

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** guionmaria@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Friday, October 09, 2020 8:58 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

NFF, an ever-growing and giving heart-based endeavor!

Earth, community, relationship—and the health of these three— are embraced and nurtured through this project.

Volunteers transform a “blank” grassy plot into visual beauty and a sustainable source of food, while apprenticing as stewards of the Earth.

Those passing daily are drawn to learn, often to participate. All reignite a connection , both to nature and Earth, as well as to one another.

I encourage us all to walk the talk of the values we espouse:  
Support and encourage with appreciation the Northside Food Forest. May it inspire the “rippling” of sister projects throughout our city.

From the heart,

Maria Guion

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Pamela Stewart](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#); [Smith, Colin](#); [Spooner, Scott](#); [Grand, Julie](#); [Schopieray, Christine](#); [Taylor, Christopher \(Mayor\)](#)  
**Subject:** Concerns about the Food Forest Project in Leslie Park  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 9:11:50 AM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Dear Council Representative Grand, Mr. Smith, Mr. Spooner, and Mayor Taylor,

My name is Pamela Stewart and I'm a decade-long resident in Arrowwood and use Leslie Park every single day.

I am writing to you to express my deep concerns and dismay over the garden installed in Leslie Park by one of my neighbors and her business, and to urge you to please intervene to prevent this project from going forward without the due process and proper procedures that the city code requires. I am also writing to bring to your attention significant problems with the project's location and administration.

My partner and I have been trying to give input on this project since May. The signage that finally went up at the site promised a survey, but there were no paper copies attached and the web-link provided on the sign only directed us to the general Parks Department email. I attended the "public meeting" organized by ShuNahSii Rose on September 10 in the hopes that it would be a forum to raise concerns with the project and have a fair discussion. However, it was made clear that the organizers only intended to hear statements of support. Any voices in opposition were ignored or dismissed. I was disappointed that when I raised concerns about the impeding of park access and lack of transparency, they were immediately dismissed as an interpersonal problem with a neighbor.

I want to be clear: my problem here is with the takeover by a private group of a portion of park land that had been regularly used by our community, and with the circumventing of fair process that has led to a lack of trust in our community towards this project and towards the city and left us feeling disenfranchised.

This food forest occupies land in the park that was once enjoyed regularly by me and others in our community as a place to walk our dogs, play soccer, and have picnics. The project has disrupted access to B2B and nature trails, causing congestion of bikers and pedestrians in a crowded area of the park. The proposed expansion of the site would impede them further. The site is far from the road and not accessible to those with mobility problems. The site is also not sustainable, requiring the group to take water from Arrowwood (at a cost to our whole co-op members) to irrigate it. All of these problems would have been immediately apparent and could have been avoided had normal procedures been followed and a proper site study conducted by the city.

I am also alarmed that this project, while community-facing, is part of ShuNahSii Rose's business and promoted on her website. This business has a spiritual dimension and includes paid courses and subscriptions. I see that the plan for the food forest's expansion includes a building to be used as a teaching space. Is this a space that will be used by this private enterprise? On public land?

The below information provides the timeline and details, as we understand and have experienced them based on our own observations and communications with the parks department, for the takeover of a portion of Leslie Park.

In April, while the city government was shut down due to COVID-19 and we were all under a stay at home order, a group began installing a very large vegetable garden in Leslie Park, behind Arrowwood where I live. This was an area of the park where I walk and play with my dog regularly, so the sudden loss of public land was something we felt immediately. The group said they were conducting this work with city permission, though this was not true. It later transpired that Jeff Hayner had privately encouraged them, rather than directing the group to the proper channels to propose a community project. (Whether he explicitly gave them the go-ahead or if they misinterpreted his enthusiasm for the project as license is unclear. Another neighbor informed me that ShuNahSii Rose said to her that she was just going to go ahead and begin construction, knowing that she did not have permission, but I did not witness this exchange.)

I have since learned that the city was led to believe that ShuhNahSii Rose and her group had conducted significant community outreach prior to beginning the project, and that they had received strong support from neighbors. This did not happen. I and many other neighbors, who have enjoyed a friendly relationship with her in the past, were never approached. The first we knew of the project was when the park became a worksite.

By the time that we were able to alert the city to what was going on, it was too late, and the project was largely constructed. And it's still there.

Although the city at first seemed poised to intervene and restore the park, a retroactive approval process has now been engineered. The group, "True Earth," submitted a proposal (with significant misinformation); this private group has been put in charge of gathering community input (deeply problematic); a pro-forma meeting to discuss the garden was held on September 10. This meeting was administered by the private group—not the city—and was not a forum for true transparent public engagement.

While this garden was surely well-intentioned, the way in which it was implemented is unacceptable and deeply troubling. The city has regulations and clear protocols that were ignored. Trees were planted; public land was appropriated. A private group (with which Jeff Hayner appears to be at least loosely affiliated - he appears in their promotional literature and has been plugging them/this project on Facebook) has been able to bypass existing community partners (Project Grow and Food Gatherers), skip the oversight and input process, and take over land that should belong to everyone. This is not how things work in a functioning democracy.

Since then, my partner and I have tried unsuccessfully to get the city to enforce their code, restore the park, and then follow proper procedures in soliciting proposals and input from the community if they want to pursue a project like this. We have not been able to get a satisfactory answer from anyone in the Parks Department (we contacted Scott Spooner and Julie Grand) or a response at all from the mayor. The city has acknowledged in emails that what occurred is improper, but that they are inclined to let it slide as they don't "see the harm."

Leaving aside the many problems with the project itself--the misrepresentation of the prior use of the site and the misrepresentation of community support in their proposal, the impeding of access to nature trails, the theft of water from Arrowwood to maintain the garden--this is just now how government is supposed to work. A councilperson's pet project is being given special consideration. As I see it, this group took advantage of a lack of oversight during a public health crisis to take public land for themselves.

When they got caught, a city council rep showed favoritism to a group of his associates and then applied inappropriate pressure to the city to get them to look the other way.

I'm concerned by the degree of backroom dealing and cronyism here. I'm concerned by our loss of a public amenity. And I'm very concerned by the erosion of public procedure and public trust.

There is not unanimous support for this project in our community; some of us are uncomfortable and not in favor; most of us never knew what was happening. There are other areas of the park better suited for accessibility (particularly for those with mobility challenges) and to allow for expansion if the project is successful.

The sad thing is that this might well have been the kind of project that I would enthusiastically support, if it had been done in the right way. Instead I have to face the loss of my park every day, as well as the loss of my trust in our government.

Please do not allow this project to go forward in this current iteration. The only way to do this fairly is to restore the park and begin again, with a fair and proper proposal process in which community input is truly sought, park use is considered, and a site is equitably selected.

Thank you for your attention,

Pamela Stewart

**From:** [Robin Greenwood](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Cc:** [ShuNahSii Rose](#); [Spooner, Scott](#); [Smith, Colin](#)  
**Subject:** Current Food Forest Proposal  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 5:34:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [Updated Northside Food Forest Proposal.pdf](#)

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Dear Parks Advisory Commission,

Thank you all so much for your time in today's meeting, we greatly appreciated the opportunity to share about this project and hear your questions and feedback. We wanted to make sure that you have the up-to-date version of our proposal for the Northside Food Forest available, so I am attaching it here.

Thank you again,  
Robin and ShuNahSii

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Robin Greenwood

True Earth- Centering Ecological and Cultural Regeneration

**From:** [Rosalie Denenfeld](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Food Forest - YES!!!  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 2:00:49 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

I write in support of the Food Forest project which I find to be practical, inspiring, and generous. At a time when our world is in great need of concrete ways to cooperate and invest in each other's health, happiness and hope, this project addresses many layers of need.

Thank you- Rosalie Denenfeld

"grab hold of the reins  
before habit runs off with your brains"

*Rosalie Denenfeld she/her/hers poet*

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Jessica Goniea <contact@jessicasapothecary.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 10, 2020 11:52 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern:

I have been hearing about the Northside Food Forest project and would love to see it happen. Consider this email a vote of support!

Thank you,

Jessica Goniea

Jessica's Apothecary & Spa

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.jessicasapothecary.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7CJLanefeld%40a2gov.org%7Ce6034ff7e3d44336b64108d86d3466c1%7C48afa58563754170b9d1e9c568bb92f3%7C0%7C0%7C637379419916507208&data=CcOpeIsd0iOyPITYIy60VUARSsFtQGvxJ4ygyJzrp0A%3D&reserve d=0>

@jessicasapothecary

Spa: (734)545-4303

Cell: (734)604-5971

**From:** [Lawrence Francis](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Food Forest at Leslie Park  
**Date:** Monday, September 21, 2020 4:04:38 AM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

We would like to enthusiastically register our approval for the Northside Food Forest Project at Leslie Park.

This well-planned effort can't help but enhance the viability and attractiveness of the park. Using such a small area of a 50 acre site for such worthy goals as outlined in their plan has our full support.

Thank You  
Larry Francis and Claudia Myszke  
Ann Arbor 48103



**From:** [Damena Karoly](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Food Forest in Leslie Park  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 06, 2020 8:50:57 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to say that I am so grateful and inspired by the work I have seen to create the Food Forest in Leslie Park. The more I learn about it and what it means to the community the more excited I am to see plans move forward. I especially like the idea that it is an educational opportunity for children and others to learn and see real food grown in the park. It is so much more interesting than growing grass. I look forward to watching the project grow and observing the land change to be more productive to help Mother Nature house many of her creatures.

Sincerely,  
Damena Karoly

**From:** [Sandra Finkel](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Food Forest Project  
**Date:** Thursday, October 08, 2020 2:20:45 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello. I am a resident on Hilldale Drive on the north side of Ann Arbor and I want to add my voice to those who support this unique and innovative project. I first heard about it this summer and have been following its development. I understand it is up for a vote on Oct. 20 and want you to know that I wholeheartedly support it.

I think it combines aesthetics, practicality, education, and ecological smarts with a hefty amount of community building. Please approve this project.

Thank you.  
Sandra Finkel  
382 Hilldale Dr, Ann Arbor, MI 48105

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Sandra Finkel, MPH  
[Intentional Balance, LLC](#)  
734.604.1857  
[finkelsand@gmail.com](mailto:finkelsand@gmail.com)  
[www.sandrafinkel.com](http://www.sandrafinkel.com)

**From:** [Claire Broderick](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Food Forest  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 06, 2020 2:01:08 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hi PAC,

I am writing as a community member to encourage the allowance and support of the Food Forest project. Sustainability is a huge concern now and for the future. This is a small part of productive action that will make a big difference. Please support and vote in favor for the Food Forest Project on October 20th 2020.

Sincerely, Claire Elise Broderick

**From:** [Charo Ledon](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Food Forest  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 1:08:30 PM

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**I am emailing in support of the Food Forest. I understand that there are a few voices against it, but want to point out that they are just that, a FEW.**

Thank you,  
Charo

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Charo Ledón  
P. O Box 2641  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106  
734-213-5396

**From:** [Lisa Steichmann](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Leslie Park Garden  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 10:26:25 AM

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----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Lisa Steichmann <[lsteich@gmail.com](mailto:lsteich@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Sat, Sep 12, 2020 at 12:28 PM  
**Subject:** Leslie Park Garden  
**To:** Taylor, Christopher (Mayor) <[CTaylor@a2gov.org](mailto:CTaylor@a2gov.org)>, <[lisadisch44@gmail.com](mailto:lisadisch44@gmail.com)>, <[sspooner@a2gov.org](mailto:sspooner@a2gov.org)>, <[JGrand@a2gov.org](mailto:JGrand@a2gov.org)>

To Whom it May Concern, 9/12/2020

I am writing to express my dismay over the garden that has been installed in Leslie Park. When the planting began, I was curious about what was happening. There was a flurry of activity, and I was hopeful about energy surrounding people planting in the spring, even though it was in a city park.

I was open to the idea, having been part of a group of people who lived on the park making gardens. That was over 30 years ago, but as young families we wanted to grow food. We cleared an area of trash, and then removed invasive plants. We gardened there for several years, until the families dropped out, one by one. The area turned shady, and my section went back to woodland, although I still remove invasives and trash. I understand the organic process of people coming together to plant food, and I approve. Since then the cooperative has created several areas for members to garden, and those plots are available to all co-op members, something not available to us at the time.

I reached out to Shunahsii Rose three times in the first few weeks of activity, leaving messages saying I wanted to talk about the project. She did not return any of my calls. Clearly she was not looking for involvement; this was self contained, and the group was already in place. Sadly, only a few of the people in the group actually lived on the park. The group seems to be already formed because of their relationship to Shunahsii, and this seems to be an extension of her professional work. I was disappointed to realize that no one was being recruited from the Arrowwood community to join, and that they only hoped we would not fight what was happening. This was the opposite of what they were saying, that this was for the community and not just for them.

When I did some research, I found that they want to expand this project to include a building where they can hold informational meetings and educate people about the project. I

**STRONGLY OPPOSE** any buildings being placed in this area of the park.

The timing of this project unfortunately comes at a difficult time. The golf course, which has been accessible for the 34 years I have lived here, has closed 7 entrances from the

neighborhood. The restricted access means it is less safe to be on the golf course during non-golfing hours. While I used to be able to exit if there was an unsafe situation, I now can only leave through one place, making it impossible to avoid aggressive dogs, etc. The Pickle Ball court has become extremely active—I count up to 30 cars there on most days and evenings. Leslie Park has also become popular to people with drones, making it hard to walk the loop at times. The loop itself has become so broken it is not safe to walk in many areas and kids on skateboards have to weave in between basketball players on the basketball court because the court is the only smooth surface in the park. Now the garden removes a flat area where people used to play soccer, play fetch with their dogs, etc.

A lot has been said about the design of the garden, and how thoughtfully it was planned. Plants are directly up against the sidewalk, making it impossible to avoid stepping on them while dog walking. I try to keep my dog away from the plants but they are very attractive, because other dogs have been peeing on the plants. I also fear the plants will be run over by the snowplow and salted since the walk is regularly cleared and salted during the winter. I also question the plantings, which include 8 Comfrey plants. Comfrey is invasive, similar to mint. Any small piece of root left behind will create a plant, it is virtually impossible to remove. As I said, there are 8 comfrey plants in the garden now, but they spread. These plants will remain in this area virtually forever. Comfrey should be grown in a container, just as mint should. Otherwise, they overrun other plants.

Finally, my hope has diminished because the garden is not attractive. Weeds are growing all over the beds, the grass and weeds in between the beds has gone to seed, with birds and wind and small animals spreading them beyond. Perhaps as people become busy they drift away from projects, which is very common with gardens. It looks untended and messy. Shunahsii Rose has worked hard to build her business. She has a beautiful personal garden, as her neighbor mentioned in the meeting. It was easy to see she has support from the people she has been engaged with professionally and personally. The people gardening are part of her community work, which is her business. This garden is an expansion of her business. The survey sent out was meant to express how excited you are about this project, not to ask if it is appropriate. It was not brought up at any Arrowwood Cooperative meetings to the best of my understanding. Her friends and family spoke in glowing terms of her efforts, which is great. But let's be clear. This is not for members who live on or near the park. It's for this group of people who decided to expand their "activism" by taking park land for their own use. The In Sacred Balance website shows a City Council member actively supporting this effort. Are we open to other religious groups expanding their impact in the community by appropriating park land?

Can I start selling drinks to people in the park, and build a little booth? I would normally assume no, but I'm not sure why not if this is the way we are allowed to go forward. Because surely the community would benefit, right?

Please help.

Thank you.

Lisa Steichmann

2767 Arrowwood  
A2, MI 48105

**From:** [Damena Karoly](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#); [ShuNahSii Rose](#); [Robin Greenwood](#)  
**Subject:** Leslie Park Food Forest Project  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 3:39:46 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern,

I live in Arrowwood and am writing in support of the Food Forest Project in Leslie Park. I have walked this park daily since 2006 because I have a day care and we use the park daily. I have helped clean up the park after fireworks, cleaned up dog poo and weeds around the playground equipment. I take the children to walk in Leslie Park Woods and also made trips to the Science Center. I believe that the walk into the woods is magical for the children and so healthy and the fact that the Food Forest is near the entrance and exit of the woods makes it even more interesting for a wonderful sensory experience for the children. As we walk by now the children are having a sensory experience smelling the herbs and feeling the different textures. I am a certified teacher in Early Childhood and the Waldorf Methods, so outdoor play is a big part of my program. I know that the Rudolf Steiner High School makes use of the park as well as a learning station for biology class, gymnastics, and they are interested in gardening and permaculture ideas. I am excited that the Food Forest will be used as a learning place for children to be educated about nature and food and life skills needed for us all. As I understand it the possibilities are endless for afterschool programs for Arrowwood Community as well as so many other organizations. I find this exciting and am in full support.

I met ShuNahSii in the 1990's well before I moved to Arrowwood and I have only known her to create places of beauty and she has an eye for aesthetic if you walked in her yard that would be a testimony in itself! I look forward to watching this project grow and create possibilities of more hope and inspiration as it has done for me thus far.

Sincerely,

Damena Karoly



**From:** [Terrie](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Leslie Park Food Forest  
**Date:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 2:22:09 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello Park Advisory Commission Members,

I live in Arrowwood and love the parks on the North side. I encountered the Food Forest on one of my walks in the woods near Leslie Park.

I fully support this project and am proud Ann Arbor is home to this leading edge project that helps promote sustainable systems.

The project enhances my experience in the park and allows plenty of room for me and my dog to walk.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Terrie DeBonis

**From:** [Katherine Brown](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** Leslie park gardens  
**Date:** Thursday, October 08, 2020 8:43:09 AM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,

Please approve if the Leslie Park gardens project. I think it will make valuable contribution to AA. I live up here and would greatly appreciate something like this, especially now w covid.

Thanks for your consideration.

Best,

Sent from my iPad

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Ying-Jen <yingjenlin@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 12, 2020 12:28 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for The Northside FoodForest Project

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Dear Parks Advisory Commission,

I am writing to express my support for The Northside Food Forest Project. I am a resident of the Arrowwood Hills Co-op and a mother of an 18-month-old toddler. We take our child to the Food Forest in Leslie Park almost every day. For our little family, the Food Forest is not only a beautiful addition to the landscape but also a wonderful place to show our child where food comes from and how these plants relate to human beings and other types of animals and insects. More importantly, I can teach our child to appreciate nature and respect the work done by a group of diverse and hardworking people. I believe that these values and experiences are also important for other community members and AA residents.

I really look forward to seeing The Northside Food Forest Project come to fruition and continue to develop as my child grows up. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Ying-Jen Lin

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Elaine Economou <elaine@movewellness.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 05, 2020 9:46 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest Coalition

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

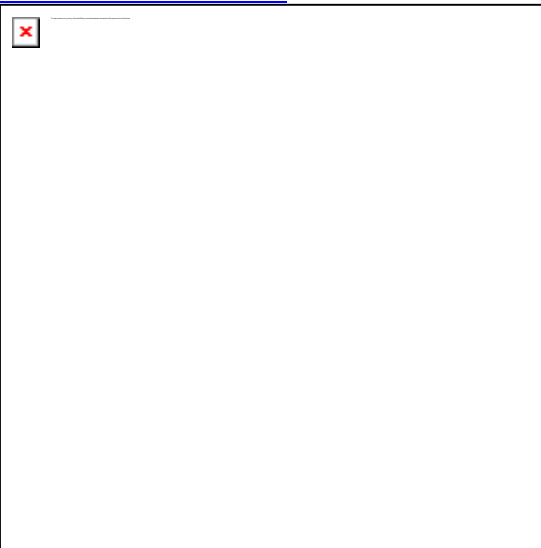
Please approve the request for the Northside Food Forest. It is a wonderful opportunity to bring the community together to care for our local land, grow food and connect with each other and nature. The group spearheading this project is a wise and committed steward of sustainability and healing. This project is a visionary one and one that the entire Ann Arbor community will be proud of with it's inclusivity and impact.

Please feel free to reach out to me with questions or let me know how else I might express support for this project.

Elaine

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Elaine Economou  
Co-Founder and CEO  
MOVE Wellness ®  
734.255.9110  
[www.movewellness.com](http://www.movewellness.com)



## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** June Smedley <junesmed@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 8:29 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Cc:** Kathleen Peabody  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest Community Resilience Project

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Parks Advisory Commission:

I strongly support the idea for the Northside Food Forest Community Resilience Project, and it behooves the Commission to allow the Project to go forward and see its fruition.

There has been much planning by the people on the Project's Team, and it will be an addition to the Ann Arbor Community that has not been seen to this date.

The Project is strongly needed by the community, the climate, and the land. The area proposed has always been wasted area since I have lived here over the last forty years.

There is no reason to impede or interfere with the commencement of the Project.

June Smedley  
2926 Verle Avenue  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Sara Rose <saramsrose@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 1:38 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest Support

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello PAC team,

I am writing to express my support for the food forest project in Leslie Park. I have lived in Ann Arbor all my life and I have lived in my unit in Arrowwood for over seven years. I grew up playing in Leslie Park, and it often felt like a neglected area. Right now the play structure closest to Arrowwood is overgrown with thistle (very pokey) and ragweed (Fall allergy culprit). I walk in Leslie Park most days, now more than ever since I am working remotely. I have loved seeing the beginning of what could be a beautiful community space. Though the Food Forest is in such a small part of the overall park, it beautifies the area so much!

I have talked with other park-goers admiring the area and expressing gratitude that the park is being used in such a wonderful way. Bikers easily cruise by, dog-walkers and parents with little kids stroll past, it's lovely. I attended the public meeting last week and was delighted to learn of the possible environmental benefits as well, in addition to the community benefits. This project seems perfect for Ann Arbor, and I am so excited that it's in my backyard. I can't wait for it to grow and I hope to volunteer my time to help!

I would be happy to share more of my thoughts if any of you want to reach out!

Best,  
Sara

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**Sara Schreiber-Rose, MSW**

c: 734.417.2723

e: [saramsrose@gmail.com](mailto:saramsrose@gmail.com)

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Evan Daywell <evan.daywell@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 1:11 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside food forest support

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello

I'm writing to voice my support for the Northside food forest. Supporting community-led projects that increase the diversity of uses of our city parks is a way to encourage more engagement and creative interaction with these beautiful community resources.

There is space for more than grass, paths, and playgrounds, and facilitating the exploration of that space is a way to build the vitality, enjoyment, and individual character of a park.

My children and I enjoy participating in and visiting the food forest area and will be excited to see it grow and change over time.

-Evan Daywell

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Kathleen Peabody <kfpeabody@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 1:17 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Dear Parks Advisory Commission Members,

We are writing as part of this Food Forest community. This unique project was started as a way to show our love and protection for the earth. This one-fifth of one acre that is planted with great hope for the future is a benefit for all without admission requirements. We realize this public park is for the public, and this is of course our intent for these offered resources of food, aesthetic beauty and environmental education.

In our planning and helping to create this, we could not imagine that there would be serious objection to this. We knew we were and are taking thousands of affecting details into consideration, and have always been confident that we are growing a first quality effort which will be a benefit for the future. This is an educated, personal, cooperative and community project which we believe answers our needs to stay local, fix what we can, and help fulfill the Sustainability Goals of the City.

Thank you for your time and effort on this park project.

Kathleen and Michael Peabody  
Ann Arbor



## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Robin Greenwood <robin@trueearth.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 1:10 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Cc:** ShuNahSii Rose  
**Subject:** Presenting at today's PAC meeting

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello PAC team,

I hope you are doing well amidst these unprecedented times. I am reaching out because ShuNahSii Rose and I are scheduled to present at today's PAC meeting regarding the Northside Food Forest proposal. We have not yet seen a link to access the meeting, and we also wanted to confirm that everything is set so we will be able to screen share for our presentation.

Thank you so much, we look forward to seeing you this afternoon.

Warmly,  
Robin

--

Robin Greenwood

True Earth- Centering Ecological and Cultural Regeneration

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Pamela Stewart <pavs@umich.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 11:12 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution; Smith, Colin; Spooner, Scott; Grand, Julie; Schopieray, Christine; Taylor, Christopher (Mayor)  
**Subject:** Re: Concerns about the Food Forest Project in Leslie Park

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

If I can append a short addition to my earlier email, I want to emphasize that *no matter how worthy a project, or how good its intentions are, this lack of due process does in fact harm our community*. To allow this project to go forward tacitly endorses the taking over of public land: it says **"this is OK, anyone can appropriate parts of the park for their own use."**

What is to stop the next person who decides that they do not want to wait for permission, or go through the correct channels? By allowing this to go ahead, you send the message that the rules are arbitrary and do not matter. You disincentivize others from following the rules in the future.

And who knows - perhaps there are people who have good or even better ideas for a project in this vein who have been excluded from the planning process because they abided by our community regulations rather than taking the law into their own hands.

The city codes and processes exist to protect our community and democracy. When we form a society, we agree to respect these codes and each other by agreeing that they apply to *everyone*. Not following them here--no matter how much we might like the idea or endorse the spirit--sets a bad precedent and harms all of us. It sends a message that Ann Arbor has suspended the rule of law and the fairness of due process, undermining both our government and our community.

Thank you.

On Tue, Sep 15, 2020 at 9:11 AM Pamela Stewart <[pavs@umich.edu](mailto:pavs@umich.edu)> wrote:

Dear Council Representative Grand, Mr. Smith, Mr. Spooner, and Mayor Taylor,

My name is Pamela Stewart and I'm a decade-long resident in Arrowwood and use Leslie Park every single day.

I am writing to you to express my deep concerns and dismay over the garden installed in Leslie Park by one of my neighbors and her business, and to urge you to please intervene to prevent this project from going forward without the due process and proper procedures that the city code requires. I am also writing to bring to your attention significant problems with the project's location and administration.

My partner and I have been trying to give input on this project since May. The signage that finally went up at the site promised a survey, but there were no paper copies attached and the web-link provided on the sign only directed us to the general Parks Department email. I attended the "public meeting" organized by ShuNahSii Rose on September 10 in the hopes that it would be a forum to raise concerns with the project and have a fair discussion. However, it was made clear that the organizers only intended to hear statements of support. Any voices in opposition were ignored or dismissed. I was disappointed that when I raised concerns about the impeding of park access and lack of transparency, they were immediately dismissed as an interpersonal problem with a neighbor.

I want to be clear: my problem here is with the takeover by a private group of a portion of park land that had been regularly used by our community, and with the circumventing of fair process that has led to a lack of trust in our community towards this project and towards the city and left us feeling disenfranchised.

This food forest occupies land in the park that was once enjoyed regularly by me and others in our community as a place to walk our dogs, play soccer, and have picnics. The project has disrupted access to B2B and nature trails, causing congestion of bikers and pedestrians in a crowded area of the park. The proposed expansion of the site would impede them further. The site is far from the road and not accessible to those with mobility problems. The site is also not sustainable, requiring the group to take water from Arrowwood (at a cost to our whole co-op members) to irrigate it. All of these problems would have been immediately apparent and could have been avoided had normal procedures been followed and a proper site study conducted by the city.

I am also alarmed that this project, while community-facing, is part of ShuhNahSii Rose's business and promoted on her website. This business has a spiritual dimension and includes paid courses and subscriptions. I see that the plan for the food forest's expansion includes a building to be used as a teaching space. Is this a space that will be used by this private enterprise? On public land?

The below information provides the timeline and details, as we understand and have experienced them based on our own observations and communications with the parks department, for the takeover of a portion of Leslie Park.

In April, while the city government was shut down due to COVID-19 and we were all under a stay at home order, a group began installing a very large vegetable garden in Leslie Park, behind Arrowwood where I live. This was an area of the park where I walk and play with my dog regularly, so the sudden loss of public land was something we felt immediately. The group said they were conducting this work with city permission, though this was not true. It later transpired that Jeff Hayner had privately encouraged them, rather than directing the group to the proper channels to propose a community project. (Whether he explicitly gave them the go-ahead or if they misinterpreted his enthusiasm for the project as license is unclear. Another neighbor informed me that ShuNahSii Rose said to her that she was just going to go ahead and begin construction, knowing that she did not have permission, but I did not witness this exchange.)

I have since learned that the city was led to believe that ShuhNahSii Rose and her group had conducted significant community outreach prior to beginning the project, and that they had received strong support from neighbors. This did not happen. I and many other neighbors, who have enjoyed a friendly relationship with her in the past, were never approached. The first we knew of the project was when the park became a worksite. By the time that we were able to alert the city to what was going on, it was too late, and the project was largely constructed. And it's still there.

Although the city at first seemed poised to intervene and restore the park, a retroactive approval process has now been engineered. The group, "True Earth," submitted a proposal (with significant misinformation); this private group has been put in charge of gathering community input (deeply problematic); a pro-forma meeting to discuss the garden was held on September 10. This meeting was administered by the private group—not the city—and was not a forum for true transparent public engagement.

While this garden was surely well-intentioned, the way in which it was implemented is unacceptable and deeply troubling. The city has regulations and clear protocols that were ignored. Trees were planted; public land was appropriated. A private group (with which Jeff Hayner appears to be at least loosely affiliated - he appears in their promotional literature and has been plugging them/this project on Facebook) has been able to bypass existing community partners (Project Grow and Food Gatherers), skip the oversight and input process, and take over land that should belong to everyone. This is not how things work in a functioning democracy. Since then, my partner and I have tried unsuccessfully to get the city to enforce their code, restore the park, and then follow proper procedures in soliciting proposals and input from the community if they want to pursue a project like this. We have not been able to get a satisfactory answer from anyone in the Parks Department (we contacted Scott Spooner and Julie Grand) or a response at all from the mayor. The city has acknowledged in emails that what occurred is improper, but that they are inclined to let it slide as they don't "see the harm."

Leaving aside the many problems with the project itself--the misrepresentation of the prior use of the site and the misrepresentation of community support in their proposal, the impeding of access to nature trails, the theft of water from Arrowwood to maintain the garden--this is just now how government is supposed to work. A councilperson's pet project is being given special consideration. As I see it, this group took advantage of a lack of oversight during a public health crisis to take public land for themselves. When they got caught, a city

council rep showed favoritism to a group of his associates and then applied inappropriate pressure to the city to get them to look the other way.

I'm concerned by the degree of backroom dealing and cronyism here. I'm concerned by our loss of a public amenity. And I'm very concerned by the erosion of public procedure and public trust.

There is not unanimous support for this project in our community; some of us are uncomfortable and not in favor; most of us never knew what was happening. There are other areas of the park better suited for accessibility (particularly for those with mobility challenges) and to allow for expansion if the project is successful.

The sad thing is that this might well have been the kind of project that I would enthusiastically support, if it had been done in the right way. Instead I have to face the loss of my park every day, as well as the loss of my trust in our government.

Please do not allow this project to go forward in this current iteration. The only way to do this fairly is to restore the park and begin again, with a fair and proper proposal process in which community input is truly sought, park use is considered, and a site is equitably selected.

Thank you for your attention,

Pamela Stewart

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** John Krienke <jcwk@protonmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 12, 2020 9:03 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for 1/5 acre Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I'm writing in support of the Food Forest initiative. I think it's a great idea and a promising location.

I'm an Ann Arbor native, having grown up in the Eberwhite/Slauson/Pioneer area and raising my three daughters here as well.

Thank you for making Ann Arbor a beacon of hope in our sustainable future.

john.

John Krienke  
204 Burwood Ave  
Ann Arbor MI 48103

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Chau Ho <mchauho@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 16, 2020 7:55 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Dear Parks Advisory Commission,

I am writing to share my enthusiastic support for the Northside Food Forest. I am a PhD student in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at UM. I have lived on the Northside for 3 years (707 Moore St).

The Northside Food Forest is an important opportunity for our community to learn and practice building sustainable food systems. I look forward to participating, and know many other people do too.

Thank you,  
Chau

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Bonsitu Kitaba <bonsitu@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 08, 2020 8:30 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern -

I write on behalf of my family in support of the Northside Food Forest. My sons attend daycare in the neighborhood and have seen firsthand the benefit of the food forest. We need more of these green community centers in our neighborhoods. They serve multiple purposes, providing much needed nutritious foods to the community and as a community gathering and building space. Spaces like this help us bond as neighbors and friends and strengthen communities in Ann Arbor.

We urge you and the commission to vote in favor of the Northside Food Forest.

If you have any questions about my support, please do not hesitate to contact me here or at 202-290-6779.

Sincerely,

Bonsitu Kitaba-Gaviglio, Esq.  
1521 Miller Ave.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)

## **Vander Lugt, Kristen**

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**From:** Kris Parnicky <krisparnick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 1:13 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I write in support of the Northside Food Forest. It will be a valuable addition to the AA community.

Thank you,

Kris Parnicky  
415 Sommerset Ct



## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Laura Trumbull <gaiawombyn@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 2:00 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for the Food Forest Project on the Northside

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hi there,

I'm just emailing to express my absolute support of the Food Forest project beginning on the Northside of town.

I believe this project will provide invaluable educational and economic equity opportunities as well as provide a tremendous revolutionary model for essential constructive environmental regenerative processes.

The benefit of this project to model new forms of community activism and engagement is huge and exponential.

I believe firmly that this project represents the exact type of investment the city of Ann Arbor needs to be creating, supporting, and championing.

In great support,  
Laura Trumbull

402 Liberty Street  
Ann Arbor MI, 48103

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Maro Beauchamp <maro@trueearth.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 1:44 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for the Northside Food Forest Community Resilience Project

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello!

I'm writing to voice my support for the Northside Food Forest Community Resilience Project that will be presented at today's meeting. I am a resident of the Arrowwood Hills housing cooperative and live near the proposed project site. I also attended the previous public meeting centering on this project. The Coalition representing this project has done a fabulous job researching the environmental issues caused by current agricultural practices and food forestry is an excellent solution to many of these issues. My neighbors and I have been already been enjoying the fruits of the team's labor on the site, with our local kids having a blast interacting with the plants and learning about gardening. I believe the Food Forest is an invaluable addition to the Northside community and would be a great step forward for Ann Arbor in addressing environmental impact. Many major cities already have their own food forests, famously including Ron Finley in Los Angeles, and Ann Arbor ought to join the ranks.

Thank you!

Maro Beauchamp  
pronouns: [they/them/their](#)

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Devney Hamilton <devneyhamilton@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2020 6:22 PM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Support for the Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Dear Parks Advisory Commission,

I am writing to voice my enthusiastic support for the Northside Food Forest. I co-own Sassafras Tech Collective, an Ann Arbor business with 5 full time employees. I have lived on the Northside (707 Moore St) for 3 years, and have worked in Ann Arbor for 5 years.

The Food Forest is in easy biking distance for me. I am very hopeful that you will allow this project to move forward. Being able to bike to a join in a community food effort (more collaborative than gardens where each person has their own plot, though those are also wonderful) is a huge hope for me in a very trying time. I look forward to learning more about permaculture, while building community and growing food together. As many indoor community engagement opportunities are no longer accessible, the Northside Food Forest would fill a large gap in my life, and I believe, many of my neighbors' lives as well. When I share about the Northside Food Forest with friends, the response is always positive and curious.

I did not learn about the PAC meeting today until I was home from work; otherwise I would have attended. Please accept my enthusiastic support for the Northside Food Forest.

Thank you,  
Devney Hamilton  
Worker-Owner, Sassafras Tech Collective

--

Devney Hamilton  
650 248 7341

I use [they/them/theirs](#) or [she/her/hers](#) pronouns

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Jessica Kilbourn <jkilbourn@emich.edu>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 05, 2020 9:42 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello and thanks for reading!

I am writing to ask and encourage you to vote in favor of the amazing Food Forest project led by ShuNahSii Rose and other wonderful community members who are creating and re-imagining culture together. The food forest asks only 1/5 of one acre in one of Ann Arbor's 150 parks and holds a long-term vision of creating a thriving, self-regulating, small scale food source that serves as an educational hub and inspirational pilot project for the immediate community as well as the city at large.

It is a beautiful project with a beautiful vision that can and does meet sustainability goals. The food forest is also a wonderful way in these uncertain times to take care and support one another both with food but also as a sustained community working together!

Please consider the benefit this brings to those leading this project but those that will be touched by it far and wide in the community! And vote to approve!

Thank you so much for taking the time to read and consider this!

Thanks,

Jess K.

***Jess/ica Kilbourn***

She/her/hers  
Part-time adjunct instructor, Women's and Gender Studies, EMU, BS, MLS  
Nationally Board Certified Massage Therapist and Bodyworker  
Licensed Massage Therapist  
Reiki Master Teacher  
Certified End-of-Life Doula  
[jessicakilbourn.com](http://jessicakilbourn.com)

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** CHRISTINE MINDEROVIC <c.minderovic@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 08, 2020 8:47 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

I am writing to ask that you approve the request to use an area in Leslie Park to establish a food forest.

Now is the time to bring a project such as this to our community. Our world seems rather unpredictable. A project such as this will bring the community together, teach us how to create and maintain a food source.

Thank you for your consideration.

Christine Minderovic

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Robin Krienke <robin@movewellness.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, October 10, 2020 8:26 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

As a long time resident of Ann Arbor, I would LOVE to see this project happen.

Thank you  
~Robin Krienke

Robin Krienke  
Cofounder and COFO  
cell:734.904.4930, studio:734.761.2306



[movewellness.com](http://movewellness.com)

## Vander Lugt, Kristen

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**From:** Brian Lydic <brian@irecusa.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 14, 2020 10:28 AM  
**To:** PAC\_Distribution  
**Subject:** Northside Food Forest

This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello,

As a Northside resident, I'm emailing in support of the proposed Northside Food Forest. What is a more foundational element of resilience than the food system? Demonstrating, and hopefully later expanding, the concept of sustainable/self-sustaining food systems that are accessible to the immediate community will help Ann Arbor move toward a sustainable model and be more resilient to climate change or economic disasters in the coming years. This is of course most important to the lower income populations most susceptible to climate and economic consequences. Trying to address climate change or general environmental sustainability without majorly modifying our food systems and our relationship with them is a fool's errand. Not only will the food forest supply actual food, but will educate the community on how we can move towards a sustainable future.

Best regards,

Brian Lydic




Ward 1 resident

1108 Wright St.



**Brian Lydic**, Chief Regulatory Engineer

[Interstate Renewable Energy Council \(IREC\)](#)

Ann Arbor, MI | 734.548.8664 |   

**From:** [Kevin Neaton](#)  
**To:** [PAC Distribution](#)  
**Subject:** North side food forest project  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 06, 2020 12:25:37 PM

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This message was sent from outside of the City of Ann Arbor. Please do not click links, open attachments, or follow directions unless you recognize the source of this email and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am writing as an Ann Arbor resident to voice my support for the proposed food forest project in Leslie park. I look forward to supporting this project as a volunteer. I am also excited to learn from this project and apply what I have learned in my own yard.

Thanks for your consideration,

Kevin Neaton  
1641 Fulmer, 48103



# Northside Food Forest Community Resilience Project





## Northside Food Forest - Community Resilience Project

### Intention

The Northside Food Forest is a Community Resilience Project that meets two primary objectives: ecological regeneration and strengthening of local community resilience, particularly (but not exclusively) with regard to food independence. We also see the project as a way to educate the public about lessening energy consumption and engaging sustainable practices. We are currently talking about phase one of our overall vision and feel hopeful that this project could serve as a pilot program that models ecologically sound food production, significant carbon footprint reduction, and localized resilience (as outlined in the Sustainability Framework Goals). We know that it is important to all of us, City Staff, local governance, and Ann Arbor residents to adapt to the circumstances of climate change in a timely manner and we are excited to be a part of this work that offers inspiration as well as a practical example. We would like to demonstrate how areas of our parks that are underutilized could serve to improve both ecological and community resilience.

Location: The proposed site of the Northside Food Forest, is on the outside of the asphalt trail on the South end of Leslie Park. Phase one of the Northside Food Forest (which we hope will convince us all of the viability of phase two) would occupy just under one fifth of one acre of land on the far south end of the park, near the playground. We are very familiar with park use here, as several of us involved in the project live on the park, and know that this area could well serve as a very real part of localizing resilience without compromising (even perhaps enhancing) traditional uses of the park.

We are also excited that this project is sited adjacent to Arrowwood Hills Co-op, one of Ann Arbor's few affordable living options. This helps the city to meet the important responsibility of attending to under-resourced residents and communities. As Ann Arbor aims to increase localized resilience as part of our future, addressing and engaging the communities among us that are most vulnerable to economic and food insecurity is an honorable choice.

The Food Forest Coalition: The Northside Food Forest is a proposal brought forth by a diverse coalition of Ann Arbor residents from both Arrowwood Co-op (as the project borders the co-op) and the wider city. See "Our Team" on page 11 for info on the core people donating time and energy to the project, bearing in mind that this is only a portion of the members of the coalition. The coalition brings together diverse skill sets, including permaculture and ecological garden design, community organizing, organic farming, engineering, construction, youth empowerment/community engagement, inclusion training, and many others. Several members of our coalition have lived in the community bordering the proposed Food Forest site for many years, and have deep roots in the community.

Ecological benefits: Excess carbon is a huge culprit in climate destabilization, and not only is a food forest carbon neutral, it actually sinks carbon from the atmosphere into the soil where it belongs. Carbon

sinking offers very real ecological regeneration and it is evident in the beauty and relief that an ecologically balanced space provides. A public feature such as the Food Forest also significantly reduces carbon emissions by lessening the mowing area (with zero regulations imposed on them, gas powered mowers constitute a staggering percentage of carbon emissions), establishing a permanent/perennial food source (conventional agricultural food production and transportation are among the highest carbon footprint we create), and significantly increasing biodiversity. As environmental education is essential to true ecological restoration, we are excited to demonstrate that solutions to the dire crises we face are accessible and can actually be joyful.

Economic benefits: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and without intervention things will only get worse, environmentally speaking. As is evidenced all around us these days, the impact of environmental destabilization will continue to be costly in ways we cannot even imagine. While we are so very privileged to have such a beautiful and extensive parks system in Ann Arbor, we can see that the city is at or beyond capacity to optimally care for our parks and we are positing that inspired, well organized collaboration could be a very beneficial development. It is certainly worth a try. In truth, I keep thinking of something that one of our youth, Nora Berry (a sixteen year-old Community High student), said in her interview on the project. She said that a project of this nature builds trust and relationship between “those in charge of the city” and community members, and that it inspires a sense of agency and responsibility. We see this quite small project as one step in a much larger, solution-oriented dream; a dream of real ecological and community resilience brought about through well organized creative collaboration.

Addressing the scope of the environmental and economic crises we are faced with will require innovation and imagination as well as sound and proven science (permaculture). Crisis intervention, increased community services, and/or professional consultants (which we are), can all be very expensive. We are both offering our professional services (in ecological garden design and community organizing), and bringing together a volunteer team of professionals who are donating their time and services because they are excited about the merit of the project.

This project is a well-organized experiment that doesn't ask much of the city. While it is perhaps a surprise to talk about it in a wider context, we feel it is important to do so. We have hopes and we are not alone. Many, many cities are implementing innovative plantings and community engagement projects, and food forests in particular, to do just this. [Here's one example in Atlanta Georgia](#), [another in South Central L.A.](#), and [one in Seattle, WA](#). There are also some great community engagement videos about [this Food Forest on the website of True Earth](#) (an organization that a couple of our coalition members run). The Northside Food Forest aims to inspire, and skillfully organize, communal stewardship of this shared public space in a way that meets essential collective objectives, including the carbon and community resilience objectives of the city. Permaculture and ecological gardening work.

Community benefits: We are so in love with and inspired by the community building aspect of the project. The garden welcomes and our work days already bring together people of many ages (10 to 71 years to date), races, ethnicities, genders, and socio-economic positions. Inclusion, demonstrated in a welcoming intersectional environment and team are essential to our model from the start. There is incredible enthusiasm for the project among Arrowwood residents, which is critical because the co-op borders the site. The support for the project which we have gleaned through interviews and endless conversations during our three work weekends also extends not only to our wider Northside neighborhood, but to residents from across the entire city. People are excited about the possibilities, the model, the opportunities for education, and the fact that it is a very solution-oriented project occurring at a time where we need the relief of sound reason for hope.



## Concept

While the title of the project is The Northside Food Forest, the concept is actually an integrated food forest/edible landscape hybrid project intended to be an educational and demonstration site. The initial installation will be approximately 75% self regulating food forest guild plantings, and approximately 25% annual food/flower beds (allowing for transition to 100% perennial food forest guilds should that prove more practical). Food forest installations are typically quite casual and “organic” feeling, which can come across as unkempt. Creating a hybrid food forest/edible landscape allows for many areas of the site to be food forest guilds that self regulate and provide infinite benefit, while at the same time conveying a sense of intentional design and allowing some space for annual (vegetable) plantings.

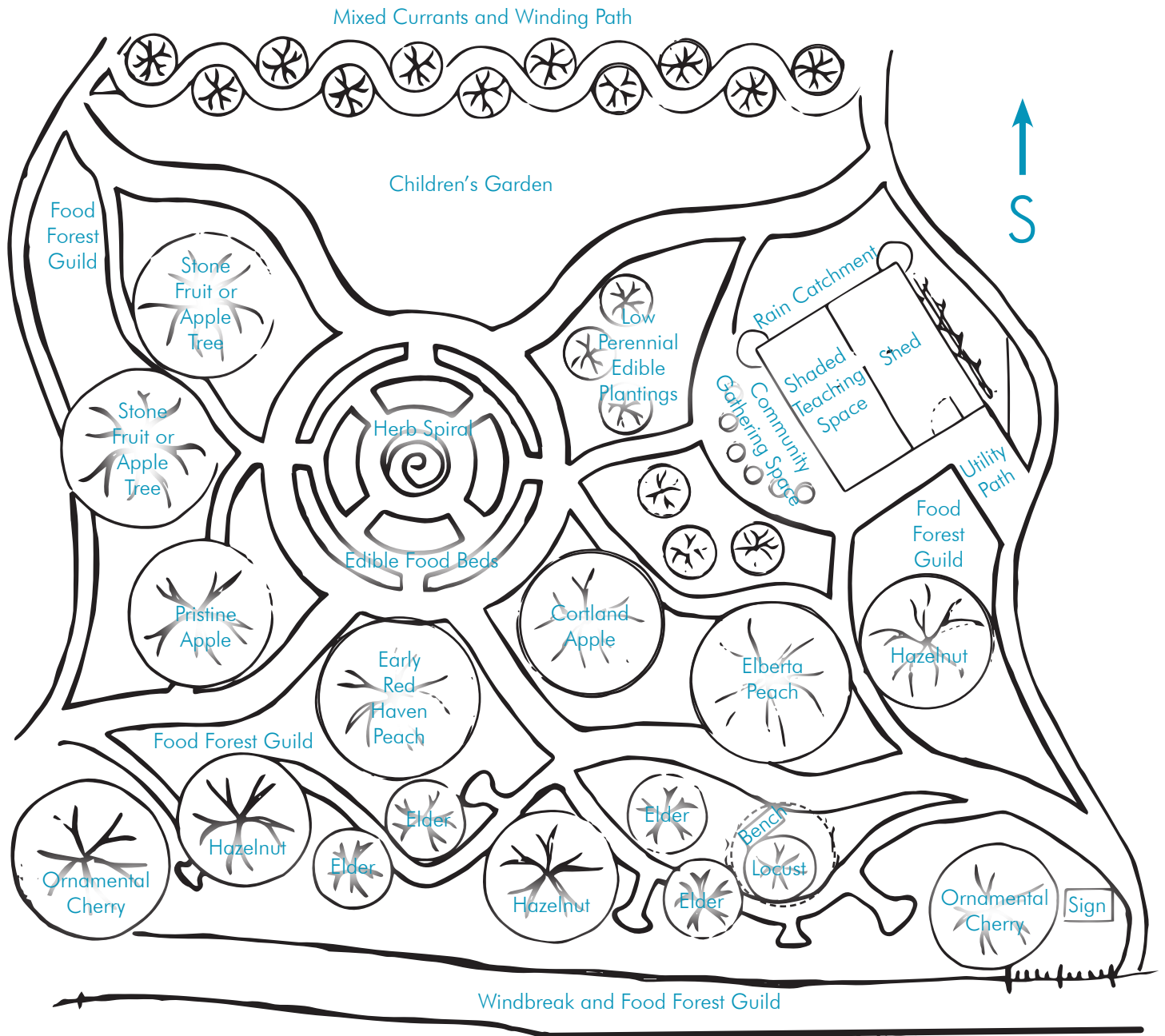
Permaculture is a system of design that models itself after nature, in order to both meet the needs of people and support ecological regeneration. The original meaning behind the name was “permanent-agriculture” and it emphasizes design strategies that require as little energy expenditure as possible, addressing a design from a whole systems perspective, and stacking functions wherever possible. Through this design orientation, potential wastes or problems can actually become valuable resources that fuel creative solutions. Effectively executed permaculture designs have the capacity to eliminate waste, drastically improve an area’s carbon footprint (often becoming carbon-negative), create or improve habitat, regenerate soil fertility, and provide for people’s needs in ways that work in concert with, not in opposition to, the natural environment.

The Food Forest is an age old, well-established, and well-documented, concept of a self-regulating food system that mimics the ecological structure and function of a naturally occurring forest. It is classically made up of seven layers of plantings. The tallest (typically nut) trees would be to the north of the site, and remaining plantings of fruit trees, berry bushes, herbaceous perennials, ground covers, root plants, and climbing plants are integrated and layered throughout. Because of the size/nature of the Leslie Park site, we would be omitting the nut trees and keeping the installation to a six-layered reasonable scale. Once it is established a food forest is almost entirely self-regulating, meaning that it provides for all of its own needs (water, fertility, soil health, and pollination) through a closed loop system. If you are interested in learning more, check out this page on [What a Food Forest Is](#) available at the True Earth website.

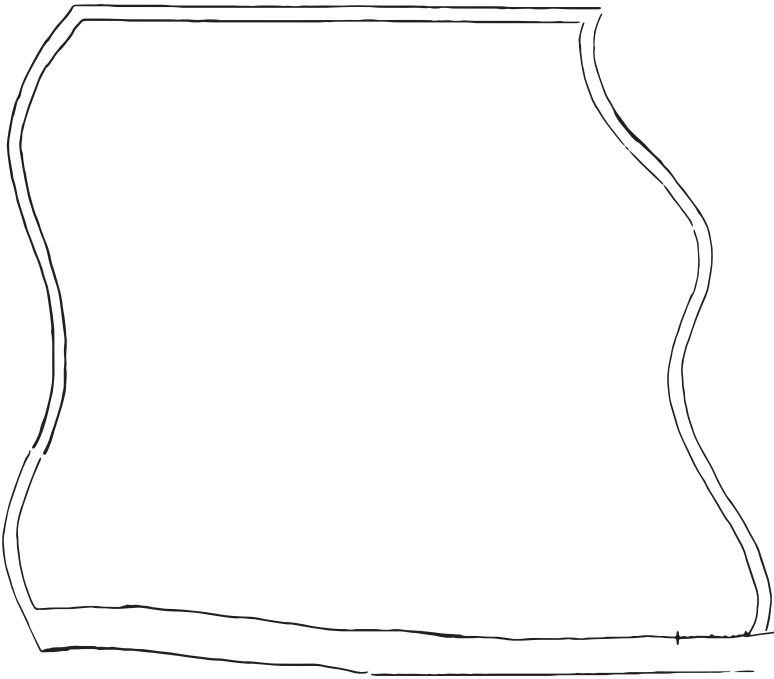
The Edible Landscape concept allows for a bit more structure to the design and makes the site likely to be more appealing, and accessible to the public. As a design for park land that aims to educate and engage the public in regenerative agricultural practices, it is important to incorporate features that are easier to understand as food sources, while also introducing the community to less common (perennial) means of food production.



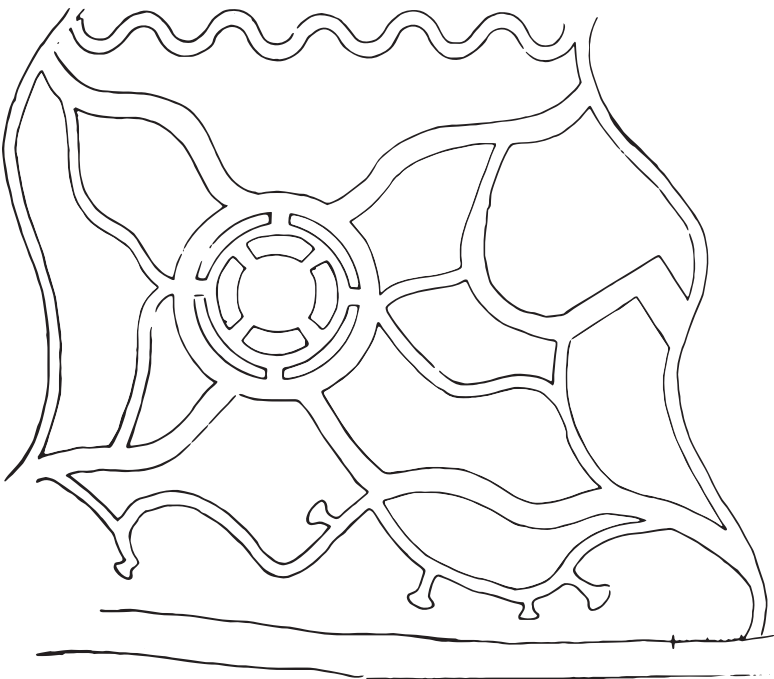
## Design - Site Map (To Scale)



## Design - Access



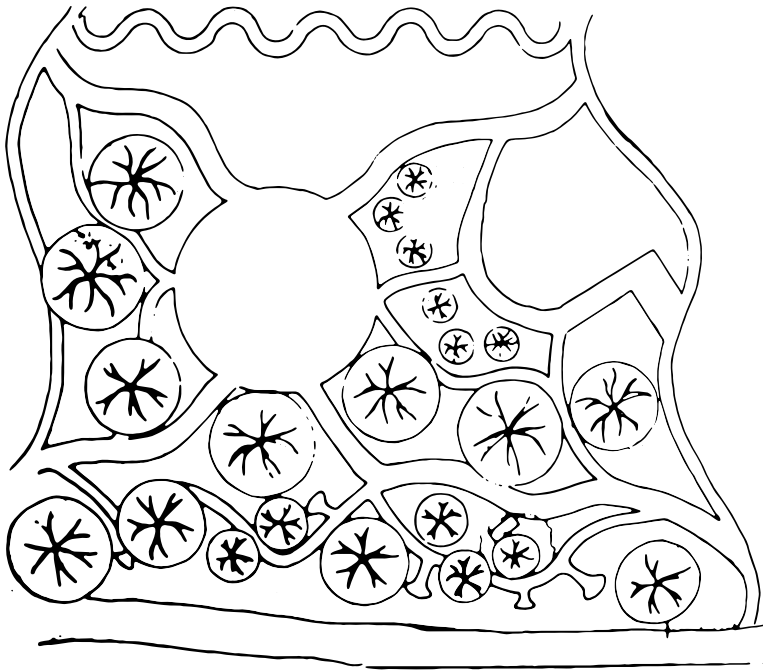
Perimeter: a two foot wide, clearly demarcated (sod removed), and deeply mulched border around the entire site that will allow for ease and mobility for mowers, as we know this is a concern for park maintenance. We have already implemented a trial of this method onsite and it is working well. As you can see on the site map there is plenty of space on the East and West sides of the installation, and there is a 10 foot distance between the South perimeter and the tree line.



Paths: are an extremely important aspect of good design with regard to both beauty and function. The movement of paths through a space goes a long way toward shaping people's experience of the garden. We have opted for 4' wide curving paths as the primary travel paths. They lead to the central labyrinth feature at the heart of the garden as a place of repose. More narrow (2' wide) maintenance paths that include some "keyholes" (a permaculture concept) allow access to harder to reach areas. For this first year the paths will be the only area of the installation that remain as lawn and will be maintained with a rechargeable weed wacker, a minimum of bi-weekly, by volunteers on a schedule. By year two, and going forward, as the guilds and growing

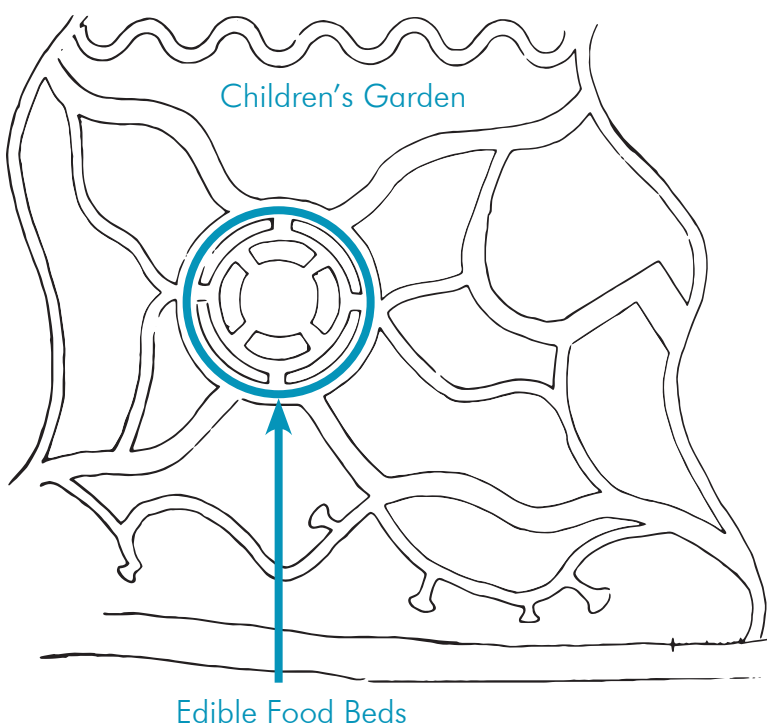
beds establish as plantings, the paths (and perimeter) will be mulched deeply once a year in the Spring by a volunteer crew on a schedule. We are hoping that the city can help with materials for this, but there are other free sources available (that just require more effort in coordination).

## Design - Plantings



Food Forest Guilds : are planted in six layers (fruit trees, berry bushes, herbaceous perennials with various functions, root plants, ground covers, and climbing vines) with organic methods that maintain a regenerative agricultural approach. A guild is a cooperative group of plants that support each other and thrive when grown together. Plant species in a guild will bring a variety of benefits such as: providing food and medicines, improving the soil, deterring pests, conserving water, and attracting pollinators. Guild plants stack functions, so the majority of plant species in a guild work in concert with each other to maximize use of space and provide several benefits simultaneously. The general categories of necessary plants are:

- deep rooted dynamic mineral accumulators that help maintain vibrant soil
- nitrogen fixers - a minimum of 20% of the plantings need to fulfill this function
- pollinator plants - a variety of flowers active throughout the entire growing season that serve to attract a wider and more reliable range of pollinators, helping to ensure a healthy ecosystem
- biomass builders that are critical to overall health and increased topsoil. One of the most astonishing aspects of permacultural/ecological gardening is that it builds topsoil rapidly

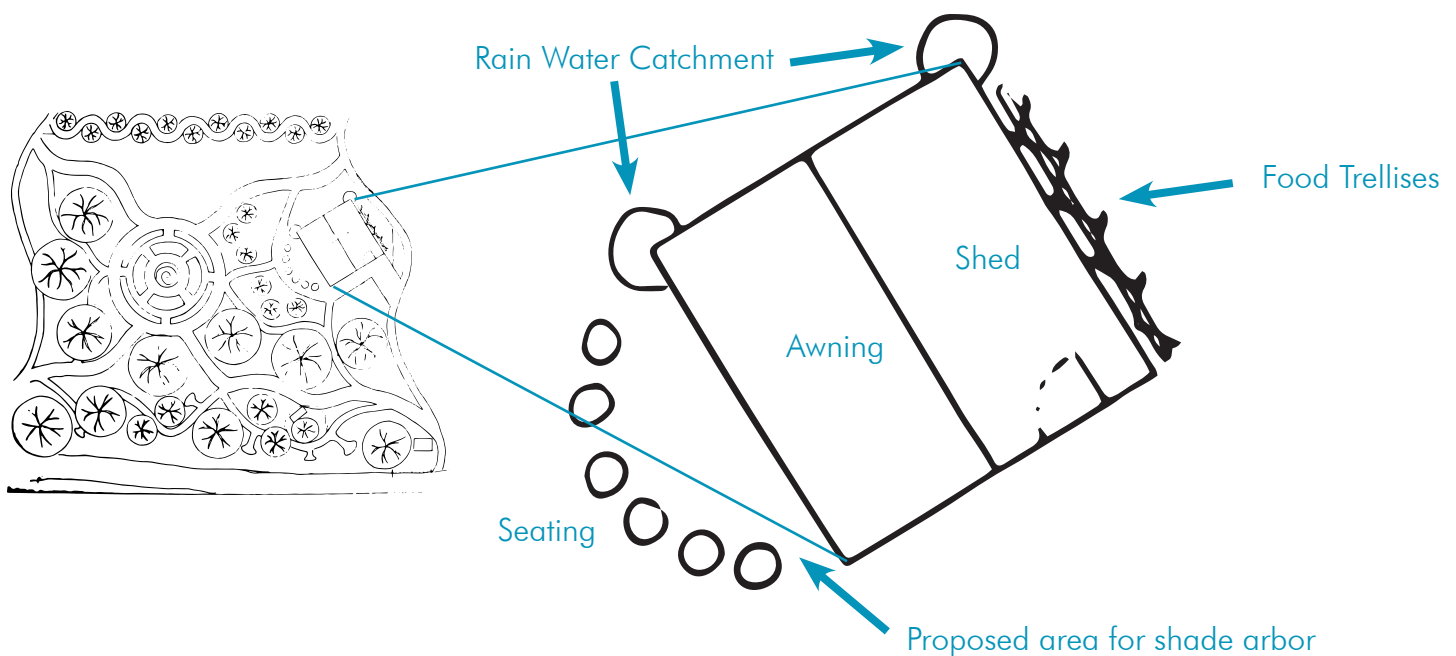


Edible Food Beds and Children's Garden: reserving this portion of planting is, as we said, an experiment that will weigh the annual food growing aspect of community engagement and follow through. There is still room for the community to weigh in on the children's garden area and what would be planted in food beds next year. There is already a robust planting of veggies in the four directional food beds this year that we are excited for the community to benefit from.

## Design - Water Catchment, Energy Conservation, and Community Space

Once established, a food forest inherently conserves energy and water through dense plantings and natural biomass “self-mulching” that retains moisture, like a naturally occurring forest. As the forest establishes it will require less and less attention and resources. While the forest is young, and should the community demonstrate enthusiasm for continued annual food production, watering will need to happen. As of now we have organized a team of volunteers who are tending this aspect of the work, but we would ideally love to demonstrate sustainable principles through rainwater catchment off the roof of a small shed/awning that provides community gathering and work space. This segues into the next aspect of the proposal.

### Community Gathering Space for Engagement, Education, Storage, and Workspace



We propose a simple building that has a 16' x 16' foot print, of which one side of the structure (8' x 16') is a closed shed to store garden equipment etc., and the other side of the structure (also 8' x 16') is an open air awning (on the side of the building that faces the garden). The awning would provide shade, work space, and a place to teach from (seating would simply be tree stumps). This building would provide the opportunity to demonstrate several important and sustainable stacking functions: as much of the building as possible would be built from repurposed materials, the roof would allow for rainwater catchment (of approximately 430 gallons per month of average rainfall given the square footage), the South facing wall would allow for vertical food production by training berries up a trellis, the shed/storage serves an essential function for a permanent installation, and the awning affords a place for community workspace. We have incorporated, and built many aspects of garden installations, but as this building is a custom design and on public land we have enlisted the volunteer help of a couple of professionals (an engineer and a contractor) to help us meet requirements and ensure the best outcome. We have more specs (not finished), including a budget, but will wait to put more effort into this aspect of the project until we hear back from you. We would also love to build a **shade arbor structure** over the (very casual) seating area we've outlined in the design to grow hardy kiwi vines (an AMAZING contribution to a Michigan food forest). Again, we have worked out the general concept and dimensions, and have been exploring possible materials, but will wait to move forward or put more effort in until we hear back from you.





## Community Support and Opportunities for Engagement

The three Spring work weekends presented us with opportunities for engagement with people from all across the city including Arrowwood, our wider Northside neighbors, and all of Ann Arbor. Our core team (of people volunteering in support of the project) is made up of people living both in Arrowwood and around the city, you can see some members here [sharing their perspectives on the value and importance of this project](#).

As the park explicitly borders Arrowwood, we thought it would be a good idea to solicit wider feedback from co-op members. We have created a survey to get feedback on the kinds of things they would like to see growing in the garden, what activities they are interested in, etc. Once we have clear approval from you and are decided on the bones of the plan, we intend to share this survey (online) with co-op members and invite further participation.

As the Food Forest establishes, both in the plantings and as a project that the city supports, there can be a variety of opportunities for people to come offer and receive education in permaculture and ecological gardening, often learning through hands-on experience. This will be both an excellent way to foster community engagement and resilience, and help provide for the forest's maintenance needs.

## General Maintenance - Scheduling and Coordination

Keeping maintenance to a minimum, and organizing volunteers, is something we are taking into consideration from the inception of the project. While maintenance is inevitably an overarching, long term concern, permaculture design makes it entirely possible to curb the demands through thoughtful attention to detail in the planning stage. The Northside Food Forest design allows for clear distinction between the responsibilities of park maintenance crew and those of the Food Forest team, and it affords the parks crew easy access to areas for which they are responsible. Maintenance needs will evolve as the installation does, and maintenance will primarily lessen over time. The committed team we already have in place is here to observe and respond to the site, and develop a long term plan. With thirty years of experience in community organizing under my (ShuNahSii's) belt, I have a thorough understanding of the scope of this task of coordinating a crew and it is relatively small. We are confident that we can do a good job. I am personally making a minimum three year commitment to overseeing this project, and its maintenance needs, in order to help coordinate and streamline: systems of communication with volunteers, maintenance schedules, and basic weekly and seasonal checklists (including watering, weeding, pruning, and path maintenance). Clear systems will greatly simplify what it means to take good care of the forest going forward, as well as to delegate or hand off coordination jobs as needed.

## Pest and Disease Management

We are 100% committed to non-toxic, organic methods of care for the Food Forest and we ask that parks always respect this, as it is an essential aspect to our approach and critical to the vitality and success of the project. From a long-term organic and ecological gardening perspective the first thing to understand about pest or disease management is the role that knowledgeable design, and in particular polyculture plantings, play in radically diminishing the likelihood and/or instances of ill health in the first place. Again, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Conventional orchards are typically planted as monocultures, as are many demonstration gardens (think, rose gardens at conservatories etc.), and this is the worst thing for the health of the plants and/or the ecosystem. Nothing in nature grows as a monoculture, and nature's inherent intelligence is the model for the forest. Monoculture orchards not only diminish the overall vitality of the trees from the get go (no guild plantings beneath them to improve/maintain soil health and/or deter pests), but should one tree fall ill, this style of planting makes all of the trees easy prey.

For the most part, a thorough guild planting will head off any issues that would arise in terms of disease, insect invasion, and even most mammal feasters. We would like to put welded wire fencing enclosures around the fruit trees while they are young to give them a chance to get established.

## Watering

As we have already stated, we hope to demonstrate water conservation not only through our planting/design (intensive planting, biomass mulching, etc.) but through the sustainable principle/practice of rainwater catchment and use. We have great, professional help on board (see: Our Team) and feel confident that we could do an excellent job. With your go ahead we will refine/complete details for this aspect of the design for your consideration/approval and include a request for funding in our grant application through the Sustaining Ann Arbor Together Neighborhood Grant Program.

Otherwise we will continue with what we are doing now; a shared and coordinated volunteer effort fulfilled by neighbors of the Food Forest bringing water (via wagon) from our homes in Arrowwood. In truth, even with the little rain we've had, watering needs are quite minimal and would be far less so if we decided to replace the annual veggie beds with perennial plantings.

## Food Harvesting, Foraging, and Distribution

As with maintenance, the harvesting needs of the Food Forest will evolve as the project progresses. We intend to allow for open foraging for community members as communicated through clear signage at the site, as well as coordinated harvest days or small harvest festivals (with proper COVID-19 precautions) at key times of year that require more extensive harvesting. We are committed to prioritizing access to community-harvested produce for Arrowwood residents, and we plan to create a streamlined system to match the available produce to interested residents.



## Timeline

In the long run, we have hope for further development of the site and are considering this facet of the design/installation phase one. If the process goes smoothly and the community/city demonstrates enthusiasm, we will happily offer details of our long term vision.

Year One, 2020: Spring, Summer, and Autumn.

- Establish Core Team - done.
- Confirm Design - in process.
- Complete and Install Signage - we have a clean aesthetic in mind, a quote for a professionally printed aluminum sign, and would love to move forward with signage ASAP in order to communicate to the community that the project is alive and well, and continuing with enthusiasm.
- Establish paths, perimeters, and beds through sheet mulching of all planting areas.
- Install many/most of the foundational plantings: trees, guilds around trees, and berry shrubs that establish South perimeter.
- Establish structural components: shed, trellis, and arbor.

# Our Team

We have a team of consistently engaged volunteers that are excited to show up for scheduled work shifts on the project. We have also brought together a solid team of core volunteers to help with installation and maintenance in regular workshifts (respectful of the current need for physical distancing and COVID-19 safety measures), and professionals offering their time and expertise to support various aspects of the project.



ShuNahSii Rose - Project Manager. Thirty years of experience in teaching and community organizing, certification in permaculture design, twenty years of design/installation experience in ecological gardening.



Robin Greenwood - Assistant Project Manager. A strong foundation in community organizing, non-profit service, organic & permacultural farming, and certification in permaculture design.



Ile' Karoly - Environmental Science Major at EMU with a concentration on humans and the environment: youth leadership, program development, installation, and maintenance crew.



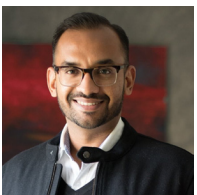
Nora Berry - Community High Student with a strong skill base in facilitation and community organizing: youth leadership, program development, installation, and maintenance crew.



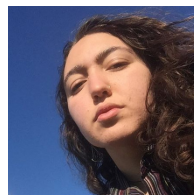
Evan Daywell - Experienced organic farmer, family man and neighbor of the Food Forest. Evan is supporting the development of annual food beds, installation, and maintenance crew.



Maro Beauchamp - Graphic and Web Designer: Layout and design of signage, informational materials, and Food Forest web page, installation, and maintenance crew.



Vishnu Nair - Masters of Engineering and agricultural background in Southern India: structural design support, rainwater catchment advisement, installation, and maintenance crew.



Nyah Sealssie - Cultural Inclusion and Sensitivity Training, strong skill base in facilitation, grew up farming: program development, installation, and maintenance crew.



Kathleen Peabody - Bachelors in Land Use and Environmental Impact Assessments, Huron Watershed Volunteer: resident elder, installation, and maintenance crew.



Councilmember Jeff Hayner - Professional Builder/Contractor: structural design support, and building work crew leadership.