

Whereas, in early 2020 the Northside Food Forest began their project in the southern section of Leslie Park, on a site less than one acre in size;

Whereas, neither City permission, nor public input were sought prior to commencing work on the NFF;

Whereas, concern has been raised by citizens regarding the lack of public input solicited by NFF;

Whereas, residents have voiced both support and opposition for the NFF project;

Whereas, the NFF aims to achieve goals in line with City sustainability goals;

Whereas, a template for the establishment and management of community gardens exists in an agreement between Project Grow and the City of Ann Arbor;

Whereas, the agreement between Project Grow and the City of Ann Arbor outlines a process for establishing new garden sites or the extension of existing sites, with staff providing their recommendation, but leaving the final recommendation up to the Park Advisory Commission;

Whereas, staff recommend treating the NFF as a pilot project through the 2021 season, allowing for an opportunity to see how the project resonates with community;

Whereas, the purpose of the Park Advisory Commission is to provide a consistent and formal opportunity for public involvement and perspective regarding community park and recreation services;

RESOLVED, that the Park Advisory Commission believe the NFF project seeks to address meaningful sustainability goals along with having the potential to strengthen community, but that a lack of process, permission and public input has generated polarizing sides of support and opposition for the project;

RESOLVED, that the Park Advisory Commission recommend approval of the NFF on a pilot basis only, following these steps:

1. Prior to April 1, 2021 The City and NFF develop a working agreement that outlines the goals and purpose of the NFF, the organizational structure of the NFF, maintenance responsibilities, community outreach, signage, insurance requirements, and level of City support.
2. Until such an agreement is formalized and signed by both parties that no further work on the site occur, beyond what is necessary to keep the existing NFF alive and in good condition.
3. For the 2021 season any additional plantings and landscaping must be approved prior to implementation. Failure to do so will end the pilot project and require removal of the NFF.
4. For the 2021 season no permanent or semi-permanent structures will be erected on the NFF site in Leslie Park.
5. During the 2021 season the NFF conduct at least 3 free outreach and educational classes, with support from City Staff, on Food Forests to neighborhoods near Leslie Park.
6. That the NFF report back to the Park Advisory Commission at their October 2021 meeting on how the 2021 season went.
7. The Park Advisory Commission will decide the future of the NFF project at Leslie Park at the conclusion of the pilot process.