

## *What is the Vision and what is requested for the 4th Ward Community:*

### **To make 15 Seward Avenue lot a SUSTAINABLE 4th Ward GreenSpace/Community Garden**

Rights to the Lot of 15 Seward Avenue to be leased to 4th Ward residents so it can't be sold and the community has a right to garden on it for the next 100 years.

This GreenSpace will give a much needed new life to the 4th Ward. Community Gardens have the possibilities of drawing together, people from different backgrounds, race, culture and social class. This can change the atmosphere of the 4th Ward by creating a way of building relationships with people who might never "network" together. Planting and growing food is our common ground. We all want good food. None is readily available locally.

We can set up planting vegetables for kids. Like the guerrilla gardener, Ron Finley of LA says, "if children plant kale, they eat kale."

There are currently over 18,000 community gardens in the USA, and gardens are growing in force. We can teach our kids how to garden and how important it is to volunteer and help their neighbors.

A GreenSpace can provide organic food for those who might otherwise not be able to afford it. It can teach gardening skills (i.e. such as water conservation, saving seeds, natural fertilizer and organic pest control).

The aging population can also have a voice because their knowledge and expertise can be invaluable.

Growing herbs and green leafy veggies reduces health risks and are beneficial to improve health.

GreenSpaces reduce stress. It provides a space to compost. Reduces air pollution. Everyone who eats the food from the garden learns to eat more healthfully. Gardens are cheaper to maintain then it is to maintain a park. Property values will increase with a community garden.

#### **Community Gardens:**

- Help improve air and soil quality
- Increase biodiversity of plants and animals
- Reduce "food miles" that are required to transport nutritious food
- Can replace impervious structures and improve water infiltration
- Can reduce neighborhood waste through composting
- Positively impact the urban micro-climate

#### **Community Gardens:**

- Increase access to fresh foods
- Improve food security
- Increase physical activity through garden maintenance activities
- Improve dietary habits through education
- Increase fruit and vegetable intake
- Reduce risk of obesity and obesity-related diseases
- Improve mental health and promote relaxation

### **Community Gardens:**

Gardens in urban areas are positively correlated with decreased crime rates

Vacant lands can lead to crime which can detrimentally impact the health of residents

Residents in areas with high crime rates may experience cardiovascular disease and mental health disorders

The consequences of vacant lands are decreased property values, drug use, and the illegal dumping of litter, tires and chemicals

Gardens can improve economic opportunities by training volunteers and selling food at farmers' markets

Urban agriculture can teach residents useful skills in planning, food production and business

Improving vacant lots increased property values in New Kensington, Philadelphia by 30%

Green Leaf Communities provide agriculture opportunities for students and adults to receive training and work on maintaining urban gardens together, reaching across the generation gap.

Gardening is a very meditative activity, it gives people a space to love and care for. It changes things and makes the neighborhood more peaceful.

We could join other communities for support.

After meeting with the Mayor and Lisa Randazzo on January 2nd, I asked for the garden to be in the lot where the firehouse on 15 Seward Avenue had been removed. He informed me that the Salvation Army might want the property.

### **My question:**

Would it be at a cost that covers the demolition and clean up of the firehouse? Many of the neighbors around the lot are not interested in selling the lot to an organization that will take the property off the tax rolls. With the massive property tax increases over the last three years, we feel it would be a better use of the property for the neighborhood to **grow food** rather than have a non tax generating parcel of private property.

What was the complete cost of the demo and clean up?

Is there an official offer on the property?

If so, who has made the offer and was exactly is the offer?

### ***Some useful websites for community gardening:***

<https://communitygarden.org/resources/>

<http://www.wakingtimes.com/2013/05/11/civil-disobedience-or-death-by-design/>

<http://www.wakingtimes.com/category/food-nature-earth/>

<https://greenleafcommunities.org/the-many-benefits-of-community-gardens/>

<http://learn.eartheasy.com/2014/09/6-unexpected-health-benefits-of-gardening/>

Thank you,

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