

City Considers Community Garden Space

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

December might sound like an odd time to talk about gardening, but the topic was one of many during last night's city council work session.

Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District is hoping to start a community garden sometime in the next year, and would like to use city land to do so. Last night District Manager Joe Dinnocenzo presented the idea to the council and asked them to consider some sort of land use agreement.

"So our proposal and I've since talked to Aimee and Mark Kozak a little about the idea and we came up with maybe a tentative idea of possibly using land on Larch Street that you guys own. The 1000 to 1300 block of Larch Street."

Dinnocenzo said there is a community garden out at the Fairgrounds currently, but users don't have access to water and its location so far out of town isn't ideal for those who might need or want to use it. He said the district's goal is to have a location semi close to apartment buildings with the thought that folks living in them don't have land to garden and would use the community space.

He said the hope is to draft a memorandum of understanding with the city to use land for a series of small, raised garden beds.

"You know if we got the city approval to use that land we would pursue funding to develop some plots and maybe get a water line plumbed in, which would be the spendiest thing. And I think we envision a nominal fee structure to cover operations, which should be pretty minimal."

Dinnocenzo said they would also have a set of guidelines and usage rules, which have yet to be drafted. Most council members were in full support of providing land for a community garden, including Councilman Charlie Davidson.

"I think that's an excellent idea. I talked to Joe on the telephone briefly and I think it's a very good way for some of our people to remain here for a very reasonable price in our community."

Dinnocenzo said he wasn't sure how the garden plots would be allotted to folks, whether it will be first come first serve or a lottery system. Ideally he said he'd like to design the project so there's not a long waiting list and anyone who's interested can get involved.

The city council only has one meeting in December, so it's unlikely any gardening land agreement will make that agenda, but Mayor

Pat Branson said they would be sure to continue the discussion in the New Year.