Proposal for the Beach 84th Street Community Garden

This is a proposal to transform the vacant City-owned property at 318 Beach 84th Street, Far Rockaway, New York 11693, into a community garden under the jurisdiction of the NYC Parks Department. The property is Queens Block 16103, Lots 83 & 84. It is currently in the inventory of the Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and available for transfer.³

Who We Are
The Beach 84th Street Gardeners are led by Wanda McDowell and Joe Logan, who own the house across the street from the property and have spent two years rallying support and clearing hurdles with the assistance of NYC Parks and DCAS staff, as well as 596 Acres, Community Board 14 and The Rockaway Beach Civic Association.

Our group is made up of ten local residents (list attached) who are ready to help manage the garden. We have written support from 37 other individuals, as well as local businesses and houses of worship. The day care, the Community Development Initiative Head Start Program, is excited at the possibility of the future garden becoming an outdoor classroom!

³ In 2009, the Economic Development Corporation put a hold on this property when it conducted a study to identify the location of a ferry landing on the Bay side of the Rockaway peninsula. That hold was lifted at the request of 596 Acres in 2016, clearing the way for the transfer to NYC Parks that our proposal for this community garden contemplates. Parks placed a hold on the property as of April 29, 2016.
Wanda can be reached at wandamc72@gmail.com or (518) 693-9349.

Designing for the Rockaway Context
This City-owned lot is on a residential block that experiences inundation by salt water from the raising water table beneath the Rockaway peninsula. At high tides and occasionally when it rains, the lowest edge of the property – the 3-4 feet at the front, nearest the sidewalk – flood. The design we propose for the future community garden here takes advantage of these water events and follows the natural tendency.

We plan to use the 12-feet front portion of the site to create a native-plant environment that showcases the flora that is native to salt-water inundated Rockaway. We will plant grasses and shrubs suggested by the NYC Parks Department that have a specific brackish or saline water level in their native environments. See Attachment listing salt tolerant species (https://www.nycgovparks.org/sub_about/parks_divisions/gnpc/pdf/salt_tolerant_species_list.pdf).

In addition to providing a beautiful resilient planting space, this saline sensitive growing area will also serve an educational purpose. A mini-botanical garden of salty species, it will have signs that highlight the unique characteristics of the plants chosen for this area and draws the viewer’s attention to Rockaway’s unique natural context.

We plan to consult with the NYC Parks Green Infrastructure Unit on the design of this area of the garden and have already been in touch with Jeff Keiter, the unit’s Sustainability Coordinator.

The remaining portion of the garden, which is elevated, will contain some of the things that have inspired us from other gardens that we have visited: raised beds for growing healthy vegetables, a social area with room for groups to bar-b-q and classes to meet, a tool shed and lending library, and winding paths through a natural landscape that will include plants that are inviting to crucial pollinators. One of our priorities is to plant a garden that helps bees thrive in the Rockaways.

We will include a solar panel array to generate power on-site so we can have lighting when needed and access to electricity for tools. Solar professional and Rockaway resident David Gibbs is standing by to facilitate this portion of our design.
How the Garden Will Be Used

The garden will be locked when it is not being used and all garden members will have keys.

Garden membership will be open to all interested people. Most plantings in the garden and the salty educational area will be cared for by the group collectively. The garden will also include 10 raised beds in which we will grow vegetables to give away to people in the neighborhood. 10 more beds will be assigned on an annual basis to individuals and groups of people who want to grow vegetables on their own, with priority for those living on the surrounding five blocks, and secondary priority for those living, working or having a summer address in zip code 11693.

The garden’s opening hours will be managed by our group of volunteer stewards. We will try to have it open every day in the summer and to provide space for special programming all year round.

We will have certain days just for children. We will teach the children how to attend to a garden and plants; our goal is that they learn to grow, share, and embed in them the healthy need of consuming vegetables.

Enclosures

- A proposed layout of the community garden
- Photographs of the vacant lot and the planning process
- Letters of Support from:
  - Queens Community Board 14 dated October 24, 2016
  - Rockaway Beach Civic Association dated October 6, 2016
  - Power Rockaways Resilience dated June 30, 2016
  - Community Development Initiative Head Start dated August 16, 2016
  - New Hope Missionary Baptist Church dated August 30, 2016
  - Ebb Tide Marina dated November 6, 2015
- NYC Parks Suggested Plantings for Saline/Brackish Environments
- List of future garden members
October 24, 2016

William Lo Sasso  
Deputy Director, Green Thumb Parks Department  
49 Chambers Street Room 1020  
New York, New York 10007

Dear Deputy Director Lo Sasso,

In light of the letter of support (enc.) from the Rockaway Beach Civic Association, the District Office of Community Board 14 has no objection to the Green Thumb application for a community garden on City owned property located:

318 Beach 84th Street, Block 16103, Lot 83.

I thank you in advance for your efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Gasko  
District Manager

JG/dls

cc:  
Hon. Eric Ulrich
D. Lewandoski  
Rockaway Beach Civic Association
October 6, 2016

Dear Jonathan Gaska,

This is an updated letter of support from the Rockaway Beach Civic Association ("The Civic") in reference to the proposed community garden project at 318 Beach 84th Street. The Civic originally wrote to the Community Board on April 19, 2015 supporting the project.

The Civic was again approached by Ms. Rhuanda McDowell, a resident of Beach 84th Street and who has been diligently working on this project for several years, and Ms. Paula Segal, Executive Director of 596 Acres, to again write to CB 14 to state our support for the project with an updated letter.

The Civic fully supports Ms. McDowell and Ms. Segal in their efforts to make this blighted vacant lot a productive, healthy garden for the community.

We can be reached at info@rockawaybeachcivicassociation.org.

Regards,

John Cori
President

Bridget Klapinski
Co-Vice President

Eddy Pastore
Co-Vice President

Grace Miller
Treasurer

Marni Rhyme
Secretary
June 30, 2016

Wanda McDowell
Beach 84th Street Community Garden
318 Beach 84th Street
Rockaway Beach, NY 11693

To Whom It May Concern,
I am writing in support of the Beach 84th Street Community Garden. I have been a resident of the Rockaways for three years during which time the organization, Power Rockaways Resilience, which I am a founding member have been active in the Rockaway community as a implementor of renewable energy and resilience. This garden will provide a space for residents of all ages to meet and work together, as well as a place to educate and engage community members about local agriculture, healthy nutrition, sustainability, and community self-sufficiency.
We look forward to collaborating with Ms. McDowell and Mr. Logan and the Beach 84th St. Garden on the utilization of renewable technologies to further enhance their ability to foster community development in the Rockaways.

Sincerely,

R. David Gibbs
Executive Director The Coastal Marine Resource Center,
Power Rockaways Resilience
August 16, 2016

Mr. William LoSasso
Director
Green Thumb
Parks Department
49 Chambers Street Room 1020
New York, New York

Dear Mr. LoSasso:

Re: Beach 84th Street Block 16103, Lots 83 and 84

This letter is in support of the Community Garden proposal to create a fruit and vegetable garden. Community Development Institute Head Start (CDI HS) serving Rockaway Beach is a Federally funded program providing services to low income families including expectant mothers and families with children from birth to five years old.

A couple of months ago Wanda McDowell visited our Program and presented a Proposal (see attached proposal) to create a fruit and vegetable Community Garden on a couple of empty lots. The Garden would definitely bring a healthy aspect to the community.

She explained that she and her husband would be working the lots.

CDI HS has agreed to support Wanda McDowell in her efforts to create a fruit and vegetable garden in the Community.

Sincerely,

Christine Beck
Site Manager

Carmen Ayala
Program Director
Isak Mendes
Out Reach Coordinator
Green Thumb
City of New York
Parks & Recreation

August 30, 2016

Dear Out Reach Coordinator Mendes:

This is to confirm that the New Hope Missionary Baptist Church is willing to support Wanda McDowell regarding the Community Garden on Beach 84th Street Lots 83 – 84. We believe that the garden will be beneficial to the community and will help to provide an opportunity for the residents in Rockaway to come together to improve our neighborhood.

As part of the community we support any effort to enhance our environment. If you need any additional information, please contact me at 718-634-4100.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rev. Larry L. Shell Sr.
Pastor
Dear Out Reach Coordinator Mendes,

My name is Mr Craig Marinucci. I am writing this letter to support Joseph Logan and Wanda McDowell.

I am informing you that I would like nothing more than to do Pro Bono work on vacant lot at 318 Beach 84th Street. (Block #16103 – lot #83).

I own, my own heavy earth moving equipment. I am willing to use what necessary equipment is needed to level the property out, to prepare for community garden.

All work will be done Pro Bono. Feel free to contact me at any time – (718)-614-6807.

Sincerely

[Signature]
Craig Marinucci
Salt Tolerant Species List

The following species include those whose native habitats have a specific brackish or saline water level and/or can tolerate salt spray. These species may prove useful in coastal or roadside plantings depending on their other cultural requirements.

**Trees**
- *Betula papyrifera*– Paper birch
- *Betula populifolia*– Gray birch
- *Celtis occidentalis*– Hackberry
- *Juniperus virginiana*– Eastern red cedar
- *Magnolia virginiana*– Sweet bay magnolia
- *Nyssa sylvatica*– Black tupelo
- *Pinus rigida*– Pitch pine
- *Populus deltoides*– Eastern cottonwood
- *Prunus serotina*– Black cherry
- *Quercus alba*– White oak
- *Quercus bicolor*– Swamp white oak
- *Quercus coccinea*– Scarlet oak
- *Quercus palustris*– Pin oak
- *Quercus rubra*– Red oak
- *Quercus stellata*– Post oak
- *Quercus velutina*– Black oak

**Shrubs/Vines**
- *Amelanchier arborea*– Common serviceberry
- *Amelanchier canadensis*– Canadian serviceberry
- *Aronia arbutifolia*– Red chokeberry
- *Aronia melanocarpa*– Black chokeberry
- *Baccharis halimifolia*– Groundsel tree
- *Cephalanthus occidentalis*– Buttonbush
- *Clethra alnifolia*– Sweet pepperbush
- *Gaylussacia baccata*– Black huckleberry
- *Ilex glabra*– Inkberry
- *Iva frutescens*– Saltmarsh elder
- *Lindera benzoin*– Spicebush
- *Myrica pensylvanica*– Bayberry
- *Prunus maritima*– Beachplum
- *Rhus copallinum*– Winged sumac
- *Rhus glabra*– Smooth sumac
- *Rhus typhina*– Staghorn sumac
- *Rosa carolina*– Pasture rose
- *Rosa virginiana*– Low pasture rose
- *Salix discolor*– Pussy willow
Salt Tolerant Species List

Shrubs/Vines cont’d
- *Sambucus canadensis* – Black elderberry
- *Vaccinium angustifolium* – Lowbush blueberry
- *Vaccinium corymbosum* – Highbush blueberry
- *Viburnum dentatum* – Southern arrowwood
- *Vitis labrusca* – Fox grape

Herbs
- *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* – Bearberry
- *Cakile edentula* – Sea rocket
- *Eupatorium album* – White thoroughwort
- *Hibiscus moscheutos* – Marsh mallow
- *Lathyrus maritimus* – Beach pea
- *Lechea maritima* – Beach pinweed
- *Limonium carolinianum* – Marsh rosemary
- *Maianthemum canadense* – Canada mayflower
- *Oenothera biennis* – Common evening primrose
- *Opuntia humifusa* – Eastern prickly pear
- *Solidago sempervirens* – Seaside goldenrod
- *Symphyotrichum novi-belgii* – New York aster

Graminoids
- *Ammophila brevigulata* – Beachgrass
- *Distichlis spicata* – Saltgrass
- *Juncus gerardii* – Blackgrass
- *Panicum amarum* – Bitter panicgrass
- *Panicum virgatum* – Switchgrass
- *Schizachyrium scoparium* – Little bluestem
- *Scirpus maritimus* – Seaside bulrush
- *Scirpus pungens* – Common threesquare
- *Scirpus robustus* – Saltmarsh rush
- *Scirpus validus* – Soft stem bulrush
- *Spartina alternifolia* – Smooth cordgrass
- *Spartina patens* – Saltmeadow grass
- *Spartina pectinata* – Prairie cordgrass
Salt Tolerant Species List

Aquatics
- *Pontederia cordata* – Pickerelweed
- *Sagittaria latifolia* – Broadleaf arrowhead
- *Typha latifolia* – Broadleaf cattail

Ferns
- *Thelypteris palustris* – Marsh fern