

The following are emails residents sent to the first selectwoman related to the community gardens.

July 31, 2022

Dear James,

Thank you for emailing your questions and concerns.

The Board of Selectmen approved funding for a study of Allen's 5 & 6 as a possible site for a third turf field only, not a sports complex as you have described. Once completed, the study will be made available to the public online, discussed at a Board of Selectmen meeting and provided to the P&Z Amenities Master Planning Subcommittee.

Carry in/carry out is the rule at all town parks and fields, except for those where food is consumed, such as the WHS Complex and Schenck's. As such, it would continue at Allen's Meadow.

There are environmental pros and cons to both grass and turf. Grass fields require watering (60,000 gallons per week for a football field in the Northeast according to the Sports Management Association), chemicals and gas-powered mowers and blowers. Although much of the Shaw Geofill, coconut infill turf field installed at the Stadium and Lilly is composed of natural materials, the fiber in the blades are not. Nor is the shock padding, which is made from recycled materials. The Town is seeking to balance environmental considerations and cost with a mixed of the two fields types.

The Allen's study will include consideration of the abutting wetlands. If you followed the recent Board of Selectmen discussions for storm mitigation at the Wilton High School Complex, you know this Board considered the impact of climate change/increased intensity of storms in its decision making. In 2017, some residents were concerned when the Land Trust returned management of Schenck's Island to the Town. Since then, the Town implement of oversaw improvements to Schenck's, the Norwalk River and the opposite side of the river, which improved the health of all and provided opportunities for more residents to enjoy and make use of the areas.

Since 2007, there were multiple efforts to install a turf field at Middlebrook. Those efforts resulted in two lawsuits. As such, Middlebrook is not a viable location for a third turf field. The Board of Selectmen recently authorized a study of the land behind Comstock. The study found the area wasn't a viable location for a third turf field.

It is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to balance the needs and interests of all residents. We fulfill our responsibilities best when, in a transparent manner, we engage expert consults, gather facts, present the facts and findings to the public, hear public comment, receive board/commission input and then make a decision based on all input.

Thanks,

Lynne

Dear Ms. Vanderslice and other Selectmen,

The Parks and Recreation Commission's identification of Allen's Meadows Field 5 or 6, as a preferred site for a third turf field in Wilton seems flawed. The Meadows, while housing six grass fields is also a sight of an incredible ecosystem that has been studied by the environmental classes at Wilton High School for decades. It is a significant stop for migrating songbirds in Spring and Fall. It is an area that houses Cross Country, running and walking trails enjoyed by the student athletes and community members at large. It provides a place for Wiltonians to find some serenity and calm in the throws of a pandemic or on weekday morning as well as being the 47 year home to the Community Gardens. It's also an important aquifer supporting ground water infiltration in the area renewing our wells.

What Allen's lacks is the infrastructure that will be required for a proper in-filled turf facility. Realistically that facility will have high voltage lights, bleachers, bathrooms, a concession and adequate parking on town owned property. None of these are present at Allen's meadows. Allen's Meadows is a carry in carry out facility. There isn't even garbage and recycling on site. In fact Allen's as currently constructed lacks the space for an in-filled turf field with adequate run-out areas. A turf field the size of Kristine Lily field, without the stands, has a foot print of 400 feet by 300 ft. while the larger field 6 as currently constructed is 380 by 255. Any expansion will encroach on wetlands located 30 feet from the existing fields or other activities currently conducted in the Meadows. Are we really going to build another turf field along a wetlands and then act surprised when it floods? Twice isn't enough? Electricity would have to come in from Olmstead. If there is a change in status of the lease agreement for the front of Allen's a new parking area would be required and have to egress onto Olmsted as well. That is why the Allen's Meadows Study conducted in 2007 and adopted by the BOS opposed any further development on the site.

These criteria should be a minimum of any site for this important undertaking, and can be found on Town owned property just above the Comstock Community Center. It may be more difficult to develop initially, but it will provide a better solution in the long run while maintaining the uses and environmental capital of Allen's Meadows.

James Van Acker

July 28, 2022

Thank you so much, Lynne, for your gracious reply. And yes, I did get the latest news, which is very auspicious indeed.

Originally, Jane Simone and I shared a double plot; Steve P. might recall that. Now, Frank Simone has taken over most of Jane's gardening, and he tends to be on top of paying first thing in the spring, after which I reimburse him.

Here's my info, and if you need additional info let me know:

905 Ridgefield Rd.

Wilton
203-762-0661
katsura234@yahoo.com

Thanks again,
Best,
Julia

Hi Julia,
Thanks for emailing. Hopefully by now you have received the most recent email indicating CT DOT has agreed to consider amending the lease to include gardening. Attorney Nicholas Bamonte, who is handling the matter will be attending Tuesday's Board of Selectmen meeting.

I've copied Steve Pierce so he can add you to the e-trak email system, which is the official means of communicating with gardeners. He indicated we don't have your information. Perhaps you share a plot with an individual who annually applied for the plot.

Regarding your question about the recent expansion of the gardens. All but 2 or 3 of the plots are on town-owned land. CT DOT was not contacted at the time. We expanded the gardens because residents on the waitlist were becoming increasingly frustrated, suggesting our practice of renewing existing gardeners first was unfair as it didn't provide an opportunity to those on the waitlist. Some had been on the waitlist for more than five years. Fortunately we were able to expand the number of plots and allow for equitable access.

Thanks,
Lynne

Dear Ms. Vanderslice,

Of course this is all very upsetting. But not made better by very confusing and poorly timed communications:

1) first, we gardeners are told No Pesticides. Not a problem. Formal signs go up; no one is complaining as far as I can tell.

2) next, we are told No Gardening. Then why the initial concern about pesticides, if the entire project is forbidden anyway?

3) Now, why Immediate Demolition? This is a genuine hardship (not everyone has a truck to haul stuff away and as pointed out already, the growing season is not even over by end Sept.! IF there is some kind of true emergency regarding the property, we deserve to know what it is.

There is quite a bit of nonsensicality - or opacity - in this order of things.

I have one more point here: which is that not that long ago, a major garden expansion was done, along the entire left side of the garden roadway. This involved extensive - rather brutal actually - removal of trees and shrubs and some fairly serious earth-moving by heavy equipment. What in heavens name did the state think of

that, I wonder? Did they approve it? Or did they not know about it? I cannot figure out a reasonable answer to this.

I am old; many of us are. I will not be starting over from scratch, it's just too expensive and too labor intensive. So this is not about my own future other than it is a very sad loss FOR my future. And we are all sad I know. I believe we deserve more...

Sincerely and respectfully,

Julia Gardiner

July 26, 2022

Stanley,

Thank you for your email and your generous offer.

CT DOT is required to sell property through a public bidding process. If for some reason, CT DOT seeks to sell without a bidding process it requires an act of the State Legislature. Wilton would need the approval of a town meeting to purchase. We would certainly like to have more permanent control over the property, but if successful would require a multi-year process. As such, we are focused on the immediate issue of an amendment to the current lease to allow for gardening.

Municipalities can request an act of the legislature to convey state-owned property to them at no cost. In 2017 or so, we worked with Representative Lavielle to request the 2.8 acre parcel used for DPW storage. Our request was not moved forward. The abutting parcel, which includes the community gardens and playing fields is 26.8 acres.

Thanks,
Lynne

Lynne A Vanderslice
First Selectwoman
Town of Wilton
203-563-0100

Thanks for keeping us all informed about conversations with Dot . Being a member of the garden club and have lived at 112 wild duck for many yrs. I for one would be interested in knowing whether the State would consider selling the property to the town- my foundation would consider making a substantial donation towards such an acquisition again thanks for your help

Greetings gardeners,

It appears as if the door with the State DOT on creating a lease allowing for community gardening is now open but we need to stay on top of this still. Please consider attending the

8/2 BoS mtg where you can voice your concerns during Public Comment. The zoom link is attached on top of agenda.

Thanks,
Joe

Latest from the town for folks who haven't seen the email:

Andy

July 26, 2022

Joe,

Thanks for the offer and your help. The discussions between CT DOT and the Town are primarily legal, which is why our attorney is handling them.

I'll reach out to you and the group if something different comes up.

Thanks,
Lynne

On Jul 26, 2022, at 2:38 PM, Joe Bear <joebear.gator@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Lynne,

Sure, I can pause my conversations with Melanie now that the Town is on a resolution track with DOT, but I am eager to stay close to the process given the way this has been handled and communicated to both the community gardeners and the public. If the Town or State need a resident point person to represent the Community Gardeners, I'm happy to volunteer for that position- I can share that with Melanie too.

At the end of the day Lynne, I'm thrilled and relieved we're now on a resolution track, despite what it took to get there. I hope you know I'm here to help, not to cause friction or impede the lease discussion process that has thankfully commenced.

Joe

Hi Adair,
Thanks for emailing. The following email was sent to gardeners on Monday.

I don't know about the other BOS members, but yes, I have eaten tomatoes directly from the vine, as I grow my own along with other vegetables and herbs.

Thanks,
Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter.

We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

I couldn't have been more surprised that you, seemingly without question, accepted the unreasonable notion that that community gardens would be eliminated.

We are in an environmental crisis and healthy, naturally grown food is one way we can help. Not only are there more nutrients in food grown locally without pesticides, but they taste better and have less environmental impact.

Have you never had your hands in the dirt, grown your own vegetables, eaten beans, raspberries, sun gold tomatoes directly from the plant?

If more people grew their own food, we would be a lot healthier and most likely there would be less obesity and a greater sense of well-being.

Sincerely,

Adair Garis

July 25

Hi Nick,
Thanks for emailing and for visiting Wilton.

There is a great deal of misinformation about the gardens, but a possible dog park is a new one.

Earlier today the following email was sent to the gardeners:

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take

several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter.

We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

Thanks,
Lynne

Lynne A Vanderslice
First Selectwoman
Town of Wilton

From: Nick Bonomo <nbonomo@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 9:45 PM
To: boardofselectmen
Subject: Allen's Meadow community gardens

Dear Board of Selectmen,

I am writing to support the continuation of the Community Gardens at Allen's Meadow.

I understand that the gardens are under threat of conversion to a dog park, perhaps due to a lease wording issue.

It is imperative that the community gardens at Allen's Meadow continue to exist as they have for 47 years.

As a naturalist, I know that these gardens are the epicenter of biodiversity in that complex, particularly in summer and autumn as those plantings and surrounding grasses and weeds produce flowers and seeds that are covered in insects and birds. In fact, the gardens at Allen's have become famous statewide for the wildlife that they attract. I am one of many hundreds of *non-Wilton residents* that have traveled to your town over the years SOLELY to visit these gardens at Allen's. When I am in town to visit the gardens, I patronize local businesses more often than not, as do many others. This impact on the local economy might not be very well known outside of certain circles, but it is very real.

If the issue does happen to be a leasing issue, please do whatever you can to fix this. Whether that means writing a new lease, or changing the wording of the existing lease, I do not know, as I am no expert in those matters. I am sure it can be done. But I do know that the destruction of community gardens in this particularly special location would hurt local biodiversity and small business.

Respectfully,

Nick Bonomo

Hi Lynne,

Thanks for the update and advocating on this matter.

I really believe this is important to many people. It's a symbol not just a garden. It brings people together.

Take care and good luck!

Sincerely
Kim Komacki

On Mon, Jul 25, 2022, 5:26 PM Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Hi Kim,

Earlier today, the following update was sent to the community gardeners.

Thanks,

Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter.

We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

From: k k <kckomac@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 7:52 PM

To: boardofselectmen

Subject: Allen's Meadow ... ?? Are you serious?

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Good day all.

I have read the 2 letters sent to Selectwoman Vanderslice and I am in shock that this is even a topic of discussion?

These gardens have offered hours of my own personal time walking through with amazement. The gardens bring peace, buzzing bees, birds and town folk together.

One of the letters bringing up older gardeners having to cease and potentially move their gardens bothers me to the core.

Some residents do not have yards that can afford gardening. It's a community garden! It a social activity and hobby that means alot to gardeners!

With all the difficult times with Covid, staying inside during a pandemic...etc, how can this be?

As stated, I am sure there is a solution within the boundaries of state and town to keep the gardens where they are and keep the residents that take PRIDE in their gardens and town.

Please take a look at the deterioration of communities around us? Do you want Wilton, CT USA to be another deterioration or stand strong and be the town that we are proud to reside?

Leave the gardens alone and focus on other agendas that make Wilton stronger!

Please.

Respectfully

Kim Komacki

Sarah,

Thank you for emailing. The following email was sent to the community gardeners earlier today.

Thanks,

Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter.

We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

From: Sarah bohrer <sarahbohrer@hotmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 5:08 PM

To: boardofselectmen

Subject: Community gardens

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Hello, I would like to voice my opinion that there should be a greater effort to have the community gardens remain at Allen's Meadows. These gardens mean so much to the gardeners, the visitors, and most importantly, the animals that share the ecosystem. What a waste of time and energy moving them would cause. Please fight harder to have the gardens remain where they are.

Thank you,

Dr Sarah Bohrer

Lynn,

Thanks for reaching out.

This is great news and I look forward to hearing the progress the town makes with the state.

I did not however receive the notification- which makes your email very much appreciated!

Wayne

On Jul 25, 2022, at 4:02 PM, Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Wayne,

This afternoon you should have received the following via the Google group and/or e-Trak.

Thanks,

Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter. We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

Lynne A Vanderslice
First Selectwoman
Town of Wilton
203-563-0100

From: Sen. Haskell, Will <Will.Haskell@cga.ct.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 12:14 AM
To: Wayne Gura <waynegura@gmail.com>
Cc: Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@WILTONCT.ORG>
Subject: Re: Allen's Meadows Community Gardens

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Hi Wayne,

Thank you so much for being in touch, and I apologize for the delayed reply. I was disappointed to learn about the Department of Transportation's policy and how it will impact the plots at Allen's Meadows. I know these are beloved gardens.

Last week, I spoke with First Selectwoman Vanderslice (cc'd here) about locations elsewhere in town where these gardens could be re-located. I was glad to hear that the Board of Selectmen is actively exploring alternatives.

I'm not certain that re-negotiating the terms of the lease is feasible at this point, but I always believe in working in tandem with partners on the municipal level. Since the town is the leasee, I will follow the lead of Town Hall in this matter. Should the Board of Selectmen seek my assistance at any point with the Department of Transportation, I will gladly lend a hand. Needless to say, I will continue to keep in close touch with my colleagues at Town Hall as this matter is discussed.

I hope that you and your family are finding ways to stay cool during this hot summer!

Best,

Will Haskell

From: Wayne Gura <waynegura@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2022 4:24 PM
To: Senator Haskell <Haskell@senatedems.ct.gov>
Subject: Allen's Meadows Community Gardens

First: Wayne

Last: Gura

Street: 51 Woodhill Rd

Town: Wilton

State: Ct

Zip: 06897

Phone: 2038341033

Email: waynegura@gmail.com

Subject: Allen's Meadows Community Gardens

Message: Hi Will,

Please review this article and let us know if you have any thoughts regarding how we change change the states mind.

Thanks

Wayne

<https://goodmorningwilton.com/state-puts-allens-meadow-community-gardens-on-notice/?fbclid=IwAR30D40TXP2V2COBytLqHssmj97ErXX6K6tbokuyRqtAkQ7XSzfWOvZbfrs&fs=e&s=cl>

Hi Lynne,

Thank you for your note and the update. This sounds encouraging. I appreciate your efforts on behalf of the gardeners.

Wendy

On Mon, Jul 25, 2022 at 4:03 PM Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Wendy,

This afternoon you should have received the following via the Google group or e-Trak.

Thanks,

Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter.

We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

Lynne A Vanderslice

From: Sen. Haskell, Will <Will.Haskell@cga.ct.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 12:13 AM
To: Wendy Woolf <wendywoolf7@gmail.com>
Cc: Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@WILTONCT.ORG>
Subject: Re: Allen's Meadows Garden Plots

Hi Wendy,

Thank you so much for being in touch, and I apologize for the delayed reply. I was disappointed to learn about the Department of Transportation's policy and how it will impact the plots at Allen's Meadows. I know these are beloved gardens.

Last week, I spoke with First Selectwoman Vanderslice (cc'd here) about locations elsewhere in town where these gardens could be re-located. I was glad to hear that the Board of Selectmen is actively exploring alternatives.

I'm not certain that re-negotiating the terms of the lease is feasible at this point, but I always believe in working in tandem with partners on the municipal level. Since the town is the leasee, I will follow the lead of Town Hall in this matter. Should the Board of Selectmen seek my assistance at any point with the Department of Transportation, I will

gladly lend a hand. Needless to say, I will continue to keep in close touch with my colleagues at Town Hall as this matter is discussed.

Best,

Will Haskell

From: Wendy Woolf <wendywoolf7@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2022 1:18 PM
To: Senator Haskell <Haskell@senatedems.ct.gov>
Subject: Allen's Meadows Garden Plots

First: Wendy

Last: Woolf

Street: [140 Cheesespring Rd](#)

Town: Wilton

State: Connecticut

Zip: 06897-2305

Phone: 2032164345

Email: wendywoolf7@gmail.com

Subject: Allen's Meadows Garden Plots

Message: Dear Senator Haskell,
I have heard from a fellow gardener that the State of Connecticut has demanded that the Town of Wilton close the Allen's Meadows garden plots despite these having been available to residents for years. I would like to understand how this can be? In a time when community based affordable activities are most needed and enhance the quality of life in

Fairfield County and Connecticut, this action is incomprehensible. Can you help us to amend the terms of the State lease?

Thank you,

Wendy Woolf

Gene

gleganza@gmail.com

On Mon, Jul 25, 2022 at 4:05 PM Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Gene,

Circling back as the following good news was shared with the community garden participants.

Thanks,

Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter.

We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

Lynne A Vanderslice

First Selectwoman

Town of Wilton

203-563-0100

From: Gene Leganza <gleganza@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 23, 2022 9:10 PM
To: Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@WILTONCT.ORG>
Subject: Re: Community Gardens

Hi Lynne --

Thanks so much for your rapid response; I continue to be very impressed by your responsiveness to local needs, including my -- a single resident's -- concerns.

Re your state dealings, honestly, I suspected as much about this issue. Of course you would deal with that first and of course state govt agencies are intractable. I think you have a lot of experience with that, which is why you so swiftly leapt to alternatives,

I'm wondering if there isn't some non-official effort us citizens can make that would embarrass the Lamont administration into stepping in. This is SO anti-environment, which should be a solid plank in the dem agenda (frankly as a Dem I've always been disappointed with that plank in all administrations).

Time is short; you've got to do what you've got to do; I'm thinking that the state-wide -- and possibly nation-wide -- press should hear of the incongruity here. I guess I'm assuming there's no other agenda here and the illogic of banning community gardens (and whatever you were facing with the NRWA trail) is what it is on the face of the state's argument. If there's more going on behind the scenes, then clearly I'm at too far a distance from that to figure out what's going on. In any event, the incongruity doesn't strike me as particularly odd for government activities at that level (I spent some time as a research analyst specializing in state government technology). Govt agencies do what they do, and they crank on in auto-mode -- but they are highly responsive to attention from lawyers, the press, federal, and state reps, not to mention the governor -- and I believe there's a route here for turning up the heat on the attention to this illogical mandate. I am in the early stages of discovering and exposing the inconsistent and wrong-headed thought behind this action and I think getting journalists involved in the discovery might help fight the illogic of it all.

No response to this necessary; in fact I suspect it may be beneficial to you to disassociate yourself from individual citizen's actions. However, any contacts you have that could help me make this policy/enforcement inconsistency public would be appreciated.

Gene Leganza

22 Belden Hill Ln
gleganza@gmail.com

On Sat, Jul 23, 2022 at 5:41 PM Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Hi Gene,

Thank you for your email.

Obviously the first thing we did when we received the notice was attempt to have gardening allowed. They were firmly opposed. The Good Morning Wilton article

didn't share all the information discussed in the meeting, including that the Town had already spent over 18 months attempting to change the similar CT DOT lease for the Norwalk River Valley trail and failed.

Community Gardens are on the August 2nd agenda. The following are three emails sent to the community gardens participants, which provide further details about our attempts and next steps.

Thanks,

Lynne

From: Gene Leganza <gleganza@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, July 23, 2022 12:49 PM

To: boardofselectmen

Subject: Community Gardens

To the BoS --

I am writing to voice alarm and concern about the article in GMW regarding the community gardens. The article stated that the lease with the state does not allow gardening (apparently a situation not unique to Wilton) and that the BoS was going to look for an alternate site for the gardens. My wife and I are regular visitors to Allen's Meadow, but we are neither involved in the sports activities there or gardeners -- it is simply the best natural area around for experiencing nature and looking at birds (yes we are birders). The gardens are an integral part of the ecosystem there -- it is usually the focal point of birders who travel from all over the state to Allen's Meadow as it is known as a key birding area.

While it is great that Ms. Vanderslice and the BoS would look to continue to provide community gardening space if the state will not allow it at Allen's, wouldn't the most expeditious solution be to negotiate new lease terms? I can't believe gardening itself violates the spirit of what the state intended when it created the lease in the first place, and if this is an issue in other state leases as the article states, a lease with terms that more accurately represent reasonable uses for the land would solve other communities' problems in addition to Wilton's. I understand this was listed as Option #1 in a detailed email from leading Wilton natural space advocate Joe Bear to the BoS recently on this issue. Why is the knee-jerk response one that puts the onus on Wilton and impacts the fragile ecosystem that remains at Allen's Meadow?

I strongly advocate that this issue be placed on the agenda for the upcoming 8/2 BoS meeting as I'm sure I'm not alone in wanting to hear details regarding the issues and options for this important issue. I have also sent a version of this email to First Selectwoman Lynn Vanderslice via the town's website.

Gene Leganza

'Steve & Beng Choo' via Wilton Community Garden <wilton-community-garden@googlegroups.com>

Reply all

Mon 7/25, 3:35 PM

wilton-community-garden@googlegroups.com

Proclamations

Thank you for your effort to save the community garden. I am clueless and didn't know how to approach this issue. Let me know how to support you and others who spoke up on our behalf.

Grateful heart,
Bengchoo

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 25, 2022, at 9:51 AM, Joe Bear <joebear.gator@gmail.com> wrote:

<https://goodmorningwilton.com/letters-relocating-wiltons-community-gardens-is-not-a-good-thing/>

Hi Jason,

If you and those on this thread are members of the Community Garden Google Group, you should have received the following email with good news of CT DOT's willingness to discuss allowing the gardens. Otherwise, you will receive the email through e-trak.

Thanks,
Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter.

We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

From: Jason Brandt <jasonbrandt16@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 1:09 PM

To: Vanderslice, Lynne

Cc: Pierce, Steve; Louise Washer; Christina Duncan; Jackie Algon; Tammy Thornton; elizabeth Craig; Lisa Stuart; Donna Merrill; boardofselectmen

Subject: Community Garden

Lynne,

I have been a Wilton resident on and off since 1970. I was born in Norwalk, raised on Salem Road and after college, spending years in different states I decided to move to Wilton with my wife Cynthia and raise my kids here. We reside on Kellogg and have done so since 2002.

I joined the community garden with two other families around 6 years ago. Like many of the letters you have received, it's been a great pass time, a passion, exercise, ways to give back to the community, live sustainably, lower my carbon footprint, teach my kids how to grow their own food, and now more than ever, save \$ on inflated groceries.

Like many have expressed, i am outraged, disappointed, confused that we who are trying to help the planet are being punished. Time, money, effort, emotion spent and now to what end? I won't go into ground already covered on how unfair this is, letters written have made that case beautifully. What I will spend time on is discussing options we as the town can act on on immediately.

First.

Ask for a town hall call with Wilton government, state officials and the gardening community. So we can all discuss what's a fact and what's not. All the back and forth cannot be good for maintaining a singular, linear account of the issues to solve.

Based on call - go down one of several paths.

1. Re-submit an amended lease with provisions that specifically mention gardening and ensure no pesticides are used. From communications with CT DOT, it seems that is totally fine and fairly easy to do
2. If some relocation needs to happen then do so with only the gardens that are on state land. This will only disrupt a portion of the gardens. Not all.
3. Delay September 26. What's the rush? Uur gardens are only maturing now and we get biggest yield between August and October. Rushing us out and then asking for more time and \$ to be spent by us to move our investment, kill our plants and clean is adding insult to injury. Not what this town stands for and not healthy to a sustainability movement.

Thank you
Jason Brandt

Melinda,
This afternoon, you should have received the following via the Google group and/or e-trak.

Thanks,
Lynne

Following today's discussions with CT DOT, I am very pleased to share CT DOT has advised they are open to discussions to allow gardening at the current location. The discussion may take several months, including throughout the fall. We are hopeful an arrangement will be made to allow the gardens to remain throughout the discussions.

Some of you have reached out directly to CT DOT personnel. From this point forward, please allow the Town's attorney to be the one voice on behalf of the Town on this matter. We will keep you advised and thank you for your continued patience.

The matter will be on the August 2nd agenda, though I expect it will only be to inform the BOS and the public of this update.

Lynne A Vanderslice
First Selectwoman
Town of Wilton
203-563-0100

From: Sen. Haskell, Will <Will.Haskell@cga.ct.gov>
Sent: Monday, July 25, 2022 12:27 AM
To: Melinda Weatherly <Weatherlymelinda@gmail.com>
Cc: Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@WILTONCT.ORG>
Subject: Re: DOT ban on community garden

Hi Melinda,

Thank you so much for being in touch, and I apologize for the delayed reply. As I mentioned to Gilbert, I was disappointed to learn about the Department of Transportation's policy and how it will impact the plots at Allen's Meadows. I know these are beloved gardens.

Last week, I spoke with First Selectwoman Vanderslice (cc'd here) about locations elsewhere in town where these gardens could be re-located. I was glad to hear that the Board of Selectmen is actively exploring alternatives. Should the state push back on the town's requested delay, I will certainly call the Commissioner myself.

I'm not certain that re-negotiating the terms of the lease is feasible at this point, but I always believe in working in tandem with partners on the municipal level. Since the town is the leasee, I will follow the lead of Town Hall in this matter. Should the Board of Selectmen seek my assistance at any point with the Department of Transportation, I will gladly lend a hand. Needless to say, I will continue to keep in close touch with my colleagues at Town Hall as this matter is discussed.

I hope to see you around Wilton, and I'll be sure to share any additional information I receive.

Best,

Will Haskell

From: Melinda Weatherly <Weatherlymelinda@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2022 2:05 PM
To: Senator Haskell <Haskell@senatedems.ct.gov>
Subject: DOT ban on community garden

First: Melinda

Last: Weatherly

Street: 45 Old Wagon Road

Town: Wilton

State: CT

Zip: 06897

Phone: 203 523 0947 203 856 7080

Email: Weatherlymelinda@gmail.com

Subject: DOT ban on community garden

Message: After 47 years, the DOT has suddenly determined that all traces of the Wilton community garden must be gone before the season is over. This asset to the community and bird/ area environment is not something that can be equitably replaced. People have spent decades improving the soils and the food and plants have been a benefit to many. This capricious, disrespectful treatment towards Wilton and its community gardeners by the DOT is not acceptable. We truly need your help now.

Sincerely,
Melinda Weatherly

July 22, 2022

Joe,

Thanks for the offer and your help. The discussions between CT DOT and the Town are primarily legal, which is why our attorney is handling them.

I'll reach out to you and the group if something different comes up.

Thanks,
Lynne

Hi Lynne,

Sure, I can pause my conversations with Melanie now that the Town is on a resolution track with DOT, but I am eager to stay close to the process given the way this has been handled and communicated to both the community gardeners and the public. If the Town or State need a resident point person to represent the Community Gardeners, I'm happy to volunteer for that position- I can share that with Melanie too.

At the end of the day Lynne, I'm thrilled and relieved we're now on a resolution track, despite what it took to get there. I hope you know I'm here to help, not to cause friction or impede the lease discussion process that has thankfully commenced.
Joe

Joe,
Thanks. As noted, this is who our attorney is speaking with today. We would all prefer the gardens stay where they are, so I don't understand either.

I'll have more after their discussions. Since Nick has the authority to negotiate on behalf of the Town, I'd ask that you hold off while Nick is in discussions.

Thanks,
Lynne

Good morning Lynne,
Thanks for your reply on a Sunday- I'm on the Cape with my family and am only getting to this now.

Her name is Melanie Fadoir who said that you may contact her (Melanie.Fadoir@ct.gov) and while one of her team members handles this case she is happy to be the main contact point; she also said that she has spoken with Town Attorney Nick Bamonte after she was not successful in reaching out to P&R. Furthermore, she wrote that the Town has NOT asked to renegotiate the lease, another seemingly contradiction of information I and many others would like to understand.

I've had a number of back and forths with her, she's firm

but helpful, and in one of them she sent me a form to initiate a new lease. I am not interested in dragging this matter through the mud, but I am determined to press on for a viable solution which to me seems all too obvious- what are the Town's objections with my Option 1 detailed in email below as DOT said that was possible (other towns have it) and went as far as sending me the lease form to start the process so doesn't that suggest to you they are willing to consider a new lease? Why aren't we then? And once initiated, I'm sure they'll relax any pressure on disassembling 47yrs of infrastructure.

Thanks,
Joe

Sent from my iPhone
Go GATORS!

"When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world".
-John Muir

On Jul 24, 2022, at 6:46 PM, Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Joe,
What is the name of the supervisor with whom you spoke?

Thanks,
Lynne

Good Sunday evening Lynne, and thank you for your reply- your responsiveness to the community is noted and greatly appreciated.

I suspect that with Google Groups if you're not a member of that email group you can't send/reply to it, which is perhaps why your Replies to All with the Group cc'd are getting bounced back?

In full transparency, I did my own due diligence because this means so much to me (and others obviously) and I needed to hear it firsthand so I called DOT and ended up speaking with a Supervisor on the case who apparently did the site visit 2 yrs ago and discovered the community gardens. My understanding based on what she shared with me (I'm certainly not a lease expert nor am I privy to all the pieces of this seemingly complicated puzzle) was that community gardening is absolutely allowed on state-leased land but under a lease that contains specific environmental language/restrictions allowing for it (i.e. no pesticides, etc)

so I am confused by the apparent contradictions. She will be sending me the names of towns who have a state lease permitting community gardens which I will forward to you- hopefully we can leverage their lease terms to help construct our own. To your comment below about initially trying to renegotiate the existing lease to no avail, was a new/separate lease, carved out just for the community gardens, requested and if so was that denied too? Why would the State not be amenable to working with us to construct an environmentally friendly lease for what is true passive recreation, not to mention an activity that also supports our native pollinators (important at the State level nowadays)? I refer to an email forwarded to us from a fellow resident about the State of Connecticut having announced an "Urban Green and Community Garden Grant Program"; while Wilton might not qualify it would suggest the State is sympathetic to community gardening and would want to work with our Town in creating a new lease specific for this use.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope we can find a way forward in working with the State to create a new lease for community gardens use at Allen's Meadow similar to what other towns have.

Respectfully,
Joe

Joe and all,
I'm sharing an email sent to Suzanne which addresses some of your points. I attempted to respond to the entire google group, but it was returned undeliverable.

As to renegotiating the lease, obviously the first thing we did was try to have gardening allowed. As I stated they were firm in their position.

I also previously shared, Wilton and the 4 other NRVT communities spent 18 months trying to change the NRVT lease. Even though we had the full support and advocacy of every elected senator and representative from the 5 towns, including the Majority Leader of the Senate, we couldn't get it changed. CT DOT would not back down and other agencies wouldn't pressure them to do so. Although it was stated and reported the matter was resolved it wasn't. There are sections of the NRVT in Wilton that will likely never be able to be built under the current lease terms.

Lynne

Good morning,

There are infinite reasons why the community gardens should remain at Allen's Meadow, and many residents throughout the community (not just community gardeners) have been expressing them passionately so I won't address those here. Instead, what I'd like to specifically address is how we can allow the gardens to remain at Allen's where they've been

for 47yrs. From what I've recently learned and otherwise understand, I believe there are at least 2 viable options to consider:

- Option 1- to continue with community gardening on the state-leased land at Allen's Meadow, the Town could either amend the current lease or *create a separate lease for this section of leased land that would need to include environmental language in compliance with the State's regulations (e.g. no pesticides, herbicides, and any other required stipulations)*. We have been led to believe that "digging" is not ok and is why community gardening on state-leased land at Allen's Meadow is no longer allowed when in fact "digging" into the soil to plant a tomato plant is perfectly OK in a community garden, it's the lease that needs to be modified (or a separate lease) as described above specifically for community gardening use. [Sidenote- if pesticides/herbicides are an issue on state-leased land, are ballfields 1-4 not chemically treated?]
- Option 2- as a good portion of the gardens is on Town land, rather than move the entire operation, why not keep the town-owned plots intact and create additional plots on existing town-owned land that abuts the gardens on the NW side of the invasive hedgerow? This is far more cost efficient as well- there is an onerous cost and inconvenience to gardeners to move all their infrastructure, perennial plants, stonework, etc. to a new location (mandating 2 months to do this is frankly presumptuous, inconsiderate, and offensive); the Town would also spend far more money developing a new site (incl adding irrigation) than they would adding more plots to the existing Allen's location.
- Option 3- if there is no ulterior motive (as was stated in yesterday's email blast) for such a sudden and hasty demand for exodus from Allen's Meadow, while far less than ideal why not at least leave the c. 50% of plots on town-owned land intact and search for a much smaller comparable site elsewhere in town for the other 50% on state-owned land? Another money saving suggestion. And, if the State is saying that gardening is not permitted under the existing lease agreement, why the rush to dismantle all the infrastructure to the ground- is it not the activity itself that conflicts with the terms of the current lease? I can't imagine there would be any objection to leaving infrastructure and perennial plants in place while a new site is being searched for, especially given the unreasonable timeline being asked of us.

I'd like to understand if either of the options described above (esp. 1 and 2) were considered and if so what the reasons were for not going ahead with either to allow a 47yr old town establishment to remain where it is? I'm also requesting that this topic be added to the next BoS's meeting on 8/2 so that the public can continue to voice their concerns on record.

The Pollinator Meadow project that I'm working on behind the community gardens, match-funded by Sustainable CT as you know, was not created in a vacuum as a stand alone habitat. It will enhance the existing biodiversity created by the confluence of different habitats at Allen's- fields, woods, woodland edges, watercourse, and especially the community gardens. They all

work differently but together provide a unique and invaluable web of life for birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife. As you know, I've been leading birding trips for various organizations at Allen's Meadow for decades and Allen's is known throughout the State and beyond as a magnet for birds, in large part due to the community gardens adding to the biodiversity of this town park. Birders throughout the Northeast (one from as far as Florida) descended upon Allen's in Oct when a very rare Harris's Sparrow that should have been in Texas decided to pay a visit. Allen's is written up in books and journals on "best birding locations in CT". The Sparrow Workshop I led there last Fall for CT Ornithological Association had the best results of any location in the entire state, in large part due to the presence of the community gardens and its adjoining habitats.

In closing, I'd also like to mention that there is no silver lining to gardeners vis a vis not having to deal with congestion during sporting events if the location is moved- it's quite the opposite actually. I can't tell you just how many soccer moms and dads (Wilton residents and out-of-townners alike) need a break from the action and walk the paths of the gardens marveling at its beauty, its butterflies, its birds, its tranquility, and they often are recipients of gardeners' generosity in way of cut flowers or produce. That is a real asset to the Town's image.

So I ask you, as many others have and will, please let's find a way to work within the State system to allow community gardening to remain at Allen's Meadow by considering either of the options mentioned above. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Joe Bear

Hi Lynne,

Thank you for your prompt response. I will share your feedback with our google group and look forward to learning more at the BOS meeting on 8/2.

Have a good weekend.

Suzanne

Suzanne Knutson
Sent from my iPad

On Jul 22, 2022, at 4:27 PM, Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Suzanne,

I replied all, but your google group came back as undeliverable. Please share.

Thanks,

Suzanne,

Thanks for emailing. We absolutely understand and agree this is upsetting, frustrating and appears illogical. As you wrote, much in state and municipal government moves slowly. Enforcement action is the one area that moves quickly.

The language provided in yesterday's email is directly taken from the letter we received.

As shared, our attorney is seeking an additional extension of time to comply. CT DOT controls a significant amount of property within the State and within Wilton. We deal with them on a number properties in addition to the land leased for Allen's Meadows and the NRVt.

There are currently 62, 20 x 25 plots on both the town and state-owned properties at Allen's Meadow. The plots are assigned to 46 individuals, either as single or double plots. In response to feedback received yesterday, we have begun the work to determine how many 20 x 25 plots we can house on the town-owned property at Allen's Meadow. There is an existing encumbrance on some of the land that individuals have assumed is available for expansion. We are revisiting the investigation of that encumbrance.

We expect to have our work completed for the August 2nd Board of Selectmen meeting and expect to have the related materials available to the public in advance of the meeting. Individuals can sign up to receive notices when the agenda and the materials are posted on this link. Under Meeting Agenda, check Board of Selectmen. <https://www.wiltonct.org/subscribe>

Thanks,
Lynne

Good Morning Lynne,

I'm sorry to be a bother, but I really feel the need to weigh in with my thoughts on the sudden and immediate removal of the community garden at Allens Meadow. I've had a plot there for the past 16 years. I've spent many enjoyable hours there, listening to the birdsong, quietly enjoying nature, and getting to know my fellow gardeners, so this affects me deeply and personally.

The reasons we have been given for our eviction really don't add up, which has contributed to the confusion and growing frustration amongst the gardeners. Please allow me to address each of the various and somewhat conflicting statements that have been made regarding the removal of the gardens.

We were told that the state said that "the gardens were illegally encroaching on state-owned property" and that "the lease only allowed for passive recreation and the storage of landscaping materials . . . and that community gardening was not allowed." I could easily make

the argument that gardening is a “passive recreation.” Frankly, it’s about as peaceful and passive as it gets, and ultimately highly beneficial to the environment. I also find it hard to believe that the lease specifically says, “Community gardening is not allowed.” Out of all the possible activities that the lease carves out as being prohibited, one of them is community gardening? I suspect that the specific language in the lease is being rephrased. I would like more transparency to know what exactly the lease says, because it’s pretty hard to imagine that someone would find gardening objectionable.

As for the state’s complaint that “we were charging a fee without compensating the State, which was a violation of the lease,” again I think there’s a simple solution: The town could raise the fee for the garden plots so that the state could get their cut. Certainly, that’s preferable to eliminating the gardens altogether, and I’m sure the state would welcome the additional income.

Pesticides and digging were also thrown out as possible objections to the gardens. In my opinion, these are all non-issues. All of us at the community garden pride ourselves on organic practices. It wouldn’t be a hardship at all for us to collectively pledge to refrain from using pesticides. As for digging, a garden hoe doesn’t go very deep. To my knowledge in its 47 years of existence, no gardener has ever dug up anything alarming – no drums of toxic materials, no caches of weapons, no dead bodies. I think it’s safe to say at this point that no unwanted surprises exist below the surface of that soil.

For what it’s worth, I’d like to point out that all of the aforementioned objections seem more like technical nonconformities that could easily be rewritten in a new lease rather than insurmountable deal breakers. I’m sure the town’s counsel could make a presentation to the state pointing out the many wonderful benefits of our community garden (we’d be happy to help pull that together), and then hammer out a new lease that would place the town in compliance.

In addition, I’d like to know why other alternatives weren’t considered before making the draconian decision to remove the gardens altogether. Aren’t some of the gardens on town-owned land? Couldn’t they stay and the others be moved to adjacent plots also on town-owned land? Surely, that would be far less expensive and disruptive for the gardeners and for the town than to find a new location elsewhere and get it plowed and set up with irrigation. I’d also like to understand how the September 26th evacuation date was determined. Did anyone take a look at the gardens before coming up with this date? Even a cursory peek would reveal that this isn’t possible. The growing season isn’t even over by then! Carrots, butternut squash, raspberries, tomatoes, brussels sprouts, corn, pumpkins and most flowers are still going strong by the end of September. We’ve all spent a lot of time and money planting up and caring for our gardens, and now we have to rip them out before they’re even done producing for the season?

As for the removal of the individual gardens, please bear in mind that they were established by each gardener over many years. Fencing, gates, irrigation systems, plant supports, stonework, garden tools, low tunnels, and raised wooden beds were brought in bit by bit over time. It will take several months and require the use of trucks to haul everything out. Most of us also have perennial plants and flowers that will need to be dug up and replanted elsewhere while we wait for the town to find a new location. Some of these plants can’t be dug up until they go into dormancy. For peonies, that’s in October, and for dahlia tubers it’s in mid-November.

Lastly, I hope the town understands the toll this will take on all of us, particularly our elderly gardeners. Most of them don't have the strength or energy they once had to re-establish their gardens, and they'll be reluctant to make the financial investment in their gardens all over again at this stage of their lives. This is a huge loss for them, and it shouldn't be taken lightly. Frankly, I'm very discouraged and disappointed right now. For the town to immediately order the removal of the gardens based on such flimsy and dubious objections by the state and promptly negotiate an unrealistic eviction date without input from any of the gardeners is really outrageous. I've seen first-hand how slowly the administrative process works here in town, so I find it disturbing how quickly the powers that be leapt into action and came to this unilateral decision at the expense of so many. Not only is it a heavy-handed approach with very bad optics, but it naturally raises eyebrows and has folks wondering if there isn't some sort of hidden agenda going on here.

I would like to ask that this issue be added to the next Board of Selectman's meeting on August 2nd so that the public can weigh in with their thoughts.

Thank you for your consideration.

Suzanne Knutson

Frank,

You will have to share with the Google group as it doesn't work when I hit reply all.

Yes, there will be public comment. We hold it at the start and end of our meetings.

Yes, we can put up all the emails with the agenda. I'll ask Jackie to start adding them on Monday.

Also, are all the 46 plot holders on your google group?

Thanks,

Lynne

thanks lynne for the info regarding august 2 BOS meeting. two things: will the agenda include a public comments section? can BOS include as part of the meeting record/materials the prior email communications from suzanne knutson, julia gardiner and joe bear? thank you! frank simone

Hi Lynne,

Thank you so much for the note. I want you to know how much I appreciate your efforts AND how I realize that there are only so many things that we might do or arguments we might make.

I also respect that this is just one of the many issues you and the town leavers face. For your time and attention I thank you - and wish you the best in navigating the challenges.

Thank you, and stay well -

Tom

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 24, 2022, at 7:54 PM, Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Hi Tom,

Sorry for the delay in responding. As it appears you are on the google group, you 1-likely have received the other emails from this weekend and 2-know when I reply all, I receive a reply with message not deliverable. Therefore you will need to share with the group if they are to see this prior to it being put up on the town website by my assistant during work hours.

Specific to this DEEP program, if you read the eligibility requirements, the gardens must be on property owned fee (simple) by the municipality, meaning direct ownership by the municipality.

Tonight another gardener shared they spoke with a woman at CT DOT on Friday, who indicated she has previously inspected the property. I have asked for the name. She shared with him that they have allowed gardening. We knew this, but understood from discussion this was not an option for the Allen's Meadow property.

I'm hoping the fact that she volunteered the information means there is a crack/change in their thinking. Our attorney is scheduled for a call tomorrow (Monday). We'll know more after that. Stay tuned.

Thanks,
Lynne

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 22, 2022, at 3:03 PM, Tom Fagan <thomas.m.fagan@gmail.com> wrote:

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Interesting that the State of Connecticut has announced a "Urban Green and Community Garden Grant Program". The deadline for submission is 9/30/2022.

The link is below, but you can also find via Google.

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/open_space/UGCG/2022-UGCG-Application.pdf

Eric,

Jackie will be putting all documents and, as requested by another resident, resident emails and responses on the town website. We'll send a link through the e-trak email system.

Lynne

Sent from my iPhone

On Jul 22, 2022, at 11:22 AM, Eric Fanwick <esf@fanwick.com> wrote:

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

My apologies for the reference. Normally I try to keep my anger in check. I was wrong to use that language.

That said, who is it at DOT that made the decision? Must I foia it to find out?

Eric

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

Eric Fanwick <esf@fanwick.com>

|

Fri 7/22, 11:22 AM

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

My apologies for the reference. Normally I try to keep my anger in check. I was wrong to use that language.

That said, who is it at DOT that made the decision? Must I foia it to find out?

Eric

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From: Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@WILTONCT.ORG>
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2022 11:15:59 AM
To: Eric Fanwick <esf@fanwick.com>
Subject: Re: Community garden

Eric,

Please don't interpret the fact that I don't refer to the CT DOT employees in a demeaning matter to mean that I'm not engaged.

Thanks,

Lynne

From: Eric Fanwick <esf@fanwick.com>
Sent: Friday, July 22, 2022 7:53 AM
To: Vanderslice, Lynne
Subject: Re: Community garden

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Lynne

Thank you for your prompt response on this issue.

I get that this is a headache you don't need as one I certainly don't need.

I'm on my phone so typing's not easy.

Excuse my French but as they say this is crap.

It's not DOT who's doing this but some pencil Pusher bureaucrat at Dot. So my question is simple who at dot made this decision? I can't imagine that it's the commissioner because it's too high up. And he's only an appoint to the office. And I can't believe it is the governor the only elected office in this chain, cuz he wouldn't want to anger voters in election year.

Also I can't believe after 45 years or so of the community garden that this is even an issue. I might see it if the state was going to build super 7 which was the intent of the land.

People have put their blood sweat and toil into this land and it borders on criminal that some bureaucrat at state would do this.

I hope you join the fight and we pushed the state to back down on this issue.

Eric

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From: Eric Fanwick
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2022 1:43:14 PM
To: Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@WILTONCT.ORG>
Subject: Community garden

Lynne,

What the heck is going on with the community garden? It's been there for decades and DOT now has a problem? Why didn't they say something two decades ago? I feel we are missing something here?

Personally between fencing and material to do the raised beds I'm in a lot of money.

Please get this fixed

Eric Fanwick

July 23

Hi Lynne,

Yes I did receive these and appreciate your correspondence with our group. Hoping we can find a good solution for this problem.

Thank you,

Leslie

Leslie A. Chambers

lacathome@optonline.net

(203)216-5640

On Jul 23, 2022, at 5:44 PM, Vanderslice, Lynne <Lynne.Vanderslice@wiltonct.org> wrote:

Hi Leslie,

Ross Tartell forwarded your email from Thursday. I wanted to make sure you received the two subsequently emails.

Thanks,

Lynne

From: Ross Tartell <ross@rosstartell.com>

Sent: Saturday, July 23, 2022 12:33 PM

To: Vanderslice, Lynne

Cc: Tartell, Ross

Subject: FW: Community Gardens Update

CAUTION: This email came from outside the Town network. Is it authentic? Don't click until you are sure.

Lynne,

Forwarding a note from Leslie Chambers to add to the ongoing discussion about the town gardens.

I let her know that the topic will be on the BOS agenda on August 2.

Best,

Ross

From: Leslie Chambers <lacathome@optonline.net>

Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2022 11:50 AM

To: Ross Tartell <ross@rosstartell.com>

Subject: Fwd: Community Gardens Update

Hi Ross

As you can imagine, this is a terrible blow to us community gardeners and we are all in shock. Many of us have been working these plots for over 20 years. I believe we need to meet with the Town to have a discussion about why this is happening now and the terrible impact it will have on us. The deadline is impossible, we will lose all of our crops that we have worked so hard to cultivate this spring and summer and plan to harvest in the fall, and many of us have perennials which will be destroyed. We need help!

Any advice?

Thanks so much!

Leslie

Leslie A. Chambers

lacathome@optonline.net

(203)216-5640

Begin forwarded message: