

Robyn Clifford

From: Barb and Roger Jobin <dixonjobin@mac.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 21, 2022 12:46 PM
To: Town Council
Subject: Fwd: Garden Plots at Robson Park

CAUTION: External Sender

Dear San Anselmo Town Council:

Please see the attached letter I sent to Danielle Mauk prior to the steering committee sessions for establishing the rules and bylaws for the community garden plots. I wasn't sure if you received the letters that were sent in July so I wanted to be sure you got ours before the meeting when you consider the proposed rules and bylaws that were drawn up.

While we were happy to learn that some design standards were included in the bylaws; specifically that gardeners were required to use wood to create their planting beds and anything higher than 3' would require design review, we were hoping that the fences surrounding the plots could be reviewed, standardized and improved upon as well.

At the August 16th Park and Rec meeting we learned that the bylaws included a clause for creating 10 new plots...5 of which were to be generated by sharing existing plots and 5 NEW plots were to be created from terraced space in the park. We were really concerned about this proposed expansion of the community garden space. Partly because it conflicts with future plans that the Friends of Robson have just raised funds for and partly because it reduces the space available for many San Anselmo residents to enjoy. Five plots equate to 500 square feet (if each plot is 10' x 10') and that area would just be enjoyed by five people. We understood the mission of the park to be for all San Anselmo residents and their children's enjoyment. Our recommendation is that all of the largest existing plots be shared to create new plots so that more people can garden within the same square footage as currently exists for garden plots. It's our understanding that most of the surrounding communities have much smaller plots for their gardeners than Robson Park has.

And lastly, we strongly recommend a member from Friends of Robson be added to the steering committee for the community garden plots so that both of those groups are in agreement when considering the best uses of the Robson Park.

Thank you for your consideration of these proposals.

Respectfully,
 Barb and Roger Jobin
 101 Magnolia Ave.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Barb and Roger Jobin <dixonjobin@mac.com>
Date: July 13, 2022 at 9:17:51 AM CDT
To: dmauk@townofsananselmo.org
Subject: Garden Plots at Robson Park

Dear Danielle:

I am a member of the Friends of Robson Committee and my husband and I own the property adjacent to the Park so we are highly invested in the Park both literally and figuratively. We have been concerned about the oversight of the gardeners plots so we are happy to learn that they will now be under the guidance of the Park and Rec Dept.

Occasionally something has shown up in a plot that causes us to say " they approved that?" until we learned there was no approval process or oversight for what each Gardener chose to do with their plots. And those occurrences are also somewhat counter productive to the efforts of FOR to beautify the Park. We are recommending that guidelines be established as to what each gardener is allowed to put in their plot. In a perfect world, these guidelines will be a consensus by both groups (gardeners and Park and Rec). Any variance beyond those guidelines should go before a design review process (as we had to do when we built our house). We hope the theme of those guidelines is "what meets the needs of the gardeners AND doesn't detract from the beauty of the park but in fact enhances it." Consistency of design elements is perhaps a good start.

It is in the interest of the gardeners and all of the people who enjoy the Park to be vigilant to its maintenance and preservation. We hope your guidelines adhere to the mission of its use and the commitment the Town made to the Robson Harrington Families when they accepted stewardship of the Park.

Please let us know how we might be better stewards too.
Thank you for your consideration,
Barb and Roger Jobin
101 Magnolia Ave.

Sent from my iPad

RECEIVED

JUL 06 REC'D

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO

Dear *Town of San Anselmo*

I am writing to address the new proposed by-laws suggestion that non-residents of San Anselmo be evicted from Robson-Harrington garden. I feel that this discriminates against two disadvantaged groups: low income renters, who cannot afford to buy a home in Marin County, and the elderly.

If you are a renter and wish to garden, you face a barrage of problems. The flat, sunny land needed to grow vegetables and flowers is at a premium in Marin, and the vast majority of rentals don't have it. If it exists, expensive infrastructure comes first, for the ever present deer and gophers; then irrigation and soil enhancement. This comes out of the renter's pocket, as landlords are not obligated to provide these luxuries, and if the renter has to move in a few years, well, too bad. Additionally, and this is a continued point throughout my letter, gardens take time, years, and commitment.

The proposed eviction affects 13 people, gardening in 10 of the 33 plots. All but 3 of these are retired, in their 70's and 80's. Most lived in San Anselmo when they joined the garden-some 10, 15, 30, 40 years ago. The steps, and distance from parking, are special problems, which most of us will not be able to keep up with indefinitely. On the other hand, the physical challenge of the terrain provides healthy exercise. There is a chance to grow food and flowers, and for many, a primary source of social interaction.

Many of us have served on the board for several years, and all have been conscientious with the upkeep of our own plots and general care of the park.

I am one of the 13. I am 73 years old, and my life has always been about plants. I had a landscaping company, a degree in horticulture, and worked at Sunnyside Nursery in San Anselmo as the bedding and vegetable buyer, tender, educator, for 27 years. I joined the Robson Harrington Garden about 12 years ago. Time moves on; the nursery closed, I retired, I had to move, and could not find another rental in San Anselmo; I now live nearby.

Over the years I have put thousands of dollars and countless hours enhancing and maintaining my plot here at Robson-Harrington. It's an easy one to find, just below the house, with the beautiful roses and perennials-about half flowers and half vegetables. I am diligent about its care, as it is a source of pride, and if feedback from people strolling by is to be believed, a source of pleasure for the community. I served 7 years on the garden board as "plot coordinator"-keeping the list of people who wished to join, gently encouraging those who were no longer actively participating to leave, and welcoming new members in the garden, until last year, when I stepped down.

I suggest that we non-residents be "grandpersoned" in, as opposed to being forced to vacate. The existing agreement, if I'm getting it straight, implies non residents were allowed if there weren't San Anselmo residents waiting. For the future list, I'd suggest residency at time of application, with leniency towards those who have been forced to relocate to another neighborhood....giving renters the same opportunity to garden as homeowners.



Thank you,
Luanna Helfman

415 320 9213

JUL 08 REC'D

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO

Alex Fineman, Steve Burdo, Eileen Burke, Ford Gteen, Brian Colbert.

Concerning the proposal to kick those of us who do not reside in San Anselmo out of Robson Community garden:

More than a third of us would be removed from our plots that we have worked so hard on, spent so much money on, and contributed to the communal space outside of our own plots. We are emotionally connected to the garden as well.

Other community gardens throughout the state have grandfathered in their existing "outsiders" and let them drop out through attrition. This seems the only fair plan. We have spent so much time, effort and money building our soil, weeding the communal areas to make the garden enjoyable for the many people who wander through.

The city might be surprised when they have to pay the money, do the planning, do the upkeep, etc. if they take over what we have successfully managed in a friendly, gentle manner between our own diligent members for the last however long the garden has been a community garden.

I think you are making a grave mistake.

*Martha Shaw
231 Frustuck Ave
Fairfax CA. 94930*

RECEIVED

JUL 13 REC'D

Gay Kagy
280 Redwood Road
San Anselmo, CA 94960

TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO

July 11, 2022

Michael Cerio, Chairman
San Anselmo Parks and Recreation

Re: Proposed Bylaws

The threat of evicting 13 members of the San Anselmo Community Garden has already provoked alarm and concern. If Parks and Recreation wishes to establish a congenial working relationship with the gardeners dropping the harmful retroactive residency requirement would be a good beginning.

Such a move would honor those experienced and dedicated seniors for their extended contributions to the benefit of the park. Some have spent most of their adult life (40 years) tending their plots, forming friendships, and advising visitors about gardening.

There are extensive areas within Robson Park that could be made available for garden plots. This would accommodate people waiting for openings and solve the issue of common areas maintenance.

Sincerely,


Gay Kagy

(415) 457-2168

Robyn Clifford

From: Nancy Biegel <nkbiegel@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 18, 2022 10:25 AM
To: Carla Kacmar
Subject: Robson gardens

CAUTION: External Sender

Dear Carla--

I called the town and as I understand it, you are the correct person to whom to send this email, before you pass it onto the town council for consideration. I wanted to weigh in on the Robson gardens before tomorrow's meeting. Please see my message below.

thanks so much,
 Nancy Kaplan-Biegel
 100 Woodland Avenue
 San Anselmo

Dear Town Council--

I wanted to weigh in on a decision that I believe the Town Council will make tomorrow night on the gardens in Robson. I've grew up in San Anselmo, and returned to raise my own family here. I have enjoyed Robson Park since I was about 8 years old, and it is one of my favorite spots in the world. I often refer to it as our own Garden of Eden because of all the amazing fruit trees, artichoke plants, and herbs that grow throughout the public part of the property. I am also inspired daily by the beautiful gardens people tend to so lovingly. It is about this that I wanted to share with you my opinion. From what I understand, those residents who acquired a garden when they were San Anselmo residents but who no longer live within San Anselmo proper may soon lose their gardens. This makes me incredibly sad, because I have seen some of these most long-term gardeners care so diligently about not just their own plots but the whole place. Despite living beyond our town limits, they are absolutely a part of our community, and I sincerely hope you will grandfather them into the ordinance. I completely understand the move to make sure the plots go to current San Anselmo residents from here on out. But please don't penalize those who have cared for the space and have contributed so much to this special place. It's the compassionate and right thing to do, and eventually, as they time out naturally, it will no longer even be an issue.

Thank you for your consideration,
 Nancy Kaplan-Biegel

p.s. On a related note, as someone who has walked and explored Robson for over 50 years, I want to tell you how much I value the unmanicured spaces on property. I remember how mysterious the space felt as a kid, a place to be explored, and I imagine kids feel the same today. In a world with so many tame and mapped out spaces now, this property has the right combination of manicured and unmanicured spaces. It's such a treasure. 😊

Robyn Clifford

From: Katie Rice Jones <katiericejones@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2022 4:11 PM
To: Town Council
Subject: Let's Re-Think Usage of Robson Harrington Park & Garden

CAUTION: External Sender

Dear Town Council,

It is time to re-think the usage of Robson Harrington Park & Garden.

As a San Anselmo resident and former Robson Afterschool parent, I think it is time to consider eliminating the garden at the Robson Harrington Park (RHP) location. The land the garden uses (approximately 25% of the park) should be absorbed and put to use for the greater good of our community.

Here is why:

1. Only 33 gardeners use 25% of RHP.
2. Almost 1/3 of the gardeners are not residents of San Anselmo.
3. Lot sizes are shrinking; more park space is needed.
- 4 More people will be moving into an already congested area; more park space is needed.
5. Garden-area aesthetic is unsightly and a hazard.
6. Water run-off from the gardens floods the lower-level park space, making that space unusable.

I request that you consider eliminating the garden and, through public and private fundraising, re-develop RHP for the greater good of our community.

Thank you,

Katie Rice Jones

Robyn Clifford

From: Marilee Shea <mcpadia@me.com>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2022 10:07 PM
To: Town Council
Subject: San Anselmo Community Garden @Robson

CAUTION: External Sender

Dear Council Members,

I'd like this email to remain private, as I am the fortunate recipient of some advocates of the town council and staff who helped me become a member of the community garden, and I do not want to put myself in the middle of conflict with the members of the community garden.

It's my understanding that the parks & rec commission and SACG are looking to amend the garden rules with the town and get them approved by council at tomorrow's meeting.

I believe that there should be a public vote or public discussion about (1) the state of the current garden and its perceived disarray (2) the proposal to create additional plots on to expand the garden footprint on Robson property (3) the "grandfathering" in of non San Anselmo residents.

My experience and observations over the past 5 years:

- It is a known fact that over the past several years, open plots have been assigned to friends of the existing community members who were able to skip the wait list. This, under the guise that if a person volunteered at the SACG "community day" they were automatically put to the top of the list. In fact, some of the plots were distributed to non-San Anselmo residents. The problem with this is that the so-called community days weren't advertised publicly, so if you didn't know somebody who told you about this loophole, you would be stuck on the wait list for, quite literally, years.
- The SACG is unwelcoming to new members. In fact, I personally was kicked out of the garden at one time, with no explanation of why. I share this experience with at least two new members, who have confided in me that others have been unkind.
- Many of the existing plots are in disarray and don't follow the current guidelines proposed by the SACG. Why should the SACG be permitted to expand plots on city land when the existing plots can't even be maintained in an orderly fashion?

In summary, I think that there should be a broader discussion about the state of the Robson garden. Why should San Anselmo residents pay taxes to maintain resources that aren't prioritizing residents? As inflation costs rise, I wonder how many of my neighbors in San Anselmo would enjoy growing their own vegetables, many of whom live in apartments? I can appreciate that it's difficult to turn away members of the garden, but I hope that if the garden is a personal priority, that they would consider residing in San Anselmo, and contributing to the community. Or, perhaps they can advocate for community gardens in their city or town.

Thanks for your time,
 Marilee Shea

Robyn Clifford

From: Laura Kaplanis <llcabcmom@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Monday, August 22, 2022 7:17 PM
To: Town Council
Subject: Robson Park

CAUTION: External Sender

Dear San Anselmo Town Council ~

As a supporter of Robson Park, we would like for the Town Council of San Anselmo to consider delaying your final decision on plans for the Robson Park Vegetable Gardens until members of the community have had a chance to voice concerns and/or offer suggestions.

We especially object to the proposal to expand the already oversized garden without input from those of us (town residents) who love Robson and want to make sure it is available for everyone to use.

*thank you,
Laura & John Kaplanis
247 Crescent Road
San Anselmo, CA 94960*

Robyn Clifford

From: Jamie Ginsberg <sonicallstar@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 11:05 AM
To: Town Council
Subject: In support of revising Robson To a smaller garden foot print limited to residents

CAUTION: External Sender

Town Council of San Anselmo,

I am writing to request that Robson Harrington Park have gardens limited to San Anselmo resident use and be fixed up so it is safe for the community to walk and use.

The park is community property and should be made available to all residents of San Anselmo equally.

If additional garden space is requested, please consider moving all of the gardens to Sorich, where there is plenty of room for gardening.

Sincerely,
Jamie Ginsberg
35 Berlin Ave.
San Anselmo, Ca 94960

Robyn Clifford

From: Eric Warner <ericwarner62@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 23, 2022 4:06 PM
To: Town Council
Cc: Jason Stoughton
Subject: community garden

CAUTION: External Sender

Dear Town Council,

I wanted to send a note regarding the community gardens at Robson. I am happy to hear that governance of the gardens will now be under Parks and Rec. For too long the gardening group - funded in part by taxpayer dollars - operated with little transparency. I commend the town in its efforts to adopt bylaws that reflect some best practices for the garden. **Unfortunately, I think the town fell short. As such, I don't think the town council should approve the expansion of the garden. Instead, the town council should reopen the bylaw discussion and include other interested parties that are currently not on the garden steering committee.**

Issues with the current bylaws and process:

- **Process:** there was no public input except from those involved with the garden. The town should have sought out others from the community who are not currently involved in the garden to weigh in. There was no objective outside voice included in these discussions.
 - from the staff report *"As a result, staff worked with the Parks and Recreation Commission and created a sub-committee consisting of two Commissioners, two representatives from the community garden's steering committee and one staff member."*
- **Non residents:** 10 of the 33 plots are operated by non residents- really???. In reading the staff report it is apparent that the "squeaky wheel" won the day. This park is funded by taxpayer dollars of SAN ANSELMO residents. Non residents should have to give up their plots when they leave. Staff acknowledges there is a waiting list, 30 of which are San Anselmo residents. These non-residents can sign up for a garden plot in their new towns. And the critique that renters would be left out is off base. Any resident who can show proof of residency could be allowed to participate.
 - from the staff report: *"There are 33 garden plots and 10 are held by non-residents. There are 40 people on the waiting list for garden plots, of which 30 are San Anselmo residents."*
- **Waiting list and term limits:** In reading some of the correspondence and speaking with residents, it appears that some gardeners have been there for decades and that the "old guard" can be inflexible and unwelcoming. When there is such strong demand for garden plots, the town should consider term limits for gardeners. No one has a right to control public property indefinitely. I would suggest 5-year terms (or some other agreed upon time period) to allow other residents to enjoy the gardens.

In addition to the changes to the existing bylaws as they are proposed, here are some other issues that should be included in the bylaws:

- **Derelict plots:** one only needs to walk through the gardens, which I do on a regular basis, to see that some plots are not being cared for. The town, with sufficient notification, should be able to re-assign these plots to others in the community on the waiting list. The area would look better and another resident of San Anselmo would be happy.
- **Garden plots at other parks:** it's not clear to me from looking at the website and reading the reports whether we have garden plots at some of the other parks in San Anselmo. If we don't this should be considered.
- **Water usage:** in a time when water conservation has become more important, I think there should be some consideration of how much water should be allocated to the benefit of so few people. A report of water usage for the gardens should be made public each year including the cost of the water and now it is paid for.

When we speak of community, whether is it about the garden or something else, the town must balance the interest of new residents with those that have been here for a long time. We must avoid the "I was here first" mentality of some and try to be more fair to all residents.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Respectfully,

Eric Warner
220 Crescent