

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM42.20	ACTION			Ward: 13
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Authorization to Release Section 37 (Planning Act) Funds to Enhance Community Safety and Engagement in the Moss Park Neighbourhood by supporting Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation (Building Roots) - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, recommends that:

1. City Council increase the 2022 Council Approved Operating Budget for Non-Program, on a one-time basis, by \$100,000.00 gross, \$0 net, fully funded by Section 37 (Planning Act Reserve Funds) from the development at 154 Front Street East, secured for local community improvements (Source Account XR3026-3701017) for transfer Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation so that they may undertake upgrades at Moss Park (Cost Centre NP2161).
2. City Council direct that the \$100,000.00 be forwarded to Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation upon the signing of an Undertaking by the Organization governing the use of the funds and the financial reporting requirements and the return of any durable assets which may be usable if the agency ceases its operations.
3. City Council direct that the release of Section 37 funds will be conditional to a lease agreement provided by Toronto Community Housing to Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation to authorize the use of the respective property.

Summary

This Motion seeks Council authority to release \$100,000.00 in Section 37 monies to fund Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation (Building Roots), a non-profit organization serving the downtown east community, specifically the Moss Park neighbourhood to enhance their capacity to promote programming aimed towards social cohesion and creating a safer environment in the community.

Starting in 2013 as a progressive grassroots social venture, Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation was initially founded in response to a lack of fresh food access and agricultural growing space across Toronto. Inadequate food systems are a severe consequence of larger systemic social issues within vulnerable and low- income communities. These issues have become even more glaring since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, Growing

Neighbourhoods Foundation had to shift their focus in response to these issues and began to build resources for social cohesion and co-create targeted development of community tools alongside the community.

Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation has consistently built community programming, food security and Toronto Community Housing tenant leadership at Moss Park for over six years. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization has increased their weekly engagement with local residents to over 250 per week at their Moss Park Market and outdoor animation event. In addition, the agency has adapted to provide community-oriented educational and arts programming virtually and through distribution of physical materials to over 500 households. To foster financial support, the organization has provided paid performance opportunities for over 65 local artists and performers primarily from equity seeking groups.

To enhance and continue building engagement in Moss Park, Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation understands the need for community infrastructure that responds to Toronto Community Housing tenants' expressed need for safe, visible and accessible community spaces at the Moss Park apartments. Currently, Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation is operating Canada's first ever year-round produce market operating out of a shipping container that offers a pay-what-you-can model for residents to access fresh and affordable groceries. Continuing on the theme of shipping container programming spaces, Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation is proposing to install a second shipping container that would serve as a Community Hub for the return of in-person workshops. To further continue building safe and accessible community spaces within Moss Park, Growing Neighbourhoods Foundation is also proposing additional seating and outdoor amenities to facilitate programming aimed towards community gathering with a focus on increased safety. This request would include one gazebo for year-round seating and performance space, two chess tables with seating, one concrete table tennis and two additional outdoor picnic benches, all of which would be located in the courtyard space beside the shipping container market.

The total cost of the proposal is \$100,000.00. To assist with the funding of the Building Root's vision to enhance safety and social cohesion in Moss Park, this Motion recommends that Section 37 funds from Ward 13, secured for local community improvements, be allocated to purchase an additional shipping container, one gazebo for year-round seating and performance space, two concrete chess tables with seating and one concrete table tennis.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM42.20