

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM6.36	ACTION			Ward: 12
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Requesting Accountability for the Destruction of the Community Garden at 133 Broadway Avenue - by Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Amber Morley

** Notice of this Motion has not been given. A two-thirds vote is required to waive notice.
* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.
* This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Amber Morley, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Ombudsman to:
 - a. investigate the destruction of the garden at 133 Broadway Avenue by Toronto Community Housing Corporation; and
 - b. provide recommendations that empower residents' creative animation of public and private space by encouraging City Staff to exercise discretion when enforcing regulations that support a collaborative and respectful approach with Torontonians.

Summary

For a decade, the garden Brian Gorrell created in front of his home at 133 Broadway Avenue was an oasis for his neighbours and all Midtown residents. The 2,400 square foot garden had flowers, hedges, a koi pond, and Gorrell's unique tchotchkes. The space has played host to Brian's wedding, barbeques, birthday parties, and served as a community focal point for the Toronto Community Housing residents of the Broadway building and the wider neighbourhood.

After Mr. Gorrell put in countless hours and \$20,000 of his own money, Toronto Community Housing officials decided to destroy the garden. They went beyond removing several items that were cited as a fire hazard, threw out every personal item and ripped up every tree and flower bed. This action was cruel and unnecessary treatment of a resident and amenity that brought so much joy to the neighbourhood.

This Motion requests the Ombudsman to investigate this incident to provide accountability to Mr. Gorrell and his neighbours, and provide recommendations to ensure that the City, and all its agencies, encourage creativity and animation of both public and private spaces.

Urgent consideration of this Motion is being requested as the community has been left without answers regarding the destruction of the garden and deserve open and honest transparency as to

how this situation transpired.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM6.36

(<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2023/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-236415.pdf>)