

FW: Stormwater fee exemption testimony

Paul Fugazzotto

Sent: Monday, November 21, 2016 1:59 PM

To: WATERINFO

Attachments: Stormwater exemp fee test~1.docx (16 KB)

From: cmpuppin@aol.com

Sent: Friday, November 18, 2016 5:52 PM

To: Gemela McClendon <Gemela.McClendon@Phila.gov>

Cc: jgreenberg@pennhort.org

Subject: Stormwater fee exemption testimony

Dear Ms. McClendon,

Attached please find the written testimony which I gave at this morning's Rate Board hearing.

Sincerely,

Carla Puppin

Bel Arbor Community Garden

November 18, 2016

Gemela N. McClendon, Deputy City Solicitor
City of Philadelphia Law Department
Economic Development and Investments Unit
One Parkway Building, 1515 Arch St., 15th Floor

Testimony Regarding Pending Stormwater Exemption fees for Community Gardens

Dear Ms. McClendon,

Bel Arbor Community Garden is located on the 1000 block of Kimball Street, one block north of Washington Avenue. The garden is permanently preserved under the Neighborhood Gardens Trust (NGT). Our gardeners' annual dues cover the purchase of tools, plants, and other gardening materials, as well as the costs of actual water use. Should we be required to also pay the stormwater fees, we would need to raise our dues 100%. We want to be able to make our garden dues affordable to all who are currently in the garden and to any future gardeners, and such an increase could pose a real burden.

Our garden consists of 23 individual plots, and several communal areas, including a small orchard area, a small wildflower/perennial grasses area, two permeable bricked gathering areas, and a berm planted with trees. About 45 people of all ages are involved and we have enjoyed watching each other's children grow up over the course of the twenty years since we started the garden. We participate in the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's City Harvest program, whereby we dedicate one plot to growing vegetables that we donate to Ready, Willing, and Able here in our neighborhood. Our garden is a green, productive space in the midst of a densely developed and paved- over neighborhood.

Bel Arbor Community Garden covers 13, 500 sq. ft., all of it permeable surface that provides superb stormwater absorption on site. Had we not been able to preserve the garden when we did in 1999, we know for a fact that much of it would have been paved over for an impermeable surface of an asphalt parking lot for the adjacent CVS, or for an equally impervious surface of townhomes.

All community gardens are great stormwater retention and management surfaces. We gardeners don't work on concrete or asphalt, we work in soil. Please put into place a 100% stormwater charge exemption for approved community gardens so that our gardens remain affordable for all.

Sincerely,

Carla Puppin

For the Bel Arbor Community Gardeners

