



Office of the Town Manager
Christopher Martino

STAFF REPORT

Warrenton Town Council
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Michele O'Halloran, Ward 4
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

Council Meeting Date: March 10, 2026
Agenda Title: Master Gardener's Community Garden Request
Requested Action: Approve Lease Agreement
Department / Agency Lead: Parks and Recreation
Staff Lead: Kelly Koernig

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff requests Town Council approval of a lease agreement between the Town of Warrenton and the Master Gardener Association of Fauquier and Rappahannock Counties for the establishment and operation of a community garden on approximately 6,600 square feet of Town-owned property at the Warrenton Sports Complex.

The proposed lease allows the Master Gardeners to develop, operate, and maintain the garden for a three-year term with renewal options. The agreement assigns all operational, maintenance, and improvement responsibilities to the Master Gardeners and limits Town liability and fiscal impact. The garden will provide a passive recreational and educational amenity for residents.

BACKGROUND

The Master Gardener Association, a nonprofit organization focused on horticultural education and sustainable gardening practices, has requested use of a portion of the Warrenton Sports Complex property for a community garden.

The proposed garden will:

- Provide individual and/or shared garden plots for community members
- Support educational programming and volunteer engagement
- Activate a defined area of Town property for passive recreational use

The lease clearly defines permitted uses, site limitations, operational responsibilities, environmental protections, and insurance requirements.

Key lease provisions include:

- Use limited solely to a community garden
- Lessee responsible for all installation, operations, utilities, and maintenance
- Compliance with nutrient management, environmental, and safety standards
- Required insurance and indemnification of the Town
- Removal of improvements and restoration of the site upon lease termination

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommend approval of the lease agreement with the Master Gardener Association.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

This partnership:

- Provides a new passive recreational and educational opportunity
- Utilizes volunteers for installation and ongoing management
- Requires minimal Town staff involvement
- Includes environmental safeguards and clear operational standards
- Protects the Town through insurance and indemnification provisions

The lease structure ensures the Town retains oversight and access while assigning day-to-day responsibilities to the Master Gardeners.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

The proposed community garden is consistent with Warrenton Plan 2040, including:

- P-1.2 Incorporate green infrastructure and low impact development into new open space and park development and improvements to existing open spaces.
- P-2.1 Provide a dynamic system of safe, interconnected spaces for a variety of public uses that promote healthy, active, recreational activities in spaces throughout the Town. These spaces will reflect the culture, ecology, and natural environment of Warrenton.
- P-2.2 Recognize that the visitor experience in open space parks is paramount, regardless of the size of the land. The Town will ensure equitable consideration will be given throughout the Town for passive and active amenities.
- P-2.6 Promote and support community gardens that will be managed by committed community groups, such as schools, clubs, and neighborhoods.

Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact to the Town is minimal:

- The lease rate is \$1.00 per year
- All garden installation, materials, utilities, and maintenance are the responsibility of the Master Gardeners
- No Town capital expenditures are proposed
- Staff time will be limited to administrative coordination and periodic site oversight

This represents a cost-effective expansion of passive recreation through a volunteer partnership.

Legal Impact

The lease has been drafted in coordination with the Town Attorney. Council approval is required to authorize execution of the lease.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Lease Agreement