

# West Laramie residents express support for community garden in Kiwanis Park

By EVE NEWMAN

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A new community garden could be in the works at Kiwanis Park.

A group called Feeding Laramie Valley is leading the push to have a community garden installed in Kiwanis Park.

Several meetings were recently organized to solicit ideas from nearby residents. The group is in the process of preparing a proposal they plan to present to the city of Laramie for approval.

During a meeting Monday evening, attendees debated possible locations and gave comments about layout and fencing options.

They also discussed the perils of gardening in West Laramie — frequent wind from the west and hungry animals such as deer and rabbits — and considered ways to protect the garden, such as building wind blocks and installing high fencing.

The garden could be modeled after one in LaBonte Park near Shields Street, which opened in 2010. It offers individual plots available to local gardeners. Those without yard space of their own for gardening can also garden at Greenhill Cemetery.

There's usually a waiting list of people wanting a garden plot, said David Schott, city parks manager. "Those are very well received and very popular," he said. "The idea is very well supported."

Those at the planning meeting offered various reasons for their support of another community garden. Several said they lived nearby and would use a garden at Kiwanis Park. Others supported the idea of community gardens in general and wanted to see more of them in Laramie.

Cody DeBoer, a University of Wyoming student, said he enjoys gardening but doesn't have much room for it in the trailer park where he lives.

The West Laramie resident said he primarily travels by bicycle and would appreciate access to a



## Group to propose community garden in Kiwanis Park

A group of West Laramie residents is working on a proposal for a new community garden in Kiwanis Park, similar to the one in LaBonte Park. JEREMY MARTIN/Boomerang photographer

garden near his home.

He currently has a small raised bed in his yard he hopes to expand.

“It’s getting bigger, slowly,” he said.

Gayle Woodsum, founder of Feeding Laramie Valley, said support was strong for a new garden in West Laramie.

“West Laramie was the place that people were really interested in having the next garden be located,” she said.

Feeding Laramie Valley is ready to put together a formal proposal to present to the Parks, Trees and Recreation Advisory Board, Woodsum said. If approved, the plan would go before Laramie City Council.

Some funding is already in place, Woodsum said, and Feeding Laramie Valley will likely receive donations or volunteer labor.

The group plans to solicit more funding once it has information about specific requirements from the city council, Woodsum said. For example, the garden should be required to have paved walkways and other wheelchair-accessible elements.

Funding for community gardens is available from local and statewide organizations, she said.

If all goes well, construction could begin this summer, with gardeners possibly breaking ground next spring.