

## First allotment of Fairhope community garden plots reserved

*Fairhope Environmental Advisory Board*

**By Mike Odom, Staff Writer**

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FAIRHOPE, Ala. - All 20 plots of the city's first community garden have been applied for, said Elaine Snyder-Conn, of the Local Food Production Initiative, at Wednesday's Fairhope Environmental Advisory Board meeting.

"There has also been the donation of one plot for a needy family," she said, adding the group is seeking help to identify that family.

The official opening of the community garden, where individuals care for their own raised bed garden beds, is planned for Saturday, Sept. 25, at Homestead Village, said Snyder-Conn, who helped lead the effort to establish the city's first community garden.

"Hopefully next spring we'll have a second garden," she said about a planned site behind the Fairhope K Center.

The city has contributed \$6,900 for preparation of that site, she said, but several issues remain before construction can begin.

During the next two weeks, the LFPI will be completing preparation of the Homestead Village site, including digging irrigation trenches, and volunteers are being sought to assist in that work, Snyder-Conn said.

Together with the Master Gardeners of Baldwin County, LFPI helped build a smaller "youth garden" at the Fairhope Rotary Youth Club this year and developed a gardening curriculum for elementary school students. The garden was planted on Earth Day this year.

For information about the Fairhope community garden and LFPI, visit the nonprofit group's website at [www.gulfcoastlocalfood.org](http://www.gulfcoastlocalfood.org), where a "Directory of Local Food Sources for Baldwin County" can be downloaded.

In other business, the advisory board:

- Heard a presentation from a representative for Florida-based Wise Gas Inc. about compressed natural gas (CNG) and the feasibility of transitioning the city's fleet of vehicles from gasoline and diesel to CNG.

"This is something the mayor is very interested in," said Jim Horner, FEAB chairman, after the Wednesday meeting. "The city's (gas department superintendent) gave (the representative) a list of all city vehicles so he could help us explore some of our options." That information, including the cost of the various approaches, would be provided to the mayor, he said.

- Encouraged its members and the general public to attend the first meeting of the Baldwin County Watershed Coalition.

"The meeting will discuss why the coalition is necessary and what the benefits of it will be," Horner said. "You might be hearing some bad press about this, but there's a lot of misinformation out there. This is an important effort."

The BCWC meeting is from 9- 11 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 16, at the County Central Annex at 22251 Palmer Ave. in Robertsdale.