

From the Executive Director of Parks requesting authorization to enter into a Lease Agreement and a Development Agreement between Milwaukee County Parks and the Milwaukee Domes Alliance to support the revitalization of the Mitchell Park Domes, by recommending adoption of the following:

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Mitchell Park, located at 524 West Layton Boulevard, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53215, was established as a Milwaukee County (the County) park in 1890, and in 1967, a horticultural conservatory consisting of three beehive-shaped, conoidal, glass domes opened to the public, replacing a prior greenhouse structure constructed in 1898, and the conservatory, as subsequently expanded, is known as the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, or the Domes (the Domes); and

WHEREAS, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture (DPRC) has operated and managed the Domes as a living plant museum since its 1967 opening, including caring for the over-1,800 plant species housed in the Domes; and

WHEREAS, the Milwaukee Domes Alliance (MDA), formerly known as Friends of the Domes, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, privately-funded organization established in 1989, whose mission is to provide inspirational experiences at the Domes that restore connections to nature and community, and the MDA has provided financial and programmatic support to the Domes since its inception, operating at the Domes pursuant to the Agreement between the MDA and the County dated December 13, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Domes have experienced structural deterioration that has threatened the County's ability to safely operate the Domes, and the County is unable to fully cover the cost to repair and reconstruct the Domes to ensure their continued operation into the future; and

WHEREAS, the MDA has worked closely with the County to create a plan for the historic restoration and rehabilitation of the Domes and surrounding facilities, to be implemented and carried out by the MDA, known as the Domes Reimagined Plan (the Plan), as more fully described in File No. 24-723; and

WHEREAS, on November 7, 2024, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board) approved 2025 Adopted Budget Amendment 06, codifying a \$30,000,000 commitment (the County Capital Contribution) to be paid over six years to the MDA in support of the Plan, authorizing the County to negotiate a long-term Lease Agreement with the MDA, which would transfer operational control of the Domes to the MDA; and

WHEREAS, on July 24, 2025, the County Board approved the County Capital Contribution to be paid over six years to the MDA in support of the Plan, and that approval was contingent upon further approval of a Lease Agreement with the MDA, which would transfer operational control of the Domes to the MDA, and a Development Agreement, which would govern the project; and

WHEREAS, the County and the MDA have diligently negotiated a long-term Lease Agreement and Development Agreement to govern the transfer of the Domes to MDA, outline considerations for the County Capital Contribution, and all other aspects of the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Committee on Parks and Culture, at its meeting of September 2, 2025, recommended adoption of File No. 25-553 (vote 6-0); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board) hereby approves the Development Agreement and Lease Agreement between the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture (DPRC) and the Milwaukee Domes Alliance (MDA), for the rehabilitation and improvement of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, and transfer of obligations and responsibilities from Milwaukee County to the MDA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the County Board authorizes the DPRC, Department of Administrative Services, Office of the Comptroller, Office of Strategy, Budget, and Performance, and Office of Corporation Counsel to execute any contracts and/or documents necessary to complete the project in support of the intent of this resolution.

kae
09/02/25

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