

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE  
Inter-Office Communication

Date: August 15, 2025

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

From: Celia Benton, Director, Milwaukee County Economic Development

Subject: From the Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services, providing an update on the disposition of the Charles Allis Art Museum and Collection

File Type: Informational Report

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**REQUEST**

From the Economic Development Director, Department of Administrative Services, an informational report providing an update on the disposition of the Charles Allis Art Museum and Collection.

**POLICY**

Per Wisconsin Statutes, 2013 Act 14 and 2015 Act 55, full County Board review is required for certain contracts exceeding \$300,000, and for any multi-year budget contract.

Wis. Stat. § 66.1111 outlines requirements for a political subdivision’s ownership, use and disposition of property. If the County conveys historic property, Wis. Stat. § 66.1111 applies and the County “shall obtain a conservation easement under s. 700.40 to protect the historic character and qualities of the property.”

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances Chapter 13 requires that “all county department and agency heads in interacting with private support organizations (friends groups) formed to provide financial support and volunteer services for an activity of the county or any of its departments or agencies” shall enter into a written agreement with said groups.

Wisconsin State Statutes:	Wis. Stat. § 66.1111, 2013 Act 14 and 2015 Act 55
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	Chapter 13
Specific Adopted Budget:	2024
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	39
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

**BACKGROUND**

The Charles Allis Art Museum and the Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum were

operated by the nonprofit, Charles Allis and Villa Terrace Museums, Inc., from 2012 until 2024 (the entity is now known as Charles Allis Art Museum (CAAM)). Previously, the museums had been under the umbrella corporation, Milwaukee County War Memorial, Inc. Both the buildings and art collections are owned by Milwaukee County.

CAAM and Villa Terrace Museum & Gardens (VTMG) (formerly Friends of Villa Terrace), and County negotiated the provisions of a term sheet, which was adopted in County Board File No. 24-940, and which contemplates the transfer of the Charles Allis Art Museum and collection to CAAM and the transfer of the Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum and collection to VTMG with both entities continuing to operate the buildings in part as museums. The museums are now entirely separate with VTMG operating the Villa Terrace and CAAM operating The Allis.

In July 2025, an update was provided on the progress of implementing the term sheet (File No. 25-466). At that time, the Parks Committee requested a follow-up report on the Charles Allis Art Museum’s (CAAM) progress toward meeting the following milestones by August 31, 2025:

- Hiring an Executive Director
- Securing a minimum of eight active Board members
- Establishing a clear governance and operational structure
- Developing a revised business plan with defined fundraising and revenue targets, along with key performance indicators
- Outlining a preliminary capital improvement plan
- Reporting on public programming and use metrics

CAAM has made substantial progress and is on track to meet or exceed all requirements by the August 31 deadline.

The attached letter from the Charles Allis Art Museum Board Chair, Marquayla Ellison, describes their progress in meeting the August 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

Related File No’s:	<a href="#">23-889</a> , <a href="#">24-470</a> , <a href="#">24-767</a> , <a href="#">24-940</a> , <a href="#">25-466</a>
Associated File No’s (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

**ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):  
3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability

**FISCAL EFFECT**

N/A

**TERMS**

N/A

**VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES**

Marquayla Ellison, CAAM Board President, [quay@elasticdesigns.com](mailto:quay@elasticdesigns.com)  
Erica Goblet, ED Project Manager, [erica.goblet@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:erica.goblet@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

**PREPARED BY:**

Erica Goblet, Project Manager, Milwaukee County Economic Development

**APPROVED BY:**

Celia Benton, Director, Milwaukee County Economic Development

*Celia Benton*

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**ATTACHMENTS:**

Letter from the Charles Allis Art Museum Board Chair

CC: David Crowley, County Executive  
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office  
Sheldon A. Wasserman, Supervisor District 3, PEEC Chair  
Steven Shea, Supervisor District 8, PEEC Vice Chair  
Felesia A. Martin, Supervisor District 7, PEEC Member  
Juan Miguel Martinez, Supervisor District 12, PEEC Member  
Steve F. Taylor, Supervisor District 17, PEEC Member  
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk  
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services  
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS  
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS  
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office  
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office  
Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk  
Ciara Miller, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller  
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB