



March Board Cycle

Milwaukee County Parks
9480 Watertown Plank Rd.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
(414) 257-PARK

Date: February 6, 2019
To: Theodore Lipscomb, Sr., Chairman, County Board of Supervisors
From: Guy Smith, CPRP, Parks Director
Subject: **Authorization to enter into an Option to Purchase and a Lease Agreement with the Urban Ecology Center to enable a long-term project in Washington Park (ACTION)**

Issue

Milwaukee County Parks respectfully requests authorization to enter into a lease agreement for certain land within Washington Park and an Option to Purchase agreement for the existing boat house structure in Washington Park with the Urban Ecology Center pursuant to County Board Resolution (File No. 18-495).

Background

The Urban Ecology Center (UEC) is a 501(c)3 non-profit formed in 1991 whose mission is to foster ecological understanding as inspiration for change, neighborhood by neighborhood, by providing outdoor science education; by protecting and using public natural areas; by preserving these areas and making them safe, accessible, and vibrant; by promoting community through offering resources that support learning, volunteerism, stewardship, recreation, and camaraderie; and by practicing and modelling environmentally responsible behaviors.

UEC has leased the Washington Park Boathouse from Milwaukee County since 2007 and has developed and operated educational, recreational, land stewardship, and community serving programs in the park. The Washington Park branch of UEC focuses on the neighborhood on the north and east of the park which is plagued by high crime rates, low employment, poor graduation rates, and other impacts of poverty. UEC seeks to work in urban neighborhoods that have been underserved by environmental educational programming such as Milwaukee's Washington Park.

UEC and the County have been in negotiations to expand UEC's presence in the park and sustain their commitment over the long term. UEC's current lease agreement from 2013 (File No. 13-841) allows for "UEC to raise the more substantial capital funds necessary to support major improvements... that would be undertaken in connection with a long-term lease for at least 25 years which the Parties contemplate negotiation..." The 2013 lease is scheduled to expire this year



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and does not adequately address the planned new investment of UEC. The Option to Purchase agreement and new Lease fulfills the long-term plan intended by the 2013 lease.

Milwaukee County Parks provided an informational report to the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors in the May 2018 cycle that described the proposed project (File No. 18-318). In the July 2018 cycle, Milwaukee County Parks provided an action item to the County Board to pursue an Option to Purchase and Lease Agreement with UEC and at that time the County Board preliminarily approved the Term Sheet (File No. 18-495), provided that Milwaukee County Parks bring the final Option to Purchase and Lease Agreement back to the County Board for approval. UEC and Milwaukee County Parks, in consultation with Corporation Counsel, Audit, and the Comptroller, have worked diligently to provide these final documents to the County Board with this report.

Proposal

Parks proposes to enter into a long-term agreement with the UEC in order to expand the programming and improve the facilities within Washington Park. In order to do that, the following agreements are necessary:

Lease Agreement

A new long-term lease is required as the current lease is expiring and does not adequately capture the relationship between the County and UEC with regard to the new improvements. The lease is for 25 years with two 25 year extensions. UEC is required to operate the new facility in support of its non-profit use and educational, environmental, recreational scientific, research, community, and land stewardship programs. UEC is required to maintain the building and is required to establish a maintenance reserve fund for the maintenance and repair of the structure. The lease requires that the new structure is to be a public facility and allow for public access.

Option to Purchase Agreement for boat house

An Option to Purchase Agreement is needed to enable the UEC to fund and construct the new building utilizing the existing boat house structure. The Option to Purchase only applies to the structure and the fixtures within it, and does not include the sale of any parkland. The purchase price is \$1 and the structure is sold "as is." UEC will be required to build new public restrooms as part of the new building.

Fundraising Agreement

It is anticipated that the new building will cost over \$12 million to design, build, and construct. In addition, the agreement includes approximately \$2 million worth of other public infrastructure in the park that is in or adjacent to the new building including a new parking lot, new lighting, new sidewalks, repairs to the pedestrian bridges over the lagoon, new public restrooms, and rehab of the lagoon. In order to fund this project, UEC will lead a fund development campaign and Milwaukee County will support them. The Memorandum of Understanding defines the roles and responsibilities of that fundraising campaign.



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Recommendation

Parks respectfully requests authorization to enter into a lease agreement for certain land within Washington Park and an Option to Purchase agreement for the existing boat house structure in Washington Park with the Urban Ecology Center.

Prepared By: Erica Hayden, Contracts Manager, Milwaukee County Parks

Approved By: Guy Smith, CPRP, Parks Director



Attachments

- Attachment 1 – Resolution
- Attachment 2 – Fiscal Note
- Attachment 3 – Lease
- Attachment 4 – Operating Agreement
- Attachment 5 – Memorandum of Understanding

Copy

- Chris Abele, County Executive
- Raisa Koltun, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
- Jason Haas, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 14
- Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 3
- Marcelia Nicholson, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 5
- Felesia Martin, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 7
- Steven Shea, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 8
- Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board of Supervisors
- Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
- Emily Peterson, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
- Jeremy Lucas, Fiscal Mgt. Analyst, Admin & Fiscal Affairs/DAS



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