

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: December 28, 2023

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

From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks

Subject: From the Executive Director of Milwaukee of County Parks, requesting authorization to enter into Agricultural Lease Agreements for the benefit of Milwaukee County land

File Type: Action Report

REQUEST

Milwaukee County Parks requests authorization to enter into Agricultural Lease Agreements with individual farmers for the benefit of Milwaukee County land.

POLICY

§ 59.17(2)(b)3., Wis. Stats., states that the “county board may continue to exercise the authority under s. 59.52(6) with regard to land that is zoned as a park...”. In the law of property, authority over “land” includes authority over all rights appurtenant to the land.

Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances 56.10 requires that leases over one year require County Board approval.

Wisconsin State Statutes:	§ 59.17(2)(b)3
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	56.10 - Procedures for leasing of county-owned land or building space
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County Parks manages 708 acres of agricultural land for the purpose of growing and harvesting agricultural row-crops, vegetable crops, and hay. The agricultural lands held by the county are located within designated primary environmental corridors as defined by Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC). A primary environmental corridor is defined as “concentrations of significant natural resources at least 400 acres in area, at least two miles in length, and at least 200 feet in width.” The majority of these sites

are located along the Oak Creek, Ryan Creek, and Root River and are prone to high water tables or seasonal flooding. In addition, keeping these lands in production deters invasive plant species from overtaking the land.

Milwaukee County Parks leases this land to both farmers and non-profit community-based organizations. Each lessee is responsible for working with Milwaukee County Parks on the development of a Conservation Plan specific to their parcel(s) to reduce soil loss, achieve water quality goals, and protect the natural resource base. Milwaukee County Parks' Natural Areas section manages all agricultural leases for the department.

The term of each lease is selected based on factors such as the conservation method, the crop rotation cycle, and the likelihood that the parcel may cease to be available for farming. Rent payments vary due to the size of the parcel and were developed based on United States Department of Agriculture and State of Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection fair market value rates for southeastern Wisconsin. Leases are subject to Milwaukee County's Agricultural Land Lease Policy as adopted by the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors on September 29, 1994, and revised in January 2010, and again in January 2020.

Related File No's:	22-1105, 21-1038, 21-88 , 20-864 , 19-896 , 19-888 , 16-574 , 15-767
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 by providing revenue that supports Milwaukee County Parks as well as ensuring the overall health of the County's natural areas by reducing invasive species and soil loss.

FISCAL EFFECT

This revenue has already been budgeted.

TERMS

Each of the following three-year lease terms commence on January 1, 2024, and conclude on December 31, 2026.

<u>Lessee</u>	<u>Annual Rent</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Lease Term</u>
Joseph Holterman	\$5,451.60	46.4	3 Years
Darrell Schaefer	\$984.00	8	3 Years

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

Brian Russart, Natural Areas Supervisor – Milwaukee County Parks

brian.russart@milwaukeecountywi.gov

PREPARED BY:

Saji Villoth, Contracts Services Manager, Milwaukee County Parks

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Parks Executive Director *Guy Smith*

ATTACHMENTS:

- Resolution
- Fiscal Note
- Parks Ag Lease Policy
- Joseph Holterman Ag Lease
- Darrell Schaefer Ag Lease

CC:

David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Sheldon A. Wasserman, Supervisor District 3, Comm on Parks & Culture Chair
Steven Shea, Supervisor District 8, Comm on Parks & Culture Vice Chair
Felesia A. Martin, Supervisor District 7, Comm on Parks & Culture Member
Juan Miguel Martinez, Supervisor District 12, Comm on Parks & Culture Member
Steve F. Taylor, Supervisor District 17, Comm on Parks & Culture 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