



Legislation Text

File #: 81655, **Version:** 1

Fiscal Note

No City appropriation required. Future leases and lease renewals of City-owned lands for agricultural purposes are subject to Common Council approval.

Title

Revising City of Madison leases on lands being used for row crop agriculture

Body

WHEREAS, for the past 10 years, the City of Madison has recognized the need for best management practices of its publicly owned lands through the establishment of multiple task forces and work groups; and,

WHEREAS, in April 2019, the Mayor requested that City staff and the Urban Agriculture Work Group explore updating and revising its language when a particular lease appeared on the Common Council's agenda, Legistar #55210; and,

WHEREAS, the City's 2018 Comprehensive Plan identifies appropriate "lenses" through which to view our community and contains language in nearly every chapter supporting a strong, and healthy, local food system; and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Agriculture & Food Sovereignty (successor to Urban Agriculture) Work Group requested the list of City-owned lands currently being leased for agriculture and a sample lease, then held meetings with local experts to discuss possible revisions; and,

WHEREAS, the Work Group reviewed Dane County agriculture leases and learned that Chapter NR 151 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code sets statewide standards of practice, administered at the county level, that are not currently included in the City's leases; and,

WHEREAS, the experts and best management practice resources suggest there are important factors to be considered when evaluating lands for agricultural leases including location, future use and timing of that use; and,

WHEREAS, the duration of leases should be negotiated based on these factors rather than being routinely renewed annually as most have been to date; and,

WHEREAS, the rental fees for these lands have historically been well below market rate; and,

WHEREAS, the pandemic interrupted and slowed progress on this project and suspended the work of the Integrated Pest Management Policy Review Task Force; and,

WHEREAS, in January 2022, the Regional Agriculture & Food Sovereignty Work Group provided guidance and recommendations in a memorandum to the Mayor and staff in the Economic Development Division, who are responsible for leasing agricultural lands owned by the City of Madison;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the following elements of City of Madison leases governing uses and farming practices on publicly owned lands be revised in accordance with recommendations contained in the January 2022 memorandum, including but not limited to:

- Term should depend on circumstances of each lease
- Renewal should depend on circumstances of each lease
- Hold Over provision revised as appropriate for each lease
- Rent should be negotiated, closer to market rate
- Use & Restriction should reflect state statutory requirements
- Nutrient Management should reflect NRCS standards
- FSA Program Payments should mention appropriate options
- Non-Discrimination should be expanded

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that these text revisions be included in any City of Madison lease for agricultural land starting in 2024.