



City Council

Approval of a Resolution Authorizing Renewal of an Agricultural Lease Agreement with Spooners Berry Farm for Lease of Property Lying Adjacent to Yelm Highway

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Title

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Recommended Action

Committee Recommendation:

Not referred to a committee.

City Manager Recommendation:

Move to approve a Resolution Authorizing Renewal of an Agricultural Lease Agreement with Spooners Berry Farm for Lease of Property Lying Adjacent to Yelm Highway.

Report

Issue:

Whether to approve a Resolution Authorizing Renewal of an Agricultural Lease Agreement with Spooners Berry Farm for Lease of Property Lying Adjacent to Yelm Highway.

Staff Contact:

Sylvana Niehuser, Director of Parks Planning and Maintenance, 360.753.8068

Presenter(s):

None - Consent Calendar Item.

Background and Analysis:

On September 28, 2018, the City purchased an 83.01-acre property located at 3323 Yelm Highway SE for future public use as a community park. The property had been owned by James and Sandra Zahn who had leased a large portion of the property to Spooner Berry Farms for many years.

The first phase of park development will likely not happen until 2024. In the intervening years before development, the City has been leasing the portion of the property that is suitable for agriculture (approximately 42 acres) to Spooner Berry Farms. This has allowed them to continue operating their

U-Pick strawberry farm and berry stand on the property during this period. The existing two-year lease expires January 31, 2023; The new lease is for a one-year term and is \$13,650 per year.

Climate Analysis:

The lease agreement allows for the production of u-pick strawberries and a berry stand, which seems to have benefits and impacts to climate mitigation. It provides the public with the opportunity to purchase locally grown fruit through the summer months, rather than purchasing fruit that is transported from out of the area. The berry stand also utilizes recyclable and compostable materials for packaging of the fruits. While strawberries sequester a small amount of carbon, the production also releases carbon through equipment and tilling the soil. While this agricultural agreement will not reduce greenhouse gas emissions or produce renewable energy, it does provide the community a less-carbon intensive option for fruit.

Equity Analysis:

The lease agreement allows for Spooners Berry Farm to provide fresh local produce to the community in a convenient and accessible location for the public. The u-pick and berry stand are located in the SE area of Olympia, near a major bus line and adjacent to several neighborhoods and multi-family housing. According to the Olympia School District demographics and the most recent Census data for the area, under-served populations may benefit from access to fresh, local produce. One could conclude that the berry stand and u-pick benefit those groups.

The adjacent neighborhood (Hamptons) may be impacted by the increased traffic along Yelm Highway, though one could contend it is minimal since Yelm Highway is a major roadway designed to handle a large amount of traffic.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

While the City does not have data, anecdotally it appears that the Spooner Berry Farms farm stand and u-Pick strawberry farm are very popular and highly valued by the community.

Options:

1. Move to approve a Resolution Authorizing Renewal of an Agricultural Lease Agreement with Spooners Berry Farm for Lease of Property Lying Adjacent to Yelm Highway.
2. Do not move to approve a Resolution Authorizing Renewal of an Agricultural Lease Agreement with Spooners Berry Farm for Lease of Property Lying Adjacent to Yelm Highway.
3. Take another action.

Financial Impact:

The lease agreement will generate \$13,650 annually in revenue to the City for the year. In addition, if Spooners Berry Farm did not lease and manage this property during the interim years before development, Parks staff would have to mow and maintain this property at a significant cost.

Attachments:

Resolution
Agreement
Memorandum of Lease