



WASHOE COUNTY

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: April 5, 2022

DATE: March 24, 2022
TO: Open Space and Regional Park Commission
FROM: Colleen Wallace Barnum, Park Operations Superintendent
Community Services Department, 328-2181, cwallace@washoecounty.gov
THROUGH: Eric Crump, Division Director, Operations
Community Services Department, 328-3625, ecrump@washoecounty.gov
SUBJECT: Possible recommendation to staff to approve a lease agreement for use of a five (5) acre area at Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park between Washoe County and Polygrarian Institute dba Reno Food Systems, as authorized under NRS 244.284, to be taken to the Board of County Commissioners for possible approval.

SUMMARY

Washoe County is owner of Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park located at 3295 Mayberry Drive, Reno. Betsy Caughlin Donnelly Park is approximately 30 acres with approximately six (6) developed acres consisting of turf, and paved trails. The remaining 24 acres is pasture land currently leased for grass hay production and grazing. Nevada Revised Statutes 244.284, authorizes the Washoe County Board of Commissioners (Board) to Lease county owned property, that is not needed for the public purposes of the County, to a Non-Profit agency who commits to using the property for a charitable or civic purpose, under the terms and conditions the Board deems as proper.

The Polygrarian Institute (PI) dba Reno Food Systems is an incorporated, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that began operating in 2016. It is the Institute's mission to cultivate community based food systems through education, research, and civic engagement.

The proposed Lease Agreement between Washoe County and PI shall be for a five (5) year term and allows for one (1) renewal terms of five (5) years. The Agreement will have the standard Funding out Clause, and either party may cancel the Lease Agreement by providing thirty (30) day written notice, without cause or penalty.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Stewardship of our community.

BACKGROUND

Polygrarian Institute dba Reno Food Systems is an incorporated, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization that began operating in 2016. It is the Institute's mission to cultivate community based food systems through education, research, and civic engagement.

In close cooperation with Washoe County, the PI intends to accomplish its mission in three ways:

1. Education - PI will provide the opportunity for young adults interested in starting agricultural enterprises to get valuable hands-on experience on a real working farm while benefiting the greater community by serving as a model for environmental stewardship and public wellness.
2. Research – PI will create applied science projects, feasibility and asset mapping, and micro-economic impact studies.
3. Public awareness and outreach campaigns

Washoe County Parks has a long, successful history of working with local non-profits to provide public services. Currently, Washoe County leases space to Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful, Nevada Land Trust, Great Basin Institute, and Our Story, Inc. All of these non-profit organizations provide services to the County and the community in lieu of rent. Being located within County-owned property has served to reinforce the strong public/private partnership that benefits the community and makes this area a great place to live and work.

Polygrarian Institute intends to provide benefits to the County and the Community as follows:

- Promote positive lifestyle changes through healthy eating and outdoor activities.
 - PI intends to create a food prescription program in partnership with Renown Health.
- Create new uses and support for Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space.
 - Open invitations on the leased parcel will provide learning opportunities for the community in areas such as how to build irrigation systems and creating semi-permanent structures such as hoop houses, goat/sheep shelters, and compost bins.
 - In parks with historic ranch uses such as Bartley Ranch Park, PI staff will offer workshops for fruit-tree pruning as well as grape vine pruning.
- Celebrate and embrace Nevada history by re-creating agricultural opportunities within our cities. PI will highlight historic uses of the agricultural land and help create a stronger sense of stewardship for public lands.

FISCAL IMPACT

As has been past practice, the lease space would be provided at a nominal cost, which can be paid for with in-kind services. All costs associated with improvements, including but not limited to water connection, irrigation, and structures will be the responsibility of the Lessee. Lessee will also be responsibility for all utility costs associated with Lessee's use. Maintenance and upkeep on the property will be performed by the Lessee on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Open Space and Regional Park Commission recommend approval of a Lease Agreement between Washoe County and Polygrarian Institute dba Reno Food Systems, as authorized under NRS 244.284, to be taken to the Board of County Commissioners for possible approval.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with the recommendation, a possible motion would be: “Move to recommend approval of a Lease Agreement between Washoe County and Polygrarian Institute dba Reno Food Systems, as authorized under NRS 244.284, to be taken to the Board of County Commissioners for possible approval.”