

CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



MEETING DATE: December 12, 2023

ITEM NUMBER: 9.{{item.number}}

SECOND READING:

{{customfields.ResoOrdNumber}}

TYPE OF ITEM: Consent

PRESENTED BY:

Danielle Cassidy, Parks & Natural Resources, danielle.cassidy@longmontcolorado.gov

SUBJECT/AGENDA TITLE:

A Bill For An Ordinance Authorizing A Farmland Lease Agreement Between The City Of Longmont And David Asbury (Tenant) On The Montgomery Farm (Premises)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

When the City acquired the 128-acre Montgomery Farm from Boulder County, the agricultural tenant, Mr. David Asbury, was operating under an existing lease with Boulder County Parks and Open Space. This new lease will be between Mr. Asbury, who operates Full Circle Farms, and the City of Longmont. The term of this Lease Agreement shall be a five (5) year term beginning on January 1, 2023, until January 1, 2028. If the Lessee so requests, the City, in its sole discretion, may extend this Lease Agreement upon written notice to Lessee for up to four (4) additional one-year terms beginning on January 1st of each year for the following years: 2029 - 2033. The Lessee shall pay the City for the use and occupancy of the Property the annual sum of \$16,000 (\$124 per acre) for the first five (5) years, which will be renegotiated for any additional years thereafter. Full Circle Farms is the largest organic farm in the County and one of the largest in the State. Staff believes supporting this operation and this operator is consistent with our Open Space Values, the City's Sustainability goals, and priorities set forth in Envision Longmont.

While staff and Mr. Asbury believe this is a mutually beneficial agreement, both parties are aware that the northern 80 acres of Montgomery Farm are slated to become a Community Park. Once the City determines that the park will be built, notice will be given and farming will cease on the northern portion of the property. The southern 48 acres will remain in agriculture or some other land use that is consistent with Open Space values. At this time Mr. Asbury has stated he would want to continue farming the 48 acres.

COUNCIL OPTIONS:

1. Approve the lease as written.
2. Direct Staff to modify the lease.
3. Do not approve the lease.

RECOMMENDED OPTIONS:



1. Approve the lease as written.

FISCAL IMPACT & FUND SOURCE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION:

All lease payments will be credited to the Open Space Fund.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUE ANALYSIS:

Introduction

Full Circle Farms, operated by David Asbury, has been a significant player in the organic farming sector in Longmont since its inception in 2003. Currently, it stands as the largest organic farm in the County and one of the largest in the State.

Sustainable Farming Practices

Full Circle Farms, spanning over 2,000 acres, of which 128 acres belong to the Montgomery Farm acquired by the City from Boulder County, employs sustainable and regenerative farming practices. It utilizes a rotational cropping system involving more than 70 types of produce alongside small grains, grass hay, and alfalfa to maintain soil health. Moreover, Full Circle Farms has demonstrated a commitment to water conservation through the use of diverse irrigation systems, ensuring efficient water use and management.

Alignment with City Goals

Entering into a lease agreement with Full Circle Farms aligns with the City's Open Space Values and the objectives outlined in our Open Space Management Plan. By supporting an established local farmer who prioritizes sustainable and organic farming, the City moves closer to realizing its sustainability goals. The proposed lease term is for five years starting from January 1, 2024, with a provision for potential extensions up to January 1, 2034. The farm has agreed to an annual payment of \$16,000 for the first five years, equating to \$124 per acre, with a provision for renegotiation for any additional years after the initial five year lease.

Benefit to the Local Community

Supporting this operation benefits the local community by promoting local organic food production and fostering a more sustainable food system. The farm has been a reliable provider of fresh, organic produce to the local community, playing a crucial role in promoting healthy living and boosting the local economy.

Conclusion

Staff recommends approving the lease agreement, emphasizing that the partnership with Full Circle Farms would be beneficial both in terms of achieving the City's sustainability goals and supporting local, organic, and sustainable agricultural practices. It would foster a collaborative relationship with a well-established local farmer, preserving the City's agrarian landscape while adhering to the Open Space Values.

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ATTACHMENTS:

Att 1 - Ordinance

Att 2 - Lease

Att 3 - Vicinity Map