



Agenda Report

Fullerton City Council

MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 5, 2019

TO: CITY COUNCIL / CITY MANAGER

SUBMITTED BY: KENNETH DOMER, CITY MANAGER

FROM: HUGO CURIEL, PARKS AND RECREATION DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: UNION PACIFIC PARK – RENEWABLE FARMS
EXCLUSIVE NEGOTIATION AGREEMENT

SUMMARY

Request approval from the City Council to enter into an exclusive negotiation agreement (ENA) for six months with Renewable Farms (RF). During this period, RF and the City of Fullerton will explore options to enter into a long-term agreement for the use of Union Pacific Park for the operation of a sustainable urban farm and public recreational space.

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize the City Manager to enter into an ENA with Renewable Farms.

PRIORITY POLICY STATEMENT

This item matches the following Priority Policy Statement/s:

- Infrastructure and City Assets.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact with the act of entering in to an exclusive negotiation agreement. Any potential action or agreement as a result of the ENA will be brought back to the City Council for consideration with any potential fiscal impact identified at that time.

DISCUSSION

Union Pacific Park

Union Pacific Park is a 1.7 acre park located near the downtown area just south of the SOCO District. The park was established in 2003 after the land was purchased from Union Pacific Railroad in 1998. In 2004, the park was partially closed due to soil

contamination from prior railroad industry operations. In 2009, the remaining areas of the park were closed due to issues with illicit uses. In 2012, soil remediation was conducted and completed by the Department of Toxic Substance Control, leaving the park ready for unrestricted uses.

In the ensuing years, several options were considered for the park's use, including soccer, futsal fields and passive uses. During this time, the park was one of several properties in an indeterminate state resulting from the dissolution of the Redevelopment Agency. The City and the State were in transition with the transfer of properties tied-up with the State Department of Finance. Due to this, further park renovation efforts were postponed. In July 2016, the State made final determinations on several of the City properties that were in question, including Union Pacific Park.

Renewable Farms

Renewable Farms is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 2008, located in the City of Anaheim with a ten-year agreement with the City to use one acre of public land at no fee. Its mission is to enhance communities through events, agriculture and education. There are two parts to the organization, on the farm and off the farm. Outside the farm, it provides consulting for schools, hospitals and even homeowners on responsible agricultural practices. Regardless of the resources their clients may have, RF's passion is teaching others how to implement life-giving systems in their spaces.

Within the farm, they educate and mentor school children, provide internship opportunities for college students, job training, educational workshops, event space, special needs programs and considerable amounts of free food for local families. Both, on and off the farm, they also provide jobs for vets, those coming out of incarceration, and "anyone who's hit a rough patch and is willing to try again and get back on their feet."

City of Fullerton staff has visited RF in the City of Anaheim. The farm grows produce through aquaponics, a system that combines conventional aquaculture (raising aquatic animals such as fish in tanks) with hydroponics (cultivating plants in water) in a symbiotic environment. In addition, RF uses its outdoor facility for event rentals such as weddings, bar mitzvahs, quinceañeras and similar events as a means to support its operations and the public benefits it offers the community.

Proposed use of Union Pacific Park

The model envisioned for Union Pacific Park is similar to RF, where there would be several components for the community's enrichment and enjoyment. Such components would include recreation, education / internship opportunities, retail, public and private events, public art opportunities, beer and wine festivals and open public space for passive uses.

The park's location within the City makes it ideal for many residents including SOCO Walk, near the Transportation Center, schools and residents in the immediate vicinity to walk to and enjoy the site in a number of ways. Its location aligns with Union Pacific Trail which extends from the Transportation Center to UP Park (and eventually beyond to Independence Park through possible grant funding from State, with applications already submitted).

With the City Council's approval, Staff will move forward with RF to explore options, complete due diligence and develop a plan to operate a sustainable urban farm that will provide the community with a number of options for public recreation, education, events and as a destination along an existing recreational trail. Staff will return to City Council for consideration of a concept for the park's proposed use and potential approval of any formal agreement required.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – PowerPoint Presentation
- Attachment 2 – Exclusive Negotiation Agreement