

ITEM #:	11
DATE:	05-12-26
DEPT:	P&R

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: LEASE AGREEMENT FOR ISU LAND ADJACENT MOORE MEMORIAL PARK

BACKGROUND:

Moore Memorial Park includes approximately 30 acres of land on the west side of loway Creek. This land was leased to Iowa State University (ISU) for farming for many years. To assist with the Water Pollution and Control's (WPC) Nutrient Reduction goals, the farmland was converted to prairie in spring of 2023.

ISU is still farming approximately 24 acres of ISU land directly west of the Moore Memorial Park prairie. ISU has decided to stop farming this area and is willing to lease this to the City at no cost. Once the agreement is approved, the City would convert the farmland to prairie and manage the prairie thereafter. The Water Pollution Control Department CIP - Watershed-based Nutrient Reduction project has \$75,000 in FY 2026/27 that will be used to cover the cost of this conversion.

If Council approves this request for additional acres, there will be almost 55 acres of prairie that helps reduce nutrient runoff into loway Creek. It'll also provide additional habitat for pollinators, birds, and wildlife. Mowed paths through the prairie will be established for individuals to use. By entering into this agreement, it will also keep heavy farm equipment off of Scholl Road once a shared use path is established.

Attached is the Lease Agreement which is similar to the other leases (e.g. Brookside Park, Stuart Smith Park) the City has with Iowa State University (ISU). Below are some highlights of the Agreement:

Paragraph 1. Term - The agreement will be for 20 years, July 1, 2026 -June 30, 2046.

Paragraph 3. Consideration - There shall be no monetary payments for this lease.

Paragraph 4. Use of Leased Site - The City shall use the site only as public park and comply with all applicable laws, regulations and ordinances.

Paragraph 5. Improvements - The City, at its expense, shall convert the land to prairie within two years of the commencement of the agreement. The City may establish mown trails and install interpretive signage on the leased site. It does state that any shared use path installed within the leased area will be governed by a separate easement agreement.

Paragraph 7. Maintenance - This outlines that the City is responsible for maintaining the area including associated costs. It also defines communication and consultation with ISU prior to work being performed.

Paragraph 8. Hazardous Substances - Acknowledges that no environmental study has been performed on this and allows the City to terminate the lease agreement if existing hazardous substances are discovered on the leased site.

Paragraph 10. Emergency Services - The City shall be responsible for providing emergency services but this does not contravene any existing or future 28E agreements between the City and ISU.

Leasing of this land has been discussed with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and they recommend City Council approve the lease agreement.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Approve the lease agreement with ISU for 24 acres of land adjacent Moore Memorial Park
2. Do not approve the lease agreement
3. Refer back to staff

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

This lease agreement is a win for several reasons: 1) it helps reduce nutrients entering the surrounding waterways; 2) provides habitat for pollinators, birds, and wildlife; 3) it keeps heavy farm equipment out of this area and off of a future shared use path; and 4) it provides a natural recreation area for users to walk, watch birds, and enjoy nature. Funding is available in the WPC CIP-Watershed-based Nutrient Reduction project and Parks and Recreation is already maintaining the adjacent Moore Memorial Park prairie.

This is another positive example of the town and gown relationship the City has with ISU. Therefore, it is the City Manager's recommendation that the City Council approve Alternative #1 as stated above.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Moore Bottoms Lease.pdf](#)