



City of Racine, Wisconsin
Common Council

AGENDA BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

COMMITTEE: N/A (Direct Referral)

AGENDA DATE: May 5, 2020

DEPARTMENT: Mayor's Office

Prepared By: Cara Pratt, Sustainability and Conservation Coordinator

SUBJECT: Direct Referral) Communication from Mayor Mason presenting a request on behalf of the City of Racine Sustainability and Conservation Coordinator to enter into a Solar Ground Lease Agreement and Electric Service Agreement with Wisconsin Electric Power Company, a Wisconsin corporation, doing business as We Energies. This would result in the City of Racine's participation in We Energies' Solar Now program and result in a 600 kW (ac) solar system being installed on 2.64 acres at Olsen Prairie Park.

Recommendation: That the Mayor and City Clerk are authorized and directed to enter into a solar ground lease agreement and Electric Service Agreement Solar Ground Lease Agreement and Electric Service Agreement with Wisconsin Electric Power Company, a Wisconsin corporation, doing business as We Energies.

Fiscal Note: This lease will generate a total revenue of approximately \$26,151 annually for 30 years, i.e., approximately \$784,530 over the period of the lease.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Solar Now is a pilot program approved by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Under the Solar Now program, We Energies partners with large business, nonprofit and government customers to host solar panels. The company leases the space for the panels on roofs and unused land, and the partners receive revenue. The clean energy that is produced serves all customers within the grid. We Energies has hired SunVest, a Wisconsin-based company, to be the general contractor for these projects. Solar Now projects are now feeding 5 megawatts into the energy grid, enough to power more than 1,000 homes with clean, renewable energy. The greenhouse gas emissions reductions associated with switching from fossil fuels to solar are considerable. Approximately 657 tons of carbon dioxide emissions will be eliminated per year thanks to the proposed installation at Olsen Prairie Park. That is the equivalent of removing over 140 vehicles from our roads.

Olsen Prairie Park was selected for solar installation due to its proximity to the Olsen Industrial Park, and the opportunities for a synergistic development with the existing prairie ecosystem.



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BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS: The initial term sheet was discussed and recommended for approval in both the Finance and Personnel Committee on November 11th, 2019 as well as the Board of Park, Recreation and Cultural Services on November 13th, 2019. Resolution 1266-19 was passed unanimously by Common Council on November 19th, 2019. Since November, the Sustainability and Conservation Coordinator has collaborated with several departments to coordinate logistics related to this project. A site visit was conducted on January 24th, 2020 with We Energies representatives, the SunVest installer, City Forester Matt Koepnick, Research Scientist Dr. Julie Kinzelman, and Sustainability and Conservation Coordinator Cara Pratt. The Parks Department and Forestry Division offered assistance with tree removal. The Attorney's Office provided support on contract language. The Health Department provided information on invasive species and prairie maintenance. The Department of Public Works provided input on future electrical inspection needs and paving requirements. The Department of City Development and the Finance Department have offered support on logistics related to the relocation of the Olsen Industrial Park sign. If approved, ground mount solar installation is scheduled for August 2020. Between approval and installation, a collaborative planning process will include development of the Vegetation Installation and Restoration Plans, in order to ensure prairie protection and future maintenance.

BUDGETARY IMPACT: This lease will generate a total revenue of approximately \$26,151 annually for 30 years, i.e., approximately \$784,530 over the period of the lease.

OPTIONS/ALTERNATIVES: At this time there are no alternative sites identified where a ground mount solar array could be installed through We Energies' Solar Now program within the City of Racine.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the Mayor and City Clerk are authorized and directed to enter into a solar ground lease agreement and Electric Service Agreement Solar Ground Lease Agreement and Electric Service Agreement with Wisconsin Electric Power Company, a Wisconsin corporation, doing business as We Energies.

ATTACHMENT(S): Sunvest Proposal