



Department Source: City Utilities - Sewer/Stormwater

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: February 17, 2025

Re: Authorizing Agreements with Boone County, Missouri and Mid-Missouri Radio Control Association Relating to Licensure and Operation of Remote-Control Aircraft in Designated Areas.

## Executive Summary

Staff has prepared for Council consideration an ordinance authorizing the City Manager to execute agreements with Boone County, Missouri and the Mid-Missouri Radio Control Association. Collectively, these three agreements will allow the Mid-Missouri Radio Control Association to relocate their remote-control airstrip from the wastewater treatment plant to the Rocky Fork landfill property.

## Discussion

On April 6, 2012, Council authorized a license agreement with the Mid-Missouri Radio Control Association (MMRCA) to use a portion of City-owned land at the wastewater treatment plant to fly remote-control airplanes for recreational purposes. This property is well suited for use by the MMRCA to fly airplanes as it is relatively flat pasture land and is located in an area without homes or other buildings nearby. The MMRCA used this location from 2012 until 2017 without any concerns being expressed to city staff. In 2017 residents in a nearby neighborhood began to express concerns with flight paths, noise and proximity of planes to homes in the neighborhood. This resulted in meetings with neighbors, MMRCA and city staff. Noise and proximity concerns were thought to be addressed at that time.

In 2020 the MMRCA requested the license agreement be amended to include the option of flying turbine powered aircraft. The agreement was reviewed and it was determined it needed to be updated to reflect changes in Federal Aviation Administration rules and federal laws. A revised license agreement was approved on May 4, 2020. Subsequently, additional concerns related to flight paths, noise and proximity of planes to homes were expressed by neighbors. After meeting with the neighbors and the MMRCA, it was determined that finding an alternate location for the airstrip would be an appropriate solution to the concerns.

Staff identified the former city operated Rocky Fork landfill. The city operated a landfill on this site and is liable for post closure activities for the foreseeable future. The city currently monitors this site, maintains the integrity of the soil cap and harvests hay off the property. This site is suitable for use as a remote-control airstrip due to the relative flat topography and being located away from homes or other buildings and is adjacent to the Rocky Fork conservation area shooting range. The MMRCA is agreeable with relocating their facility to this property. While the city operated a landfill on this site, the property is actually owned by



# City of Columbia

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Boone County, Missouri. In order to facilitate the relocation, three agreements are necessary, as follows:

**Exhibit A to Ordinance:** This is an amendment to the current license agreement with the MMRCA for use of the wastewater treatment plant property to fly remote control airplanes for recreational purposes. This amendment would extend the current license through May 31, 2026. This term extension allows MMRCA to continue current operations while the MMRCA and the city work to relocate the airstrip to the Rocky Fork landfill property.

**Exhibit B to Ordinance:**

This is a cooperative agreement with Boone County Missouri regarding the Rock Fork landfill property. This agreement grants the city the full authority to license MMRCA to operate recreational remote-control aircraft on the Rocky Fork landfill property and permit construction of improvements on the property to support the use.

**Exhibit C to Ordinance:**

This is a license agreement with the MMRCA to allow for the operation of remote-control aircraft on the Rocky Fork landfill property for recreational purposes. In addition, this agreement allows the MMRCA to install the following:

- Install and maintain a gate.
- Construct and maintain a 10 foot wide drive for access and an appropriate parking area.
- Construct and maintain an air strip for the aircraft. Provide and maintain a moveable storage shed.
- Provide and maintain a portable toilet unit.
- Erect and maintain a pavilion.

The agreement requires the city to request a permit modification from the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to allow the beneficial use of the property for operation of remote-control aircraft. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) has approved the permit modification to allow this use of the property, see attached correspondence from MDNR. The city is also responsible for grading the site to allow the airstrip to be constructed. This is required to ensure compliance with permit requirements and to ensure the integrity of the soil cap is maintained. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources have verbally indicated the requested permit modification will be approved. The remainder of the requirements of this agreement are similar to the requirements of the existing agreement.

## Fiscal Impact

**Short-Term Impact:** There will be minimal expense due to the use of equipment and staff time to grade the site. This is included in the 2025 operating budget.

**Long-Term Impact:** None.



## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Organizational Excellence, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Livable & Sustainable Communities, Secondary Impact: Land Use & Growth Management, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

## Legislative History

Date	Action
05/04/2020	R60-20 Authorizing a license agreement with Mid-Missouri Radio Control Association to use a portion of City-owned land used by the City Utilities Department - Sewer/Stormwater Division for the wastewater treatment plant to fly remote control airplanes for recreational purposes.
08/06/2012	R124-12 Authorizing a license agreement with the Mid-Missouri Radio Control Association to use a portion of City-owned land used by the Public Works Department for the wastewater treatment plant to fly remote control airplanes for recreational purposes.

## Suggested Council Action

Approve the ordinance.