



Legislation Text

File #: 20-0164, **Version:** 1

PROPOSED CONTRACT AMENDMENT

Department(s): Department of Permits, Rentals and Concessions

Vendor: Go Ape Bemis Woods LLC (“Go Ape”), Frederick, Maryland

Request: Authorization for the Forest Preserves of Cook County (the “Forest Preserves”) to amend contract

Good(s) or Service(s): Professional design, construction, operation, and maintenance services for an Aerial Adventure & Zipline Course (the “Course”)

Original Contract Period: 5/1/2014 - 5/1/2019; Board Approved Extension (9/8/2015) 5/2/2019 - 5/1/2021; Board Approved Extension (1/14/2020) 5/2/2021 - 6/30/2023, with three (3) one-year renewal options to be exercised at the discretion of the General Superintendent

Proposed Contract Period Extension: N/A

Total Current Contract Amount Authority: N/A (Revenue Generating). Go Ape has agreed to pay the Forest Preserves a \$20,000.00 annual fee plus a tiered percentage of gross revenue generated at the Course

Original Approval: 10/7/2014

Previous Increase(s): N/A

This Increase Requested: N/A

Estimated Fiscal Impact: N/A (Revenue Generating)

Accounts: N/A

Contract Number(s): 14-40-405

Concurrences:

The Chief Financial Officer has approved this item. Final amendment is subject to legal review and approval.

District(s): 17

Summary: Go Ape seeks to offer four (4) new activities at their existing Bemis Woods South operating location. Each of these activities can be operated as an add-on to the existing Treetop Adventure and Treetop Journey courses or as stand-alone activities to give Go Ape patrons additional options based on preference and physical ability.

The first new activity is a stand-alone “Nets” adventure course, which consists of a central tower with a series of net tunnels leading off it to larger enclosed nets, all located approximately 30 feet in the air. While primarily geared towards a younger audience, the nets adventure courses allow for a range of access and will be open to most age groups. Because participants are fully enclosed by the netting, the courses do not require the use of a harness and cable system, allowing for a more shared experience within families. The course would be built on freestanding poles in the grass field adjacent to Grove 6 (across the parking lot from the existing Go Ape courses). No trees will be used for the nets course.

The second activity, “Axe Throwing,” allows individuals to throw an axe at a target for 30-60 minute sessions. The Forest Preserves is requesting approval for this activity on a pilot basis only for the 2021 season. Should both parties wish to extend the pilot, the Agreement would be further amended, and General Superintendent approval obtained. Go Ape successfully added Axe Throwing at four (4) other U.S. locations in 2020, finding them to be a popular and safe addition. Due to this success, they anticipate the installation of an additional four (4) locations before the 2021 season opening.

The final two (2) activities are a combination offering featuring a two-way zip line, and free fall “Monkey Drop.” The stand-alone zip line would be up to 1,500 feet in length and require the construction of two (2) towers in the grass fields at Groves 6 and 7. This would replace the originally contemplated free-standing zip line included in the previously approved Go Ape agreement. The “Monkey Drop” activity would be operated from one (1) of the zip line towers, allowing participants to step off the tower and experience a short free fall experience before a controlled descent to the ground. Construction of the zip line may require the removal of one (1) tree. These two (2) activities can be packaged together, offered separately, or included along with other adventures offered by Go Ape.

Go Ape plans to construct the Nets course and axe throwing activities in the winter of 2020/2021; however, it is anticipated that the zip line and Monkey Drop combination activity will not be constructed until after the 2021 season concludes (should earlier construction be possible, the Forest Preserves would support such efforts.). Forest Preserves approval of all design and construction plans, as well as an independent certified arborist report, is required. Go Ape is responsible for obtaining all required building permits, as well as state and local governmental approvals, and must provide proof of sufficient insurance and liability waivers indemnifying the Forest Preserves of Cook County. Go Ape is required to comply with all national standards, including those set by the International Axe Throwing Federation and ASTM (American Society for Testing and Materials) International.

Prices for the new activities were included in the 2021 Forest Preserves of Cook County budget request. Once built, the four (4) new amenities are expected to increase revenue to the Forest Preserves by approximately \$100,000.00 per year. Go Ape will continue to comply with all safety requirements mandated by State and local health officials to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.