

COUNTY OF MILWAUKEE
Inter-Office Communication

Date: April 19, 2024
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
From: Guy Smith, Executive Parks Director for Milwaukee County Parks
Subject: Allowing Use of Hammocks in Parks
File Type: Action Resolution/Ordinance

REQUEST

From the Executive Director of Milwaukee County Parks, requesting removal of Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances 47.24 “Improper Use of Park Furniture”.

POLICY

Milwaukee County Parks is seeking changes to Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances specifically the removal in entirety of MCGO 47.24 which states -

“47.24. - Improper use of park furniture.

No person shall lie down upon any bench or table in any park or parkway, nor shall hang, occupy or use any hammock, excepting those used for placing infants therein.”

Wisconsin State Statutes:	
Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances:	47.24
Specific Adopted Budget:	
Specific Adopted Budget Amendment:	
Specific Adopted Capital Project:	

BACKGROUND

The use of hammocks in Milwaukee County Parks is a popular means of relaxation and enjoyment. Park users generally know how to properly install and use hammocks and there are not issues with them that would justify ordinance 47.24 as it is written.

The first part of the ordinance states “No person shall lie down upon any bench or table...” Assuming the intent of this ordinance was to prevent vagrancy in parks, this is not helpful or necessary as Park Rangers and law enforcement can address vagrancy using other statutory authority.

The reference to use for infants seems outdated in light of modern child carrying methods which would reflect the age of many of the ordinances within Chapter 47.

Milwaukee County Parks does seriously consider the health of its tree collection. If there are any concerns of damage to trees by users installing and using hammocks, these are well covered in MCGO 47.08 (approved June 2022) which pertains to the injury or damage to all natural elements within the parks system.

Related File No's:	
Associated File No's (Including Transfer Packets):	
Previous Action Date(s):	

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Describe how the item aligns to the objectives in the [strategic plan](#):

- 1A: Reflect the full diversity of the County at every level of County government
- 1B: Create and nurture an inclusive culture across County government – Parks is seeking to be more welcoming to park users
- 1C: Increase the number of County contracts awarded to minority and women-owned businesses
- 2A: Determine what, where, and how we deliver services to advance health equity – Fostering more use of parks improves mental and physical health
- 2B: Break down silos across County government to maximize access to and quality of services offered
- 2C: Apply a racial equity lens to all decisions
- 3A: Invest “upstream” to address root causes of health disparities
- 3B: Enhance the County’s fiscal health and sustainability
- 3C: Dismantle barriers to diverse and inclusive communities

FISCAL EFFECT

None

TERMS

None

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

None

PREPARED BY:

Jim Tarantino, Deputy Director

APPROVED BY:

Guy Smith, Executive Director Milwaukee County Parks *Guy Smith*

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolution/Ordinance

CC: David Crowley, County Executive
Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
Comm on Parks & Culture Chair
Comm on Parks & Culture Members
Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
Janelle M. Jensen, Legislative Services Division Mgr, Office of the County Clerk
Aaron Hertzberg, Director, Department of Administrative Services
Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS
Vince Masterson, Fiscal & Strategic Asset Coordinator, DAS
Pamela Bryant, Capital Finance Manager, Comptroller's Office
Justin Rodriguez, Capital Finance Analyst, Comptroller's Office
Allyson R. Smith, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
Ciara Miller, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
Anthony Rux, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB