

# Committee on Parks and Culture on 2022-07-19 9:00 AM - HYBRID MEETING

This meeting will be held in Room 203-R, and will be live-streamed on the County Legislative Information Center:

<https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

Meeting Time: 07-19-22 09:00

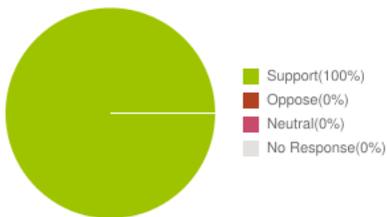
## eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Committee on Parks and Culture on 2022-07-19 9:00 AM - HYBRID MEETING This meeting will be held in Room 203-R, and will be live-streamed on the County Legislative Information Center: <a href="https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx">https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx</a>	07-19-22 09:00	21	4	4	0	0

### Sentiments for All Meetings

The following graphs display sentiments for comments that have location data. Only locations of users who have commented will be shown.

#### Overall Sentiment



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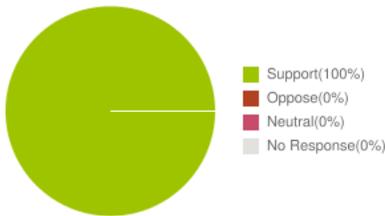
07-19-22 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
2 22-769 A resolution celebrating the civic and design contributions of Frederick Law Olmsted to Washington Park, Milwaukee County, and the United States; and renaming the roadway in Washington Park to Olmsted Way; and allocating \$2,000 from Org. Unit 1940-1945 Appropriation for Contingencies to Org. Unit 9010 Parks, Recreation and Culture Administration to update the signage	4	4	0	0

### Sentiments for All Agenda Items

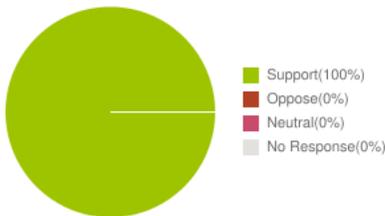
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Agenda Item: eComments for 2 22-769 A resolution celebrating the civic and design contributions of Frederick Law Olmsted to Washington Park, Milwaukee County, and the United States; and renaming the roadway in Washington Park to Olmsted Way; and allocating \$2,000 from Org. Unit 1940-1945 Appropriation for Contingencies to Org. Unit 9010 Parks, Recreation and Culture Administration to update the signage

#### Overall Sentiment



### Eddie Cullen

Location:

Submitted At: 10:38am 07-19-22

#### Testimony of Anne Neal Petri

Good morning, I am Dede Petri, president and CEO of the National Association for Olmsted Parks. Thank you to Chairwoman Nicholson and Supervisor Burgelis for this opportunity.

Biographer Justin Martin says Frederick Law Olmsted may be the "most

important historical figure that the average American knows least about.” With this in mind, the National Association for Olmsted Parks heartily supports the resolution to name the roadway in Washington Park Olmsted Way, particularly in 2022, as the country celebrates Olmsted’s 200th birthday.

We serve as a national voice for Olmsted parks and landscapes and are proud to be the managing partner of Olmsted 200, the nationwide celebration of Olmsted’s 200th birthday, dedicated to Parks for All People. We are pleased to work with Olmsted friends groups in Milwaukee, Lake Geneva and Kohler. Our board chair Philip Schultz is from Fox Point and I come from Fond du Lac.

We can honestly say: Milwaukee has an extremely important and underappreciated Olmsted heritage. Drawing attention to this heritage is timely and appropriate.

Thanks to Milwaukee’s first Parks Commissioner Christian Wahl -- for whom Wahl Avenue is already named -- Olmsted visited Milwaukee four times.

In the course of his visits from 1892-1894, Olmsted helped site parks as well as create Washington, Lake, and Riverside Parks and Newberry Boulevard, connecting the latter two. He was focused on green space, but he was also attentive to circulation and connectivity. Roads in his plans are not mere roads but essential to the park’s enjoyment. A signature feature of his park designs is a separation of ways, providing for safe and separate pathways for pedestrians, horses and carriages.

Olmsted designed the circulation system to achieve his vision of an accessible democratic space –where residents of different neighborhoods and different backgrounds could come together.

Olmsted was a great landscape architect, and founder of the profession. But, more importantly, he was a visionary reformer, and his parks, and the principles underlying them – equitable access, public health and sustainability -- deserve our recognition, our understanding and our stewardship.

Olmsted was working both before and after the Civil War. He served as an undercover reporter for the New York Times, showing the moral and economic bankruptcy of slavery. He was appointed the first head of the US Sanitary Commission, the precursor to the Red Cross, saving hundreds of Union soldiers’ lives through improved sanitation, food, and medical care. These experiences and others, throughout his life, informed his belief that parks were and should be critical infrastructure and community assets. He believed that the thoughtful built environment could have positive social, cultural and economic impacts: Parks for all people.

In Milwaukee and Buffalo – and other communities—parks have too often failed to be accessible for all people. In too many cities, we have seen actions that divide communities– as happened in Washington Park during the construction of the spur.

That is another reason we applaud this plan to honor Olmsted at a time when city leaders are examining ways to reunite Washington Park – as it was designed -- and to bring neighborhoods back together. This is an honor for Olmsted but it is also an important step in recognizing the remarkable asset that is Washington Park.

As we celebrate Olmsted’s bicentennial, Olmsted has bequeathed us valuable lessons for the twenty-first century – indeed, we might call them “the Olmsted Way.” He has shown us, in city after city, the value of green and open spaces accessible to all. He has provided us with designs that renew our spirits and restore our souls. He has invoked the better angels of our nature to come together in a spirit of community to each other in the park.

Olmsted's enduring vision for Washington Park merits recognition. We wholeheartedly support this Resolution. Thank you.

**Annemarie Sawkins**

Location:

Submitted At: 8:02am 07-19-22

It is wonderful to see Milwaukee starting to more fully embrace the work of Frederick Law Olmsted, America's preeminent landscape architect through this resolution and through the exhibition and publication In the Park with Olmsted: A Vision for Milwaukee. Olmsted's design of three parks in our city and his vision of a system of linked green spaces provided a model for what has become a robust park system. Olmsted was progressive and believed that parks are essential for the health and well-being of a city's population. He argued for public transportation and designed parks for all people. Milwaukee is unique in having, not one, but three Olmsted parks. Advancing and protecting his original design plans and ideas will also strengthen the historical legacy of Olmsted and make our city a more attractive destination for local, national and international visitors. For these reasons, I fully support this resolution. Sincerely, Annemarie Sawkins

**J. Patrick Mullins**

Location:

Submitted At: 2:43am 07-19-22

As Marquette University's Public History Director, I can affirm that commemoration of Frederick Law Olmsted at Washington Park would be fitting for many reasons, including his record as a champion of racial justice and African-American equality.

As the Resolution notes, Olmsted's influential book *The Cotton Kingdom* documented slavery as an unjust and destructive institution. It helped to turn white Northerners against slavery and keep Britain from supporting the Confederacy. Malcolm X observed in his *Autobiography* that reading Olmsted's *Cotton Kingdom* "opened my eyes to the horrors suffered when the slave was landed in the United States." During the Civil War, Olmsted supported not only the abolition of slavery but also full citizenship, political rights, and education for emancipated slaves.

Olmsted designed urban parks as a way of promoting democracy by breaking down inequality. He meant his parks to serve as a truly public space in which Americans of different classes, ethnicities, nationalities, religions, ages, and genders would mix together. As the African-American landscape architect Sarah Zewde has documented, Olmsted specified that his public parks must also be open to people of all races.

Olmsted wanted his parks to undermine prejudice and segregation by bringing white and black folks together on a basis of true social equality. This was a radical position for a white intellectual to take at the moment when Jim Crow was becoming the law of the land. When he said his goal was "parks for all," Olmsted meant it.

J. Patrick Mullins, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of History and Public History Director

Marquette University

**Jeremy Ebersole**

Location:

Submitted At: 3:33pm 07-18-22

On behalf of the Milwaukee Preservation Alliance, I'd like to offer our strong support for this important resolution. Frederick Law Olmsted is a seminal figure in American landscape design who created many renowned landscapes nationwide including New York City's Central Park, as well as our own Washington, Lake, and Riverside Parks. His work helped frame and solidify a movement in city planning that endeavored to bring the health benefits that green space provides to all people, democratizing access to the many benefits nature affords city residents. Renaming the road in this way will help draw attention to the treasure of Washington Park while building community pride and support for continued efforts to ensure it is maintained and preserved for future generations to enjoy.