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5 **AN AMENDED RESOLUTION**

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7 Rescinding the policy position adopted in File No.16-200 and recognizing a new County  
8 policy to expand the scope of strategic planning associated with the Mitchell Park  
9 Horticultural Conservatory (the Domes) to enable the Milwaukee County Board of  
10 Supervisors to consider all options for the future of the Domes  
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13 WHEREAS, the original Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, a Victorian-era  
14 greenhouse built in 1898 and demolished in 1955 due to structural safety concerns, was  
15 replaced by a new horticultural conservatory colloquially known as “the Domes”, which  
16 opened in 1964 with First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson in attendance; and  
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18 WHEREAS, from December 2013 to February 2014 the Department of Parks,  
19 Recreation and Culture closed the Tropical Dome to repair concrete whose weathering  
20 had accelerated due to the high heat and humidity within that dome, and subsequent  
21 inspection of the other two domes was authorized in File No. 14-89; and  
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23 WHEREAS, by September 2015, the Director of the Department of Parks,  
24 Recreation and Culture reported to the County Board that the domes’ deterioration had  
25 accelerated, moved for the installation of netting to protect patrons from falling concrete  
26 debris, and also requested a \$500,000 study of how to move forward with the 1964  
27 Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory (File No. 15-601); and  
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29 WHEREAS, after the Administration indefinitely closed all three domes on  
30 February 5, 2016 due to concrete debris falling from the structure, the Milwaukee  
31 County Board of Supervisors adopted File No. 16-200 which requested the Domes  
32 reopen to the public by the end of 2016, established the Domes Task Force to develop  
33 a comprehensive long-term plan for the facility, and officially set the County policy to  
34 “pursue the repair and preservation of the existing Mitchell Park Horticultural  
35 Conservatory”; and  
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37 WHEREAS, in 2018 the Domes Task Force and their consulting team comprised  
38 of HGA and ConsultEcon, Inc. released the “Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory  
39 Future Path and Feasibility Study” (Phase I and Phase II) which evaluated eight  
40 potential options for the future of the Domes ranging from demolition to expansive re-  
41 envisioning of the facility, and documented an extensive community outreach process  
42 (File No.18-164); and

43 WHEREAS, while the Phase I and Phase II studies may have explored the costs  
44 and impacts of demolition or reconstruction of the Domes, these options were not  
45 consistent with the County Board’s stated policy to repair, preserve, and prolong the  
46 existing Domes; therefore the Task Force is limited to only recommending an option that  
47 is consistent with the current policy; and

48 WHEREAS in September 2019, the Domes Task Force’s Phase III report by  
49 ArtsMarket, LLC presented a Business Plan and Conceptual Design which  
50 recommended preservation of the Domes and redevelopment of Mitchell Park with a  
51 proposed funding model utilizing various tax credits, grants, private fundraising, and  
52 County financing (File No. 19-677); and

53 WHEREAS, Milwaukee County contracted with Husch Blackwell and Baker Tilly  
54 to evaluate the Business Plan presented in File No. 19-677, and their report released in  
55 File No. 22-697 revealed that due to the complexity and laws relating to tax credits, the  
56 proposed “capital stack” presented by ArtsMarket, LLC was found to not be a viable  
57 financial mechanism to move forward with financing the Domes’ rehabilitation and re-  
58 investment without significant County investment and/or private fundraising; and

59 WHEREAS, considering its ongoing fiscal challenges, if the Domes are going to  
60 continue operating, Milwaukee County must find a way to improve the Domes’ business  
61 and operating models to enhance community impact and perhaps raise sufficient  
62 revenue to sustain operations and assist in grant and donor opportunities (File Nos. 18-  
63 164, 18-627, 19-57, 19-102, 21-233, 21-772, & 22-697); and

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65 WHEREAS, the County Board passed File No. 22-980 to have the Administration  
66 obtain the Domes’ listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, but was  
67 vetoed by the County Executive due to concerns that historic designation is not  
68 appropriate at present; and

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70 WHEREAS, despite significant resources in both time and money spent on  
71 planning for the future of the Domes, the County has not yet been able to take a  
72 definitive step towards a chosen outcome; and

73 WHEREAS, as the policymakers for the County, the Milwaukee County Board of  
74 Supervisors should have the opportunity to weigh all relevant strategies and their  
75 respective fiscal impacts and constraints, economic impacts, and alignment with the  
76 County’s strategic plan regarding the future of Mitchell Park Horticultural Center (the  
77 Domes); and

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79 WHEREAS, the Committee on Parks and Culture, at its meeting of December 6,  
80 2022, recommended adoption of File No. 22-1184 as amended (vote 4-0); now,  
81 therefore,  
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83 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors hereby **rescinds**  
84 **expands** the policy position adopted in File No. 16-200 committing the County to the  
85 pursuit of the repair and preservation of the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory  
86 (Domes) and officially recognizes a new County policy to expand the scope of strategic  
87 planning associated with the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory (Domes) to enable  
88 the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to consider all options for the future of the  
89 Domes and their respective fiscal and economic impacts to make the best, informed  
90 decision on future action; and

91 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture,  
92 coordinating with the Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance, Office of Corporation  
93 Counsel, and Office of the Comptroller if necessary, shall present a report to the County  
94 Board at the July 2023 cycle which shall evaluate options including:

- 95 (1) Demolition, which should include an estimate for recommended site  
96 improvements for Mitchell Park if the Domes are demolished
- 97 (2) Limited scope repairs to address deferred maintenance and code compliance  
98 concerns
- 99 (3) Full building renovation including the building envelope (glass, seals, concrete  
100 coating)
- 101 (4) Phase III ArtsMarket, LLC proposal for a New Urban Botanical Park and  
102 Conservatory

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104 and provide the following information:

- 105 • How long can the Domes remain open in their current state?
- 106 • Updated cost estimates for all options listed above with a description of the  
107 project scope
- 108 • In what ways could status on the State and/or National Registers of Historic  
109 Places impact each option?
- 110 • What is the lifetime on the improvements?
- 111 • Provide any known funding sources, whether the project would be eligible for  
112 bonding, and an estimate of General Obligation Bonding that would be  
113 necessary to complete the project

114 ; and

115 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture,  
116 coordinating with the Office of Strategy, Budget and Performance, and Office of  
117 Corporation Counsel shall present the Board of Supervisors with options of business  
118 plans and governance structure changes to effectuate the enhancement of the Mitchell  
119 Park Horticultural Conservatory as a destination for residents and tourists, and bring the  
120 Conservatory to perform in line with peer conservatories across the country; and

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122 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in addition to reporting on the future Dome  
123 options above, the Parks Department shall present long-term options for Mitchell Park,  
124 independent of plans for the Domes, with the goal of greater revitalization of the park  
125 space and further activation of the surrounding neighborhoods: **and**

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, while this resolution would expand the policy position adopted in File No. 16-200, this resolution does not advocate for, suggest, or show preference for one potential option over another and any decision regarding final action on the Domes will be made by the County Board of Supervisors at a future meeting.**

12/06/22  
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