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A resolution by Supervisor Johnson, Jr., to protect and preserve the natural beauty of Pleasant Valley Park and Kern Park, by recommending adoption of the following:

AN AMENDED RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Pleasant Valley Park is a 23-acre park located in Milwaukee County (the County) on the western bank of the Milwaukee River in the City of Milwaukee (the City); and

WHEREAS, the Milwaukee River Corridor contains a fragile, natural habitat, and Pleasant Valley Park and Kern Park (located immediately to the North) have some of the densest wildlife habitat within the City; and

WHEREAS, Pleasant Valley Park is home to over 100 native plant and tree species and the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture (DPRC) has documented many sensitive plant communities in Pleasant Valley Park including, false Solomon's seal, nodding wild onion, white trout-lily, zigzag goldenrod, and more; and

WHEREAS, sensitive plant communities consist of locally or regionally rare plant species, and often provide essential habitat to unique wildlife populations; and

WHEREAS, in September 2017, the DPRC provided an informational report in File No. 17-615 documenting existing concerns, including cutting of new unauthorized trails, unapproved vegetation management, erosion and trail widening, an issue with trail sustainability, unauthorized recreational activity, and user conflict; and

WHEREAS, the report outlined several ways to address existing concerns including, an improved boardwalk and trail restoration, additional signs and posted regulations, designating the trail as a hiking trail, creating a new trail to make a loop, and continued trail maintenance; and

WHEREAS, at the September 2017, meeting, the DPRC reported that the proposal of a new trail was not well received by user groups, and that the DPRC and user groups both agreed that they did not want a paved multi-use trail in Pleasant Valley Park; and

WHEREAS, although bicycling is not authorized in Pleasant Valley Park, the DPRC conducted a trail study and found that 13 to 20 percent of all park users were cyclists, a number that is similar to what one would expect to find on a trail designated specifically for mountain bikes; and

44 WHEREAS, mountain bikers and others have taken part in unauthorized tree
45 cutting and trail cutting leading to multiple unauthorized trails, causing extensive
46 damage to sensitive plants, erosion of sensitive terrain, and opening of sight lines that
47 detract from the viewshed of the corridor; and

48

49 WHEREAS, park users also report other damaging activities such as graffiti,
50 fireworks, motorcycle riding, off leash dog walking, and campfires are occurring
51 regularly in the park; and

52

53 WHEREAS, the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances provides
54 penalties for violations of park rules and regulations, including unauthorized bicycle use,
55 walking dogs off leash, damaging park property including plants and trees, removal of
56 plants or trees, unauthorized fires, and unauthorized motor vehicles in the parks; and

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58 WHEREAS, park users report that there has been little enforcement of park rules
59 and regulations in Pleasant Valley Park, though residents have repeatedly requested
60 enforcement; and

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62 WHEREAS, though the DPRC has posted several signs to deter misuse of
63 Pleasant Valley Park, the signs have repeatedly been stolen; and

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65 WHEREAS, park users report that the current trail through Pleasant Valley Park
66 is in an excellent location that allows users to enjoy both views of the Milwaukee River
67 and the beauty of the forested bluff; and

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69 WHEREAS, though there has been concern of trail widening due to the main trail
70 being located near a seepage, both the DPRC and park users have suggested that a
71 boardwalk could address the trail widening concern; and

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73 WHEREAS, the 2010 Milwaukee River Greenway Masterplan, a project of the
74 Milwaukee Environmental Consortium, in which the County is a key partner and
75 stakeholder, states that “[m]any locations along the Greenway offer a sensory escape
76 from the city. It is important to preserve outstanding river or trail views, overlooks, and
77 areas of exceptional beauty. Any future corridor improvements or restoration efforts
78 should include an assessment of the impact on the scenic beauty to ensure that visual
79 attributes are not lost.”; and

80

81 WHEREAS, Pleasant Valley Park and Kern Park are an integral part of the
82 Milwaukee River Greenway and it is necessary to take additional steps to preserve their
83 natural beauty and to enforce the proper use of the parks; and

84

85 WHEREAS, the Committee on Parks, Energy, and Environment, at its meeting of
86 May 15, 2018, recommended adoption of File No. 18-365 as amended (vote 5-0);
87 now, therefore,
88

89 BE IT RESOLVED, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (County Board)
90 declares that it shall be the policy of Milwaukee County that no new trails shall be
91 created or built along the west side of the Milwaukee River from East Locust Street to
92 East Vienna Street in Pleasant Valley Park and Kern Park, and there should only be a
93 single main trail in these parks, as shown on the Milwaukee River Greenway map
94 attached hereto; and
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96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Culture
97 (DPRC) is authorized and directed to discourage all unauthorized use of Pleasant
98 Valley Park and Kern Park through permanent signage and enforcement of current park
99 rules and regulations; and
100

101 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the DPRC, with assistance from volunteer groups
102 whenever possible, shall ~~explore the closure of~~ begin closing all unauthorized trails in
103 Pleasant Valley Park and Kern Park to ensure that the ~~parks are able to return to their~~
104 ~~natural state~~ forest floor is restored to its natural pre-trail condition; and
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106 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the DPRC shall also explore the restoration of the
107 main trail in Pleasant Valley Park, including the creation of a boardwalk, with assistance
108 from volunteer groups whenever possible; and
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110 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the DPRC shall review the current fine structure
111 for activities in the parks, including those activities that damage natural areas such as
112 biking in undesignated locations, off leash dog walking, trail cutting, plant and tree
113 removal, theft of signs, and other activities, to determine deficiencies and
114 appropriateness; and
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116 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the DPRC shall provide a written report to the
117 County Board on its enforcement efforts, recommendations regarding trail closure and
118 restoration, and a summary of its findings regarding park fines by the July 2018 cycle.
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123 S:\Committees\2018\May\PE&E\Resolutions\18-365 Resolution by Sup. Johnson Jr., to preserve Pleasant Valley and Kern
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