



July Board Cycle

Milwaukee County Parks

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Date: June 17, 2020
To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, County Board of Supervisors
From: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks
Subject: **Brew Hero Volunteer Program Acceptance of In-Kind Donations (ACTION)**

Issue

Volunteerism is an important part of our Milwaukee County Parks system. However, generational trends in volunteering and volunteering best practices, along with the recent COVID-19 pandemic, have called for shifts in the way we implement volunteer programs in our Parks. This report outlines a new volunteer program designed to creatively engage community partners and a new generation of Parks volunteers.

Background

Whether formally or informally, volunteers have been active in Parks from day one. In recent years, we have seen the benefits that Friends Groups, community organizations, schools, and corporate service days bring to our park systems through volunteering. Volunteers help control invasive species in our Parks, assist with park beautification, maintain gardens, survey salamanders, and help keep our parks tidy by picking up litter. Traditionally, volunteerism in Parks happens as part of a large group effort. However, generational trends and volunteer best practices call for new and complementary approaches which are accessible to small groups of volunteers, such as families.

In 2020, Milwaukee County Parks is introducing a new “micro-volunteering” program called *Brew Hero*. Micro-volunteering – defined as the ability for volunteers to complete easy repetitive tasks in small chunks of time, often on their own schedule – provides a new opportunity for volunteers to steward our Parks in a meaningful, ongoing way. Just like the micro-brewing of coffee, tea, and beer in small-batches, we also can engage more people in our Parks by offering micro-volunteering opportunities. The Brew Hero program is specifically focused on miniature trash cleanups in our Parks, such that a Brew Hero family, for example, might pledge to walk their local park once a week while doing a litter cleanup. This type of stewardship already happens organically by some community residents, and Brew Hero helps



formalize and promote the behavior and culture of community stewardship across the entire parks system. The City of Milwaukee and Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful are currently running similar campaigns in the community.

Brew Hero volunteers sign online waivers and volunteer agreements which outline the guidelines and rules for the Brew Hero program. Further, Brew Hero volunteers have the option of sharing their micro-volunteering experiences on social media using the hashtag #mkebrewhero. Social media posts allow volunteers to receive randomly selected thank-you rewards from local Brew Hero partners, such as local coffee shops, breweries, or tea purveyors. This component of the program serves a few important functions. First, social media engages new generations of smart-phone savvy volunteers, and posting helps promote Parks to new personal networks. The program also engages local businesses, many of whom in the service industry find it difficult to coordinate group volunteer days for their staff. Third, volunteer recognition systems are an important component of successful volunteer programs.

Milwaukee County Ordinance Chapter 13.03 requires acceptance of all gifts to county departments to be approved by the county executive and county board. Milwaukee County Parks is seeking approval to solicit and accept donations from several local businesses to support this program. Example donations could include bags of coffee, sample packs of packaged tea or beer, coffee mugs or branded pint glasses, coupons, and other merchandise. Parks will award items to randomly generated participants who post on social media (items would be given out age-appropriately, where applicable, to registered volunteers). Parks will provide an annual informational report updating the Board of Supervisors on the program's metrics and a list of donations acquired.

Recommendation

Parks' Executive Director recommends approval of Milwaukee County Parks' Brew Hero Program authorizing Parks to accept ongoing in-kind donations in support of the volunteer program.

Prepared By: Lindsay Frost, Engagement Manager, Milwaukee County Parks

Approved By: Guy Smith, Executive Director, Milwaukee County Parks



Attachments

- Attachment 1: Brew Hero 1-Pager
- Attachment 2: Brew Hero Social Media Example
- Attachment2: Fiscal Note
- Attachment 3: Resolution

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- David Crowley, County Executive



- Mary Jo Meyers, Chief of Staff, County Executive's Office
- Sheldon Wasserman, Parks, Energy & Environment Chair, Supervisor District 3
- Steven Shea, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Vice-Chair, Supervisor District 8
- Felesia Martin, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 7
- Sylvia Ortiz-Velez, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 12
- Liz Sumner, Parks, Energy & Environment Committee Member, Supervisor District 1
- Kelly Bablitch, Chief of Staff, County Board
- Julie Landry, Director, Department of Administrative Services
- Joseph Lamers, Fiscal & Budget Director, DAS
- Kelsey Evans, Committee Coordinator, Office of the County Clerk
- Emily Peterson, Research & Policy Analyst, Office of the Comptroller
- Pam Mathews, Budget & Management Analyst, DAS-PSB

