

Parks, Energy and Environment Committee on 2021-03-16 9:00 AM - VIRTUAL MEETING

This meeting will be live-streamed on the County Legislative Information Center:

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

Meeting Time: 03-16-21 09:00

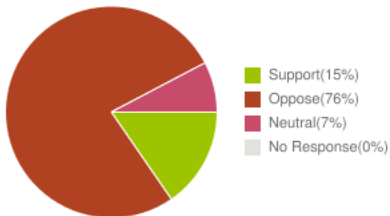
eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Parks, Energy and Environment Committee on 2021-03-16 9:00 AM - VIRTUAL MEETING This meeting will be live-streamed on the County Legislative Information Center: https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx	03-16-21 09:00	35	13	2	10	1

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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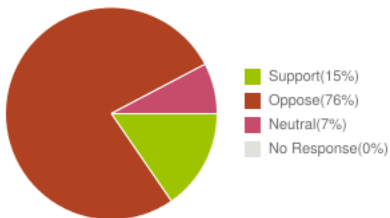
03-16-21 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
6 21-207 A resolution/ordinance amending Chapter 47 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances related to the establishment of trails within the Milwaukee County Parks System, including any changes made to established trails	13	2	10	1

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

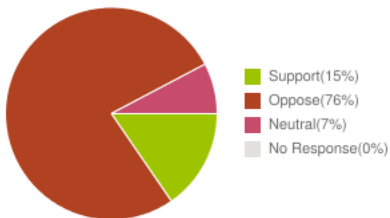
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Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for 6 21-207 A resolution/ordinance amending Chapter 47 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances related to the establishment of trails within the Milwaukee County Parks System, including any changes made to established trails

Overall Sentiment



Jason McDowell

Location:

Submitted At: 10:17am 03-16-21

The county parks system is doing an excellent job of managing the grounds, the beautification of the areas, and the activities that take place within. Adding another layer of bureaucracy to micromanage these workers won't change that much, only hinder the much-needed diverse activities that are already taking place and waste the county board's time. Don't put extra challenges in front of people who are simply trying to be healthy, or helping others by making it fun to be healthy.

Laura Schadler

Location:

Submitted At: 9:43am 03-16-21

Please continue to allow mountain bike access on the Alpha trail in Franklin, WI. My child, along with about a dozen other teens, from neighboring cities, are members of a local composite mountain biking team, that use the Alpha trail for practices. The proximity and location of Alpha Trail, allows the mountain biking team, to have trail rides, after regular school hours and parents' work hours, even through the Autumn months, when daylight hours are shorter. Without mountain bike access on Alpha trail, the team would have limited practice opportunities and limited daylight hours certain times of the year, to address necessary mountain biking skills including climbing switchbacks, descents, and bike handling over various terrains of tree roots and rocks. The Alpha trail provides a local and safe trail for this team to learn hands on skills within a reasonable distance from home. Other mountain bike trails are up to a 60 minutes drive away from team members' homes, impacting the team's ability to meet regularly for trail rides. Without mountain bike access on Alpha Trail, these teens would have limited opportunities to have trail rides, that would significantly impact technical riding skills development. My children and I use the Alpha trail during most of the year, for family mountain biking outings, which allows use to achieve our fitness goals, challenge our minds and bodies, connect with nature, which is needed for our overall health and wellness, within an area close to home, during out busy family life routine. Please continue to allow access of mountain biking on Alpha Trail. Thank you!

Greg Krauska

Location:

Submitted At: 9:10am 03-16-21

I oppose 21-207

1. The assumptions stated in the proposal are not completely accurate. Proposed trail changes will improve rideability, increase safety by having separate routes for hikers, riders and others, while preserving the environmental aspects of the land. Trails are either open or closed, not dynamically rerouted based upon conditions.
2. Trail work is being performed competently and is rightly under the purview of staff. Metro Mountain Bikers has worked closely with staff to bring modern and environmentally sound practices to trail building at Kegel Alpha. Volunteers have performed nearly all of the physical work on the trails since their opening. I have volunteered myself and found that there is a strong emphasis on creating a good riding experience, safety, sustainability and balancing of interests of various users.
3. The intent of the work in part is to dedicate separate riders and walkers. Good design can maximize safety and user experience for all. For example, shaping the course to force riders to slow down at intersections, creating sight lines that allow riders to anticipate traffic and signage emphasizing how to share the space among all users.
4. Adjacent land owners are one of many constituents. Let's have more conversation among all stakeholders, facilitated by park staff to understand how to best balance needs and interests. My own home is adjacent to park land and I understand that while I enjoy the feeling of a "larger lot," I accepted that I own a home adjacent to land that is a public space.
5. Mountain biking is a rapidly growing and responsible group. Volunteering and stewardship are part of the MTB culture. How might Parks LEVERAGE that bias for action, volunteering and cooperation?
6. Mountain biking is attractive for local communities. Look at what is happening in Bentonville, Arkansas, for example. They are making massive investments in trails to attract riders for the benefit of the local economy and to put the spotlight on their natural environment. Given this trend and the positive potential for Milwaukee County parks, now is a time to establish an approach for cooperation and community building, rather than simply move approval of trail building from staff.

I have a special appreciation for Milwaukee County Parks. I live in MN but am visiting the area 3-4 weeks per month to care for my home hospice bound father. I grew up in Milwaukee. My grandfather worked at Kosciuszko Park. My father worked at Whitnall Golf during summers off as a teacher. My first job in high school was at McCarty Park. As a Boy Scout, I was part of many hikes and service projects in the parks.

I learned about Kegel Alpha as most bike riders do - through a Facebook page run by volunteers who help decide when the trail conditions make it ok to ride, posting volunteer opportunities and sharing rider experiences for the benefit of all. Riding and volunteering at this trail has been a great experience for me as someone who is returning to his hometown more often than ever during the past 40 years.

Drop 21-207 and encourage stakeholders to work together. You have a tremendous group of positive, committed volunteers who want the best for this park area. How might you harness their energy and commitment?

Christian Walding

Location:

Submitted At: 8:59am 03-16-21

My name is Christian Walding. I'm an Emergency Room Nurse and have gained a large amount of experience over the past year enforcing the proper application and use of PPE, as well as reducing transmission risk of COVID19. I oppose the proposal requiring County Board approval for any cycling activity in a County Park. I'm a member of the Milwaukee Bike Polo Club and I am advocating to be allowed to continue to play. Including myself there are 2 other Registered Nurses in the club who have been enforcing the use of proper PPE and social distancing at the courts in Washington Park. Club members wear a properly fitting mask at all times while in Washington Park and maintain a distance of 6 feet or more from other members of the club. Members of our club have agreed to be transparent about any unprotected exposure to COVID19 and to abstain from playing bike polo until a negative test is received or quarantining for the appropriate amount of time given to us by the CDC. Physical contact is not required to play bike polo. Additionally the sport has a positive effect on the physical and mental health of those who play. As an ER nurse and active member of the cycling community, I can personally attest to the importance of continuing the safe active engagement of our parks.

Michele Bria

Location:

Submitted At: 8:53am 03-16-21

As a City of Milwaukee/Milwaukee County resident and CEO of Journey House, I encourage you to vote "No" on Resolution 21-207.

We have one of the best Parks, Recreation, and Culture Departments in the world, including in an incredible Parks Director Guy Smith. Please allow their expertise and guidance to continue on approving cycling activities and trail development in County Parks, including the Kegel Alpha Mountain Bike Trail in Whitnall Park. We want to encourage a healthy, bikeable community that welcomes activities into our parks through the expert guidance of the County Parks, who can act expeditiously to make wonderful, amazing things happen for our Milwaukee County.

Dr. Michele Bria

Milwaukee Resident

CEO, Journey House (Milwaukee Community Based Organization)

Dana Gindt

Location:

Submitted At: 11:51pm 03-15-21

I support County Supervisors voting on County Park mountain bike trail changes. It is the fiduciary responsibility of the elected officials to protect this County asset. Park staff should not have the authority to execute a MOU or allow changes to County Parks without public comment or County Board review. Staff should not be allowed to make policy changes and agreements absent of County Board consideration.

What happened to a balance of activities for all users of County Parks? Mountain biking pressures wildlife and citizens to find other more serene locations for quiet enjoyment. The Oak Leaf trail has over 125 miles of trails. But locations to walk and hike surrounded by peaceful nature are being compacted. Significantly more people participate in walking as opposed to mountain biking on trails. Wooded areas and habitat are being cleared to accomplish this proposed exclusive mountain bike trail. There was no public meeting, no local municipality of Greendale meeting, no involvement of County elected officials, no public comments. It is a reasonable request that elected officials hear input from the public and are involved in the review of changes in the Park trail system.

Resolution 21-207 requests a sensible standard be established of County Board review for changes to trails. It should be examined why some people are having issues with allowing public input and opposing elected official's involvement with modification of mountain bike trails on public land.

It is a reasonable request by taxpayers given the decades of mismanagement and handshake deals by the Parks

Department as documented in file 19-591 which has been on-going for decades. Elected officials should be part of the solution to the Parks mismanagement, a situation that has plagued the County since 2006.

The temporary moratorium should occur to allow time to review the ordinances, have input from elected officials, including the local municipality plus public comments. It is an appropriate request before any further changes are made in this County Park.

All sections of Ordinance 47 regarding County Parks should be evaluated. Are ordinances even being followed by the Parks Staff for this park?

"47.03. - Games and amusements prohibited except in designated areas; permits for exclusive use. Prohibited except in designated areas. No person shall engage in any sport, game, race or amusement in any park or parkway except upon such portions thereof as may be designated for that purpose, and then only under such rules and regulations as may be established by the park commission." The Footnote for County Ordinance Section 47 states:

"Editor's note—The references to the park commission in this chapter are obsolete and the responsibilities of the commission have been assigned to the Committee on Parks, Energy and Environment and the director of parks, energy and environment."

Was the race event that occurred for the past 4 months reviewed by the Parks, Energy and Environment Committee as required by this Ordinance? There was advertising in the parks for the sponsor, Wheel and Sprocket at the Rock for the past 4 months did that follow County Park ordinances?

21-207

"WHEREAS, Mangan Woods is a unique and important natural area within the Milwaukee County Parks System, containing some of the largest old-growth hardwoods in the System;"

This statement in the Resolution should merit that changes to this important natural area of some of the largest old-growth hardwoods be maintained and protected. Not disrupted by a Staff member supporting changes without public input or County Board involvement.

Change in public land uses and modifications to parks should require County Board input. Ordinances are not being complied with. This situation necessitates change. Please support further examination of this issue and support Resolution 21-207.

Thank you

Taryn Kaplan

Location:

Submitted At: 11:04pm 03-15-21

I oppose 21-207. As a senior at Oak Creek High School, who has been using these trails for 3 years, I'm opposed to a change in the availability for mountain bikers to use the Alpha trails. Ever since I was little, I've been on a bike. Any free time I had I would spend pedaling on the Oak Leaf Trail system. But about 3 years ago my dad and grandfather introduced me to mountain biking and then suddenly after I first started, I got word that one of my favorite teachers was going to help start a mountain bike league. I can't express enough how much my experience with my team means to me. I've met so many lovely people and I've made so many memories. Most of which were made at the Alpha Trails where we practice whenever weather and conditions permit. The Alpha Trails have become a home to me and my team and the current expansion/improvements should continue without delay.

Steven Kaplan

Location:

Submitted At: 10:01pm 03-15-21

I am deeply concerned and oppose Resolution 21-207 which alters the management of the County's recreation trails. I am a NICA assistant coach with the Franklin Composite High School Mountain Bike team of which my high school daughter is a member of. I've seen many positive impacts that the sport of mountain biking and riding the Kegel-Alpha trails has had on my daughter. NICA's mission is stated as "We build strong minds, bodies, character, and communities through cycling." It has no doubt, done just that with my daughter and many other middle and high school students on the team through an engaging and inclusive environment.

The much needed expansion and improvement of the multi-use trails should continue at the Kegel-Alpha trails. The current partnership of Milwaukee County Parks and the Metro Milwaukee Mountain Bikers has proven successful for many years and should not be altered based on falsehoods and complaints by one or a few individuals. Let the professionals that are hired by the county to manage the parks do their job. Vote "NO" to 21-207.

Michelle Guthrie

Location:

Submitted At: 4:21pm 03-15-21

PLEASE continue to allow mountain bikes to access the Alpha Trail. This is so critical for my teenage son and the dozen or more other students from the Franklin Composite Team, which gathers kids of various ages from multiple nearby school districts (my son is at Whitnall) and trains them in bike maintenance, bike safety, and riding techniques. This is a lifelong activity that gets us all moving together. It is especially critical for teens who do better at individual sports; this isn't something offered at school. And it is a FAMILY activity; I love to ride alongside my son and use the Whitnall Park area for this. Without the Alpha Trail, there is NO trail within reasonable distance for these kids, their families, and the amazing coaches who have dedicated their time and energy to this group for the past few years. We need this trail in order to continue mountain biking, period. Again, PLEASE do NOT take this away from our kids, who benefit from the outdoors, the physical activity, the camaraderie, the mechanical training, and the entire culture of mountain biking. What a gracious, generous group that respects and appreciates what they have!

This is just such a precious resource for us. My son truly needs this in his life, and so does the rest of our club. Please continue to allow mountain biking along the Alpha Trail.

Terrence McGuire

Location:

Submitted At: 2:51pm 03-15-21

Dear Milwaukee County Supervisors and Staff,

As property owners alongside Mangan Woods/Franklin, we have concerns regarding a potential expansion of the Kegel Alpha MTB Trail that originates at the Rock Sports Complex. The additional one mile of MTB trail is proposed to be sixty feet from the lot lines of homes on Hawthorne Lane and Hawthorne Court. With the vast amount of park land adjacent to the Rock Complex and within Mangan Woods, it seems unnecessary for additional trail placement to be so close to private yards and living spaces. In principle, we aren't opposed to the use of mountain bikes on trails, so long as the proposed additional trail is significantly further from adjoining homes on Hawthorne Lane and Hawthorne Court. This assumes that the original hiking trails that have been in place for many decades, remain intact.

We also support Resolution 21-207 calling for the inclusion of the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors and the authority of the Board to vote on park related matters.

Thank you for taking this into consideration.

Terry and Deb McGuire
9100 West Hawthorne Lane
Franklin WI 53132

Andy Kleist

Location:

Submitted At: 10:14am 03-15-21

I am reaching out to you to ask for your support of resolution 21-207 on the County Parks & Environment Committee Meeting tomorrow, March 16th. The resolution (in link at bottom) gives the County Board of Supervisors authority to vote on matters related to new trails in the County Parks, particularly in Mangan Woods.

As a resident who lives nearby and enjoys Mangan Woods, I am simply asking for a public meeting as I have concerns about clearing more natural habitat for new mountain bike trails in this old-growth forest that was originally gifted to the County. The Parks Department is not supporting the concept of conservation and

preservation of public parks to the greatest benefit to the most people. But instead, is catering to the desires of less than 1% of the County's population and to benefit a business directly attached to this proposed trail expansion. The Parks Department has been doing "handshake" deals since 2006 as reported in the County Audit of Parks file 19-591 resulting in mismanagement of leases, contracts, and approvals. It is clear the Parks Department does not follow their own ordinances or enforce lease agreements or contracts. As such, why does the Parks Department still have the authority to create situations that are detrimental to citizens, wildlife, and the County?

These are a few of the existing issues with this mountain bike trail proposal:

- 1) There was no public meeting where public comments were "officially" taken, and there was no public notice given to the single-family homes that abut these proposed trails and are within 60' feet of their homes. Mangan Woods falls within the municipality of the Village of Greendale, NOT the City of Franklin. Was there a public meeting in Greendale about the clearing of woods in a park in their municipality? Did the Village of Greendale receive a site plan about the location of the trails and get public input? No, they did not.
- 2) The County Board should have the opportunity to vote on private events and advertisements for private events being posted inside this public park which has been going on for several months now. For example, Wheel and Sprocket has signs in and around Mangan Woods for their "Hugh Jass Fat Bike Race".
- 3) The County Board should have a vote involving the removal of natural habitat or modification of trails in public parks, particularly mountain biking trails. Milwaukee County was recently designated as a "Bird County" and clearing large amounts of an old-growth forest does not seem to fit in with the conservation effort to protect birds and other wildlife. To allow further destruction of natural habitat in the largest contiguous environmental corridor in Southeast Wisconsin does not make sense.
- 4) Mangan Woods should be designated as a "Noise Sensitive Area" to protect the natural habitat in this 300+ acre woodland and to give sanctuary to threatened wildlife and birds in this area. The group advocating for the additional mountain bike trails have posted photos and a video on social media of bike rides in the dark. Are they planning to use these trails after dark? The public parks are closed from dusk to dawn, so how will this be enforced and policed? Are electric bikes going to be permitted on these trails?

I ask that the County please stop the clearing of trees that has already started until further evaluation with public discussion is allowed at a public meeting for County Board consideration. This has a long-term impact on this public park and there is no way to undo this harm once these paths are cleared. The County Board are our elected officials, and they should have input in the quality-of-life standards for all its constituents. The County Board needs to intercede in this pattern that continues again and again with the Parks Department.

Glen Stroik

Location:

Submitted At: 3:11pm 03-14-21

I started a High School Mountain team with Steffanie Wallin, and we call Alpha trail our home. The health of this trail system is the life blood of our team. Milwaukee Metro has worked hard to keep these trails maintained and rideable when conditions permit. The new trail has been in the works with the parks system for years. It was designed to provide a higher line that can be ridden more times of the year. There are many times when our team has to travel to other trail systems when the trails at Alpha are wet and unable to be ridden. The current plan at Alpha is to fix the low line trails that are always muddy. They won't be eliminated, but just give us an option to have an actual loop when the low line is muddy. Most other trails outside of Whitnall Park dry out in a day or two after it rains. Alpha takes a week or more. During those times we travel to Minooka Park which is the closest legal trail to ride. Many other schools ride and practice there. We could see 200 other High School athletes on a typical weeknight, and that does not include other trail users. It makes for a very crowded facility. Our next trail system we travel to is Silver Lake Park in Kenosha. The kids love SLP, but it is a 35-50 minute drive. Alpha is 5-15 minutes. John Muir in the Kettle Moraine is another option which is 40-60 minutes but again very busy. We had 15 athletes in 2020, and we will be growing fast. I will use the Wisconsin league as an example of our trajectory. The first year the league had fewer than 100 athletes, and in 2020 which is the eighth year, it had 1200. I would expect that Franklin Composite will grow 100% each year. If this resolution passes, it's going to be difficult to even have a Franklin Composite Team. Our vision as a team is to split off into actual High

School teams from each district we currently represent; Whitnall, Franklin, Greendale, Greenfield, and Oak Creek. The Ultimate NICA goal is for mountain biking to become a household sport in every school much like football & basketball. All over the country this transformation has already happened. In 13 years NICA has gone from 1 state to 30 in the country.

Steffanie Wallin

Location:

Submitted At: 11:26am 03-14-21

21-207 will have a detrimental impact on youth mountain biking. My role as the NICA Assistant Coach of Franklin Composite High School Mountain Bike Team, and teacher at Oak Creek High School, give me unique perspective as I see the positive impact mountain bike trails at Kegel-Alpha have on young community members.

National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA) came to WI in 2013 and now has 72 teams and 1200+ student-athletes. It's a non-profit organization with all-volunteer coaching staff. Its main goal is simple: more kids on bikes. Mountain biking offers chances for kids to improve physical/mental health, develop leadership and critical thinking skills, encourages risk-management, decision making, and goal-setting. NICA is focused on increasing female riders that participate through the GRiT program (Girls Riding Together). GRiT empowers girls to take on challenges of biking and forms an inclusive and equitable space with positive female role models. NICA encourages students to join the Teen Trail Corp, where students do trail maintenance activities, allowing them to advocate for the trails and serve their community.

As a teacher, I see the positive impacts mountain biking has. They are engaged, take on challenges, are better communicators and leaders, and advocates for inclusion. These actions are due to lessons learned at practice and on trail. When students don't have an outlet, they will turn to negative activities detrimental to themselves and the community. By giving a way to focus energy on improving themselves/their communities, their potential for good can be harnessed and stronger communities can be made. My role as Assistant Coach has been impactful in a way I did not anticipate. I do not have children so I consider my students "my kids." For years, they expressed a need to be outdoors in a way that engages, challenges, and provides adventure, and a need to disconnect from social media and to meet new friends in a safe way. I listened and created this positive outlet that my kids desperately need.

Franklin Composite grew from the need to provide young adults with an alternative way to get outdoors and meet new friends. We are a new team, entering our 3rd season. Since forming, we've learned the value of camaraderie, teamwork, leadership, and respect, and the value of inclusivity and providing opportunities that are suitable for all athletes. Our team is open to 6-12th grade students who reside in the communities of Franklin, Oak Creek, Greenfield, Greendale, and Hales Corners. We currently have members from each community, with 15 total athletes. We extensively rely on Kegel-Alpha as "home" trail due to its central location for all athletes. The trail is multi-use, so they have opportunities to practice trail riding and etiquette skills. We teach and require them to yield to hikers, communicate intentions, show respect to others, and leave no trace. Without Kegel-Alpha, we will be required to ride at locations unsuitable due to fees/permits and large distances for travel. Most athletes are dropped at practice by parents, and many are unable to drive to alternate trails. Kegel-Alpha as a hometown mountain bike trail is critical to keep our program inclusive and equitable.

Proposed ordinance 21-207 should be rejected as it doesn't serve the needs of the community, and is being proposed based on falsehoods that the land is leased, when it is owned by Milwaukee County. Franklin Composite has faith in the ongoing partnership of Metro Mountain Bikers and Milwaukee County Parks to make appropriate and well-researched trail decisions. Due to complaints of a few citizens who don't see benefit of shared-use trails, the future of biking at Kegel-Alpha is gravely threatened. The language of this ordinance, especially lines 75-77, is a gross overstep and punitive to a mountain biking community that is not at fault. Vote "NO" on 21-207 as it creates red tape and layers of unnecessary management.

Steffanie Wallin