

Parks, Energy and Environment Committee on 2021-04-13 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: 04-13-21 09:00

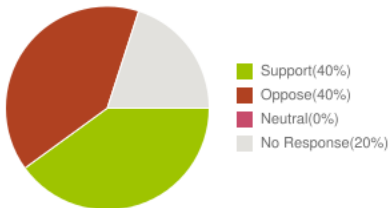
eComments Report

Meetings	Meeting Time	Agenda Items	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
Parks, Energy and Environment Committee on 2021-04-13 9:00 AM - VIRTUAL MEETING This meeting will be live-streamed on the County Legislative Information Center: https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx	04-13-21 09:00	25	5	2	2	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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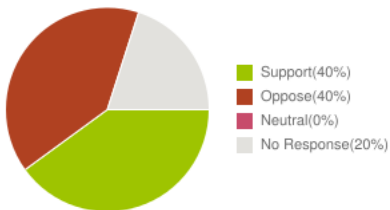
04-13-21 09:00

Agenda Name	Comments	Support	Oppose	Neutral
7 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. (03/16/21: Laid Over for One Meeting)	5	2	2	0

Sentiments for All Agenda Items

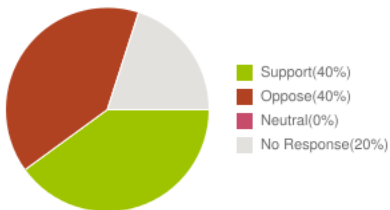
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Overall Sentiment



Agenda Item: eComments for 7 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. (03/16/21: Laid Over for One Meeting)

Overall Sentiment



Sura Faraj

Location:

Submitted At: 8:56am 04-13-21

I request that you support File 21-207 without the amendment. 20% is huge and will just mean bikers will cut only that much at a time, which is what they do now.

Over the years, many of us have watched the County Parks Dept hand over sensitive forest and woodlands to the hard recreation of mountain biking.

To keep things simple, I will bullet point my concerns:

- Mountain biking causes erosion and destruction of trails and adjoining native plants. On any spring day you'll see bike and foot trails covered in ruts.

- Mountain biking is dangerous to others on the trail. I've been hit by a mountain biker--so hard that he fell over. The danger is evident in the helmets they wear. Those of us on foot have no helmets.

- Trail closures rarely work. I've seen at least 18 trails closed, most of them with thorny and painful Buckthorn. They all opened up again.

- Anywhere there's mountain biking, there will be illegal trail cutting. Along the Milwaukee River, we see it yearly. One year we saw 4 new trail sections, cut by bikers who were seen daily bringing in chain saws on their bikes. They cut hundreds of feet of trails through sensitive areas. They've also opened up a trail by old growth American Beech Trees, a trail by a colony of Bloodroot (at-risk), and a trail by the last remaining Solomon's Seal (It's gone now). There was utterly no enforcement even though we repeatedly reported these infractions to River Revitalization Foundation, the County's liaison in these matters.

- Why is there no enforcement? We keep hearing the County needs money, and here's an actionable offense. It's being done mostly by white men with enough money to buy expensive mountain bikes (sometimes many). This seems like terrible racial and economic injustice on top of the danger to our persons and our parks.

- Mangan Woods is a truly unique, old growth forest. I don't believe the County owns another comparable piece of land. Is this really how we want to treat it - with hardcore recreation that puts the native plants and animals, and other users at risk? What will the long-term costs of this plan be? My family (descendants of the Mangans who once owned this land) are very distressed about what is becoming of it.

- Until very recently, the Trails Council has been chaired by owners of Wheel and Sprocket, who financially benefit from seeing more mountain bikes. This is a clear and direct conflict of interest. In general, there is over-representation by mountain bikers and bikers in general, both in the Milwaukee River Greenway Coalition and the County Trails Council. There is not enough representation by hikers, photographers, bird watchers, parents bringing their children, educators, and the myriad other walking trail users. Biking on paved trails is fine. Biking on soil, in the woods, in areas with endangered species, is a much more sensitive thing and not something to be taken for granted.

I would love to see the County Supervisors, who answer to citizens, take more interest and control of the trails. I would like to see a moratorium on mountain biking in old growth forest like Mangan Woods, and along the Milwaukee Estuary Area of Concern, where loss of habitat continues and creates problems for the wildlife, ecology, and safety of all.

I would also request that the County enforce its ordinances. It's a slap in the face that the Parks Dept encourages more mountain biking by allowing these infractions to go unanswered

One last thing - many years ago, I spoke to a mountain biker from out of state. He told me that where he lived, the County gave the mountain biker community an old quarry. They brought in soil to one section and started planting trees and making their own trails. I can't remember where this was, but I so wish we could do something like that here. Instead of giving our gems away for nothing, let these very motivated people create a dream for themselves.

Thank you.

Sura (Mangan) Faraj
608-627-2873
peaceiscollectivepower@juno.com

Andy Kleist

Location:

Submitted At: 8:27am 04-13-21

As a nearby resident and Milwaukee County taxpayer, I ask that you please support Resolution 21-207 regarding the additional mile of trails being proposed for Mangan Woods. No other Milwaukee County Mountain bike trail

comes within 1,000 feet of any residential homes. NONE. In addition, all other mountain bike locations have a parkway, a highway, road or river separating the mountain bike trails from the residential homes. This proposal is just another example of how this area and particularly the adjoining neighborhood is treated differently than any other residential district in Milwaukee County. What other residential neighborhoods in Milwaukee County that have been established for 40 to 50 years, have a stadium (Ballpark Commons) built immediately next to their neighborhood? The County Parks department was a co-applicant for the stadium, and now they are again encroaching on this same area and residential neighborhood by expanding mountain bike trails. In the spirit of full transparency, the County Board should be allowed to vote on County Parks that are being considered for significant changes. The Milwaukee County Parks mission is to "Protect Our Natural Resources". I do not believe that adding another mile of mountain bike trails is protecting this natural resource. There are limited spaces for finding peace and quiet already. My primary concern is that the County Board needs to be better informed and more involved in the decision making of the Parks department. Do the Supervisors even have a copy of the Parks agreement with the Metro Mountain Bikers? Or the 2017 professional trail study of this park that were both mentioned at the March 16th meeting? How can the public or the elected officials have a high level of understanding when information is incomplete? At the Committee meeting on 3.16.21, the following statements were made by Mr. Radokovich, Parks staff: "Brian Russert our natural area supervisor has immense knowledge of Mangan woods, has conducted multiple inventories through our Parks Department including Mangan Woods. We have concerns that light trail/continued trail use in the wrong areas and expansion of the trails network just by people going out and not knowing where they're going or going where they want has caused the degradation of this park site. In 2017, the parks department though a grant, had a professional trails consultant come out and do a study of this trail network, and they found multiple things that were concerning. They made recommendations for corrective action for some of these spots, in addition to increasing the amount of trails. We didn't like that. We didn't want to increase any more trails. We actually think that we're trying to reduce and right size the amount of trails in the woods, to make sure it's better." The Parks department "didn't want to increase any more trails" yet another mile of trails is being proposed now. That doesn't make sense. It seems the main driver behind these changes is to make the trails "better" to benefit the businesses directly next door, namely The Rock and Wheel and Sprocket. The trails in Mangan Woods connect in 3 different places with access to these businesses. These trail expansions significantly benefit them. Additionally, the historical trail segments that the Parks is trying to close will continue to be used. The parks study has shown that to happen and raking leaves over these trails as stated at the walk through of Mangan Woods will not stop bikers from continuing to use closed trails. Again, I ask that the Parks department, the County Board, and Staff support resolution 21-207.

Scott Szalanski

Location:

Submitted At: 10:25pm 04-12-21

I am For the amendment to Section 1. Chapter 47.11 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances for the following reasons:

1. While there are many groups against this Amendment, none of them live adjacent to the trails in Mangan Woods. As a result, citizens adjacent to Mangan Trail pay County taxes for upkeep of the County Parks, while not all mountain bike users pay County taxes. (Note that the Rock Complex and the Velo apartment complex across the street from the Rock Complex both do not pay taxes until their TID financing is paid off)
2. While there are many groups opposed to this amendment, who can guarantee that everyone of their members will all follow the rules stated in the amendment and guarantee the trail problems are corrected?
3. When issues to the trails in Mangan Woods occur regarding bike riders elected County Supervisors need to be adequately informed to properly and efficiently correct them.

Rich Steenwyk

Location:

Submitted At: 4:50pm 04-12-21

I oppose the changes proposed in 21-207, including those in the yet-to-be introduced PE&E amendment attempting to limit impact by declaring a 20% difference measurement. This legislation reads like a solution looking for a problem and borders on legislative capture by a very tiny minority of interests at the expense of many. Specifically the proposed changes around line 75 that single out activity on one trail in one park should be

viewed with a healthy dose of skepticism. The authors of the changes do not make a compelling case for why new regulation is needed? Are the parks being actively damaged? Leave the control where it is best managed -- In the Parks Department and beef up public comment periods and community engagement rules instead. Leave the micromanaging out of the full board as it will only serve to delay projects that are beneficial to all people -- a direction we should all support and one embodied in very clear messaging from the County Executive. MKE County needs MORE trails for MORE users, not LESS.

John Hepp

Location:

Submitted At: 10:02am 04-12-21

This ordinance is blatantly unnecessary. The MTB trails provide great recreation and should not be closed, even temporarily, or subject to more veto power.