



Milwaukee County

Legislation Text

File #: 11-112, **Version:** 1

From the Director, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (DPRC) requesting approval of an ordinance authorizing DPRC's Director to issue citations to any person who violates any of the provisions of Chapter 47 of the Milwaukee County Code of General Ordinances, and to delegate that authority to employees under her/his supervision in conformity with Wis. Stat. s. 66.0113.

POLICY

The Director, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture (DPRC) respectfully requests that the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors adopt an ordinance/resolution authorizing DPRC's Director to issue citations to any person who violates any of the provisions of Chapter 47 of the Milwaukee County General Ordinances, and to delegate that authority to employees under her/his supervision in conformity with Wis. Stat. s. 66.0113.

BACKGROUND

In 2008 DRPC created, with County Board approval, a Park Ranger program dedicated to the education of park patrons, public safety, fee compliance, and rule enforcement. Since then, the Park Rangers have been assisting law enforcement by responding to and handling reports of minor offenses of Chapter 47 of Milwaukee County General Ordinances (MCGO), which governs conduct in Milwaukee County's parks and parkways. Examples of some offenses include off-leash dogs, parking violations, failure to pay fees, and permit violations.

The current MCGO limits the Parks Rangers' enforcement authority to verbal warnings only. With the support of the Office of the Sheriff, Corporation Counsel, and the Milwaukee County Clerk of Circuit Court (Clerk of Court), DPRC is now seeking authorization from the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors (Board) to issue citations. Wis. Stat. s. 66.0113(2), Citations for certain ordinance violations, provides in part:

the governing body of a county. . . may designate by ordinance or resolution other county. . . officials who may issue citations with respect to ordinances which are directly related to the official responsibilities of the officials. Officials granted the authority to issue citations may delegate, with the approval of the governing body, the authority to employees.

DPRC's authority to issue citations would not diminish the Sheriff's Office or other local law enforcement officials' authority, duties, or responsibilities but would supplement their efforts and allow those agencies to focus on more serious offenses.

To begin the process of issuing citations, after the Board has conferred the authority upon the Parks Director to do so, DPRC, the Office of the Sheriff and the Clerk of Court have agreed to the following:

1. DPRC will procure batches of citations with a department-specific numerical system.
2. The Clerk of Court will enter DPRC into its system as a new issuing agency.
3. DPRC and the Office of the Sheriff will mutually agree upon the ordinance violations for which DPRC will issue citations.
4. The Office of the Sheriff will assist DPRC in entering issued-citations into the County Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS).
 - a. In 2012 the Sheriff's Office will be transitioning from CJIS to Phoenix, a web-based data entry system. Because the Phoenix system allows for different users to have access to separate databases, DPRC and the Sheriff's Office will, at that time, determine whether DPRC should be

responsible for entering its own citation information.

5. The procedure for handling contested citations issued by DPRC will follow the current procedure outlined in Wis. Stat. s. 66.0113.
6. Expand the existing Park Ranger training currently provided by the Office of the Sheriff Training Academy to include detailed ordinance review, responsibilities and communication skills required for issuing citations.
7. A list of DPRC employees authorized to issue citations will be kept on file in the department and updated annually.

The primary duties of Park Rangers are to educate, and to advocate for voluntary compliance with the rules governing parks and parkways. Under this proposal, the Park Rangers will have an additional discretionary duty to enforce ordinances where they believe a person has committed an offense and to issue a citation.

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution/ordinance authorizing DPRC's Director to issue citations to any person who violates any of the provisions of Chapter 47 of the Milwaukee County General Ordinances, and to delegate that authority to employees under her/his supervision in conformity with Wis. Stat. s. 66.0113.

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