



Chicago Park District

Legislation Text

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AMENDMENT TO SECTION C (3) (A) OF CHAPTER VII AND SECTION C (1) OF CHAPTER VIII OF THE CODE OF THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

To the Honorable Board of Commissioners of the Chicago Park District:

I. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Commissioners grant authority to amend Chapter VII, Section C Subsection (3) (A) of the Chicago Park District Code and is further recommended that the Board of Commissioners amend Chapter VIII, Section C, Subsection 1 prohibiting the use of small unmanned aircraft without a permit.

II. Explanation

Section 7.02 of the Chicago Park District Act, 70 ILCS 1505/7.02, enables the Board of Commissioners to “establish by ordinance all needful rules and regulations for the government and protection of parks...”

The availability and use of drones, quadcopters, multirotors, airplanes or helicopters that are flown under the control of a remote pilot or geographic positioning system (GPS) has expanded tremendously in recent years. More than 200,000 of these small unmanned aircraft are sold annually, or roughly 15,000 to 16,000 each month.

The Federal Aviation Administration has promulgated laws that preempt local jurisdiction over skies above 500 feet, within 5 miles of an airport and over manned or unmanned aircraft over 55 pounds. In areas below, that do not meet those standards, the FAA has sought comment on proposed legislation subject to a two year period of review.

In the meantime, the Park District recognizes that flight of such small, unmanned aircraft is a hobby enjoyed by many, possesses practical commercial uses, but may also pose potential risks to children, families and individuals who visit Park District property. Whether for commercial or recreational purposes, these small aircraft can fall from hundreds of feet above, crash into other craft flying near or hover in a manner that may disturb some people. Moreover, these aircraft may negatively impact the use and enjoyment of our parks, museums and harbors. The permitting process will allow the Park District to manage the potential risks associated with the use of drones and other unmanned small aircraft while still allowing their recreational and commercial use.

Section C, Subsection 3 (A) of Chapter VII of the Code of the Chicago Park District (the “Code”) establishes general permit requirements of the involving activities and or events transacted within the park system. The

proposed amendment seeks to add an additional paragraph regarding the operation of unmanned aircraft systems and model aeronautics.

Similarly Section C, Subsection 1 of Chapter VIII establishes permit requirements regarding the use of Harbors within the park system. The proposed amendment seeks to also add the same paragraph regarding the operation of unmanned aircraft systems and model aeronautics over Chicago Park District Harbors.

It is therefore recommended that Section C Subsection 3 (A) of Chapter VII and Section C, Subsection 1 of Chapter VIII of the Code be amended. The amendment will become effective upon approval by the Board of Commissioners.

The General Counsel shall prepare and publish copies of the portions of the Code of the Chicago Park District that have been revised by reason of this amendment.