



City of Chicago



R2021-933

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date: 9/14/2021

Sponsor(s): Hadden (49)
Osterman (48)

Type: Resolution

Title: Call for Chicago Park District to implement additional drowning mitigation strategies

Committee(s) Assignment: Committee on Special Events, Cultural Affairs and Recreation

WHEREAS, Unlike other injuries, mortality or morbidity from drowning is determined almost exclusively on the scene of the incident, based on how quickly the drowning person is removed from the water and the resuscitation efforts that are initiated; and

WHEREAS, Bystanders can make a critical difference in the survival of a drowning victim and while effective performance of a rescue in water without equipment is possible, the use of equipment like life ring buoys significantly reduces the risk of drownings; and

WHEREAS, The International Life Saving Federation has developed the “Drowning Chain of Survival”, a series of steps which helps people understand how to act effectively in the event of a drowning and is taught by the Chicago Red Cross, the Chicago Park District, and by other agencies in the City; and

WHEREAS, In the Drowning Chain of Survival, the International Life Saving Federation counsels that “[p]roviding flotation is a strategy not widely employed despite buying valuable time for emergency services to arrive, or for those on-scenes to plan rescue efforts”; and

WHEREAS, The City already has life ring buoys on all Chicago lakefront marine harbors and docks, as well as the River; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Labor requires life ring buoys be readily available, at a distance not to exceed 200 feet from each other, for emergency rescue operations when working over or near water – our children should have similar protection as our workers; and

WHEREAS, Neighboring cities adjacent to Lake Michigan have installed life ring buoys and document several successful rescues and no reported injuries due to the use of the ring; and

WHEREAS, Drowning is an important yet neglected public health issue that gravely affects youth and their families with not only loss of life, but also costly financial burdens and incalculable physical and emotional suffering; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, gathered here this fourteenth day of September, 2021, do hereby call upon the Chicago Park District to implement additional drowning mitigation strategies, including providing ring life buoys and other safety rescue equipment, on all piers and at least every 200 feet on Park District property abutting Lake Michigan.



MARIA E. HADDEN
Alderperson, 49th Ward

**RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT TO
IMPLEMENT ADDITIONAL DROWNING MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

WHEREAS, Drowning is a national epidemic and is the leading cause of accidental injury death for children under five, the second leading cause for children under 15, and the third leading cause for people under 30; and

WHEREAS, The dangers of drowning have been recognized across the global – Governor J.B. Pritzker has proclaimed the month of May “Childhood Drowning Prevention Month”, the United Nations designated July 25th as “World Drowning Prevention Day”, and the World Health Organization has named drowning a neglected public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, For every child that fatally drowns, another eight children receive emergency care for non-fatal submersion injuries, 40% of whom will require hospitalization for further care as non-fatal drowning injuries can cause severe brain damage; and

WHEREAS, Disparities in drowning death rates between non-Hispanic Black and White persons increased from 2005 to 2019, and male African American adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age face the highest rates of drowning at 4.06 per 100,000; and

WHEREAS, St. Joseph, Michigan, in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers, found that a single drowning on the Great Lakes, with coast guard deployment searching for the first 24-48 hours, can cost up to \$27,000 per hour, not including the cost of ambulance and ground resources; and

WHEREAS, Between 2010 and 2019, Chicago lost 218 residents to drownings in natural water, 40% of whom were young people between the ages of 5 and 24 and two-thirds of whom were non-white or Hispanic residents; and

WHEREAS, Since the Park District’s 35% reduction in lifeguard hours in 2009, lifeguards only work eight hours a day during the three months of summer, and the Park District has not implemented any additional drowning mitigations since this reduction occurred; and

WHEREAS, Young residents have direct access to the lakefront with no barriers, and the lack of barriers continues to be a leading risk factor for drowning; and

WHEREAS, Studies have found correlations between open water drowning rates and the number and type of state regulations, and concluded states with more regulations had lower open water drowning death rates; and

WHEREAS, States lacking regulations on lifeguards, water quality, rescue equipment, tracking/planning/reporting and signage had open water drowning death rates 3.02 times higher among youth, and 4.16 times higher among non-white residents; and

WHEREAS, Tracking/planning/reporting regulations are associated with a 45% reduction in open water drowning rates overall and among those aged 0-17 years; and



CITY OF CHICAGO

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
ANNA M. VALENCIA

Chicago City Council Co-Sponsor Form

Document No.: R2021-933

Subject: Call for Chicago Park District to implement additional drowning mitigation strategies

Adding Co-Sponsor(s)

Please **ADD** Co-Sponsor(s) Shown Below – (Principal Sponsor's Consent Required)

Alderman Harry Osterman 48 Ward)
(Signature)

Alderman Harry Osterman 48 Ward)

Date Filed: 9/10/2021 Principal Sponsor: M. Fadden
(Signature)

Removing Co-Sponsor(s)

Please **REMOVE** Co-Sponsor(s) Below – (Principal Sponsor's Consent NOT Required)

Alderman _____ Ward)
(Signature)

Alderman _____ Ward)
(Signature)

Date Filed: _____

- Final Copies To Be Filed With:
- Chairman of Committee to which legislation was referred
 - City Clerk