



Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

100 East Erie Street
Chicago, IL 60611

Legislation Text

File #: 16-0833, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION FOR BOARD MEETING OF AUGUST 4, 2016

RESOLUTION sponsored by the Board of Commissioners recognizing the Chicago Defender Charities Bud Billiken® Parade and Picnic

WHEREAS, on May 5, 1905, Robert Sengstacke Abbott founded the *Chicago Defender* newspaper, with a plan to use the newspaper to address African-American issues. In 1921, Mr. Abbott started the children's section of the newspaper, which was called the *Chicago Defender, Jr.*; and

WHEREAS, the young editor of the *Chicago Defender Jr.* was Robert Watkins, who was known as Bud Billiken®, and, it included an application to the Bud Billiken® Club. "The 'Rules of the Bud Billiken® Club' guided youth to take pride in their race and to strive towards middle class respectability." The Club was named after the Billiken, "the guardian angel of little children, according to Chinese legend." Moreover, the Bud Billiken® Club sponsored scholarships, and assisted youth with job training, internships and college recruitment. The Club featured outstanding Chicago youth through their volunteer work and essay contests. The Club also organized school supply giveaways. In addition, the Club focused on creating safe communities through conflict resolution and it promoted the importance of education; and

WHEREAS, today, the Bud Billiken® Parade focuses on "a day of family fun and celebration that kicks off the return to school for Chicagoland school children, while...staying true to the spirit of providing a chance for underserved kids to be a part of the spotlight." The Bud Billiken® Parade selects a Royal Court to lead the parade. Chicagoland children ages 8-12 are chosen based on academic achievement and community service. The 2016 Bud Billiken® Royal Court is comprised of six impressive young boys and girls." Moreover, "...the royal court is enhanced by two Bud Billiken® Royal Advisors who provide support, encouragement, and guidance to the court during their reign"; and

WHEREAS, over a few weeks, the selected Royal Court participates in a wide variety of events and activities, including a day where they are recognized on the field at a White Sox game. At the parade, the Royal Court will lead the parade on a specialty float designed especially for them; and

WHEREAS, the 87th Annual Bud Billiken® Parade Royal Court for 2016 are: King Zachary Carter, Queen Naomi Smith, Prince Jacob Joiner, Princess Taylor Adams, Lord Antoni Scott, Lady Tyannha Campbell, and Royal Advisors Caitlyn Smith and Jeremiah Hudson; and

WHEREAS, initially, Mr. Abbot had created a day for members of the Bud Billiken® Club and the youth who sold his newspapers to be an annual event in November. However, by 1929, the day of fun "morphed" into a summer-time celebration and parade. Therefore, in 1929, Mr. Abbott expanded on the Bud Billiken® concept to include the Parade. The parade's purpose was as a way to give inner city children a creative outlet and a chance to shine in the limelight; and

WHEREAS, now in its 87th year of celebration, and with the outstanding work of the Chicago Defender Charities Team and Board of Directors' leadership of the President, Dr. Marcus T. Alexander, Executive Director, Dr. Marc A. Sengstacke, and all of the members of the Board...the Bud Billiken® Parade is the second largest parade in the United States; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, hundreds of thousands of people have lined the streets of the parade route, in addition to millions of viewers watching on live television. Today, the Bud Billiken® Parade has grown into an institution with participation from across generations and across the country. Featuring participants on dozens of floats, bands, drill teams and marching units; and

WHEREAS, the Bud Billiken® Parade commences every second Saturday in August. The parade route travels south on Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, from Oakwood Blvd to 51st Street, continues on Ellsworth Drive through Washington Park, and disbands on 55th Street; and

WHEREAS, over the years, many celebrities have appeared in the Bud Billiken® Parade, such as: Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali, James Brown, Aretha Franklin, The Supremes, Roy Rogers, Lena Horne, and former President, Harry S. Truman. In recent years, the then Senator, Barack Obama, Oprah Winfrey, L.L. Cool J, Spike Lee, Michael Jordan, Frank Thomas, Donny Osmond, Queen Latifah, Tyler Perry and many more; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners and staff of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago are honored to recognize the 87th Annual Chicago Defender and Charities Bud Billiken® Parade and Picnic of 2016; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, on behalf of ourselves and staff, do hereby honor the 87th Annual Chicago Defender and Charities Bud Billiken® Parade and Picnic; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution be spread upon the permanent Record of Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, and that a copy of same, suitably engrossed, be presented to the Chicago Defender and Charities Bud Billiken® Parade.

Dated: August 4, 2016

Approved: MARIYANA T. SPYROPOULOS, President; BARBARA J. MCGOWAN, Vice President; FRANK AVILA, Chairman, Committee on Finance; MICHAEL A. ALVAREZ; TIMOTHY BRADFORD; CYNTHIA M. SANTOS; DEBRA SHORE; KARI K. STEELE; DAVID J. WALSH; Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Approved as to Form and Legality: Ronald M. Hill, General Counsel, RMH