



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

November 1, 2012

To the Honorable, the Common Council
of the City of Milwaukee

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

I have vetoed File number 120931, a “resolution relating to Common Council approval of project design and final plans for any development to be constructed on City- or Redevelopment Authority-owned land conveyed to another owner by means of a land disposition report” that was taken up and passed as an immediate adoption file.

With this veto, I respectfully request the Council review this proposal through its customary committee process which would allow city policymakers to hear from interested and affected parties. My concerns with this file are that it could significantly reduce the predictability of the development process for construction proposed on land purchased from either the City or the Redevelopment Authority (RACM), making City and RACM-owned land less competitive than privately-owned property.

RACM and the City have invested heavily in business park development in order to attract family-supporting jobs to central city neighborhoods. These business parks compete for buyers with many other industrial sites throughout metropolitan Milwaukee. Many factors, such as buyer concerns about building on former brownfield sites, make the sale of central city manufacturing sites challenging.

RACM has a strong record of working with companies to design and construct attractive and appropriate buildings in its business parks. Prior to land sale, buyers are provided with building design standards and staff from the Department of City Development works with buyers to ensure buildings are compatible with the standards. RACM’s design standards have led to the construction of high-quality buildings within the Menomonee Valley Industrial Center, while providing buyers reasonable flexibility to adjust design as the building program evolves.

Developers of affordable housing are frequent buyers of City and RACM-owned property. In order to apply for Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), they seek land sale approval at the beginning of their development process, because they must show the Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority that they have control of the property on which they propose

to build. As one would expect, these developers do not invest significant resources in building design until they win LIHTC allocations, because without an allocation of LIHTC, these projects cannot go forward.

I share the Council's desire to promote the best possible building design standards in a way that does not discourage job-creating investment or low income housing in our City. I will work with the sponsors of file number 120931 to address these issues and the concerns that the sponsors have brought to my attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Barrett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

Tom Barrett
Mayor