

VIEWPOINT

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EDITOR'S JOURNAL

Business execs backing Marcoux this time



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There has been a lot of talk about how Milwaukee Department of Development commissioner Rocky Marcoux is going through the same difficult reappointment process this year as he did in 2012.

But there is one very big difference. This time Marcoux has the backing of a

large group of business executives, some of whom were actually against his reappointment in 2012.

Since the Milwaukee Common Council sent his reappointment back to committee in early July, I've been getting calls, emails and texts from Milwaukee-area business executives in support of Marcoux. That is the exact opposite of 2012, when my phone calls and emails were from execs urging our publication to come out against Marcoux's reappointment.

What's changed?

"Rocky got it after what happened last time," said one business executive. "He

reached out to the business community and worked hard to make sure we were involved and that we had a voice in what goes on at Milwaukee City Hall. It would be a shame if he is taken out because of the politics of what is going on."

I can vouch for the change in Marcoux. Since his tough reappointment in 2012, he has made an effort to reach out more to the business community. For example, he has met frequently with our paper's editorial board, sitting in our conference room answering questions and giving us updates on projects throughout the city. He will use whatever props he can find to show how many of the projects work together.

Aldermen opposed to Marcoux said he has focused too much on downtown development, while ignoring city neighborhoods in need of revitalization. However, several political observers said much of the opposition from aldermen is aimed at Mayor Tom



Rocky Marcoux

Barrett and trying to show that Ashanti Hamilton, recently elected Common Council president, will be independent and his own force.

Many business executives, from real estate executives to lawyers, to bankers and CEOs are actively lobbying aldermen at City Hall to support Marcoux.

Several have written letters of support to Hamilton and a letter was released July 15 signed by a large group of executives, including Johnson Controls Inc. CEO Alex Molinaroli, Fiduciary Management CEO Ted Kellner and Marquette University president Michael Lovell.

Linda Gorens-Levey, a partner at General Capital Group in Fox Point, said her firm decided to invest in the Century City project at the former Tower Automotive site in Milwaukee's central city because Marcoux asked them to.

"This public private collaboration is one of the most challenging neighborhoods of the city and is truly unique," she wrote. "It is not about the real estate – it is about the vision for revitalizing the neighborhood, creating new family wage-sustaining jobs and building economic stability."

MILWAUKEE
BUSINESS JOURNAL

JULY 22, 2016