

Ms. Patricia Algiers
Presentation to Zoning and Neighborhood Development Committee
January 13, 2004

Good morning, Madam Chairwoman, and members of the Committee.

I am happy for the opportunity to address you, and grateful to Acting Mayor Marvin Pratt for his nomination of me as Commissioner of the Department of City Development.

I have deep respect for the accomplishments of DCD over the past years. I eagerly embrace the goals that have been set for this key department through its strategic plan and the 2004 city budget the common council and the Mayor passed. I will honor these goals. They are precisely in sync with my personal measures of how to grow value for this city:

- Promote an economic climate of lasting investment, innovation and economic opportunity for all city residents.
- Create diverse housing choices.
- Encourage high quality development that preserves, promotes and protects Milwaukee's physical character; and
- Ensure processes, reviews and approvals that are efficient, consistent and user-friendly.

I love the City of Milwaukee. I was born in Milwaukee at St. Joe's.

Let me say up front because this issue was raised so quickly in the media, that I am aware of the residency requirement for City of Milwaukee employees. It was accurately reported that at the time of my nomination by Acting Mayor Pratt, that I was

living in Shorewood, in a duplex I converted to condos. This past Friday, I received an offer on one of the two units, and I am looking for a condo in downtown Milwaukee. Of course – the folks in DCD also have plenty of suggestions for me, and that's helpful.

My father is a retired physician who taught me dedication to serving others. When our family was young, and my father was in medical school and doing his internship, we lived in Westlawn Housing Development. I remember him telling me that his salary was 125 dollars a month, and \$28 of that went to rent. After my father retired from private practice, he worked in Urgent Care, first at the old County General and then at Froedtert. He did this because he felt strongly that uninsured people should have access to good health care.

I am a graduate of the University of Wisconsin – Madison, with a degree in design. My education also includes Appalachian State University in North Carolina and Purdue University in Indiana for course work in real estate.

My work history begins with four years at the downtown Milwaukee Boston Store, which of course remains an anchor of the Shops of Grand Avenue. At the time I began at Boston Store I did design work that supported merchandising and sales, the Boston Store was still a self-standing entity on Wisconsin Avenue, and creating a presence at both Northridge and Southridge malls, and with stores at Capitol Court and Bayshore.

In the years since, Capitol Court has seen revitalization as Midtown Center. The Grand Avenue Mall, now the Shops of Grand Avenue, came into being with Boston Store re-opening its shop windows to the street, and a 74-unit condo project giving new

life to the upper floors of the old building. In many ways throughout my professional life, I have been witness to, and part of, evolution brought by development.

Since 1980, my work resulted in innovation in design and space planning, programming, site management and a gradual – but deep – immersion into industrial and commercial real estate. Through my work at The Gronik Company, Heike Design Associates, HNTB Corporation and then BHS Architects, I honed project management skills, researched geographic areas and studied industrial and economic trends.

The past seven years I was with Kahler Slater Architects, most recently as Principal and Senior Design Strategist. I led a team that provided services including assessment, highest and best use studies, facility management, site analysis and planning, and lease review. My clients included Quarles & Brady, the 411 Building, Sensient Technologies and Monster.com. I traveled throughout the country and saw what other cities have done.

While at Kahler Slater, I researched and authored an economic development index and system called “Live, Work, Play”. This index, when applied to a study area in Milwaukee’s downtown, allowed us to analyze and assess activity. With that data we created a map with interlocking circles of live, work, and play activities. We applied highest and best use filters and moved the study to a new level: that of identifying economic development opportunities in the area. We called those opportunities “igniters”. My work on this unprecedented study allowed me to engage in public discussion on work trends, downtown living, and the like. To this date I have made more than 80 presentations on this index to city, county and state leaders as well as community

organizations. I continue this research and am now looking at it through neighborhood analysis.

I have copies of the live, work and play materials and related articles for you, madam chair, and for the members of this committee.

When contacted by Mayor Pratt for this position, I was operating a private consulting business.

As I come from the private sector, I believe that in many respects, the City of Milwaukee DCD must act as a private sector business. It must compete. It must acknowledge that investment can be made *anywhere* and so we must work constantly to market the benefits of investment *here*. A developer's impressions are formed through plan review, contract negotiation, overall knowledge and efficiency of staff, and speed of permitting.

Where our responses have been fast and accurate, I will work to continue that good work and to enhance it. Where we must improve, I will guide that improvement. I will ask the questions that are always asked by a good businessman in the private sector once the deal is done and the product delivered: How did we perform? Who made the difference for you? What could we have done better? Without asking those questions, we don't have the right to ask "When will you do business with us again?"

I recognize that everything that is done in DCD is the result of a broad thought process and partnerships. Whether it's housing, planning or real estate, there is a depth of discussion that is appropriate for the complexity of today's projects. I've seen this approach and the best name I can give it is cohesion. Nothing happens in a vacuum at

DCD, and I join our division managers, and I'm sure, all of you, in saying that nothing should.

The new economy is regional in nature. I pledge to work to leverage to best advantage our partnerships with the county, surrounding communities and the state. I have enjoyed working in past roles with Cory Nettles, State Secretary of Commerce. I spoke with him late last week and I am excited about working with a commerce secretary and a Governor who understand how important the city of Milwaukee is to the economic health of this region and this state.

I see my role as Commissioner in the Department of City Development as being the new captain of a ship that is in solid shape and on a steady course. I have no anticipation of making changes in personnel. I was delighted by my reception in the department that last few days. I have been warmly welcomed by staff, many of whom I have met or worked with previously. In those few short days I have been given briefings by division heads who steer our path in planning, housing, real estate, zoning, permitting, and economic development, and more. I have had an all-too-brief car tour of some current projects covering many sectors of the city, including City Homes and developments on King Drive. I am working hard to learn the unique issues and characters of the districts you represent. I have read through documents such as the 2004 City budget summary, and reports on DCD's past accomplishments and its strategic plan.

I was impressed by what I read and I was impressed with the people who put these materials together. I found the infrastructure of this department intact and productive.

I will use the budget and strategic plan documents as my guide to continuing the course of DCD. My approach will be positive and proactive. I will sell the city.

I will show pride in the good work that has been done. I will continue to foster the growth of technology businesses and promote entrepreneurship. We will continue to use as our benchmarks equalized tax base, number of jobs created and jobs retained, and dollars leveraged.

Under the direction of Acting Mayor Pratt, I will bring new emphasis to neighborhoods. One of our critical tools will be the Main Street Milwaukee program. I know that the Community Development Committee will be acting on the Main Street program resolution later today. It's a unique collaboration between DCD and LISC that will help us spur revitalization in our commercial corridors.

We have two neighborhood study plans that are in completion stages. They are the West Side Advisory Plan, and the long-awaited Fond du Lac and North Study. The Fondy & North plan revealed overall strengths for that area such as a large supply of workers, good access to transportation routes, and solid successes in Housing initiatives such as our Lindsay Heights and City Homes projects. Residents and others will learn more about the draft plan in two open houses for the Fond du Lac and North plan we have scheduled later this month.

We need MORE neighborhood planning. While challenges of budget and staffing exist, we have the opportunity to roll up our sleeves and take a hard look at where unemployment, crime trends and/or high numbers of vacant commercial properties are dragging down revitalization, dragging down hope, creating despair. I wouldn't be my

father's daughter if I didn't want to make a difference there. I want to lead the charge, making a difference to all people in all neighborhoods in Milwaukee, with your help and input.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to present to you this morning. I am eager to take on this responsibility. I will work very hard during this period of transition to keep the good things going, and to get more good things started.

Thank you.