

Polanco (Urtiz), Joanna

From: Bauman, Robert
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2025 5:32 PM
To: Polanco (Urtiz), Joanna
Subject: Fwd: Water St. Concerns
Attachments: PastedGraphic-1.tiff

Please add to file.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Drew Deuster <drew@wild-planet.com>
Date: July 29, 2025 at 4:58:09 PM CDT
To: "Perez, Jose" <JoseG.Perez@milwaukee.gov>, "Bauman, Robert" <rjbauma@milwaukee.gov>, "Spiker, Scott" <Scott.Spiker@milwaukee.gov>
Subject: **Water St. Concerns**

Good afternoon Aldermen,

I am writing to plead with you for some action in helping correct the recent violence and issues that we have seen in our Water St. entertainment district. I have owned bars on Water St. for the last 15 years. While the underage loitering and lawlessness has gotten progressively worse, this year we have seen it escalate to unimaginable levels. We are witnessing problematic groups come down to Water St. with the sole intention of causing problems and disrupting what is normally a lively and socially vibrant neighborhood.

Thoughts on what we can do:

- MPD seems to be understaffed, making enforcement of any laws difficult. We need more officers on the ground or we are going to need to be calling in the national guard.
- MPD needs to take a more proactive approach with following through on actual citing and arresting people blatantly breaking the law.
- Curfews. In 2023 we made a public announcement that we would be enforcing curfews for underagers with fines and fines for the parents. This was news that was broadcasted through all of the local news outlets.
- If we could create some kind of temporary holding facility this would be helpful in deterring offenses. I would suspect this could be something similar to what is used at the Summerfest grounds or American Family Field.
- We may want to consider reopening the streets. I'm worried about the "cruising" and safety impacts of this, but it may help deter the excessive loitering we've seen.
- My last thought, which is one we visit every year, is creating a fenced in "entertainment district" in which people would have to be metal detected and searched to enter, scan ID's for proof of age and accountability if they're misbehaving. This infrastructure could be costly, but it would be easier to manage and if we implemented a cover charge we could likely subsidize it.

Right now the public perception is bad. We need to spread the message that we are not going to stand for the lawlessness anymore. Most people visiting the establishments are just looking to enjoy a night out with friends, and has quickly becoming too dangerous to be on the streets. I know some of my colleagues have shared videos. I'm hoping we can make some quick decisions to reduce the chaos and violence that we are seeing every weekend.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts,

Drew Deuster
Partner - Wild Planet Hospitality Group
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