



**Department of Public Works
Milwaukee Water Works**

Mariano A. Schifalacqua
Commissioner of Public Works

James P. Purko
Deputy Commissioner of Public Works

Carrie M. Lewis
Superintendent of Water Works

October 2, 2001

Honorable Annette E. Scherbert, Chairwoman
Public Improvements Committee
200 East Wells Street; Room 220
Milwaukee, WI

Dear Chairwoman Scherbert:

Resolution 010769 authorizes and directs the Water Works to install, operate and maintain an ornamental fountain in the median in the 2000 block of S. Layton Boulevard. I wanted to provide you with comments that the Water Works has regarding this matter.

As you know, the Water Works is not funded in any way by the City tax levy. Revenues from the sale of water fund our operation. As such, we have an obligation to use our financial resources in ways that benefit all our ratepayers, and that have a direct impact on the quality and quantity of water that we deliver.

Installing, operating and/or maintaining fountains in boulevards are activities that are inconsistent with this mission. They do not directly benefit all ratepayers, nor improve water quality and quantity.

Fountains present an attractive nuisance and require considerable maintenance and resources to keep them operational. Maintaining water flow through a fountain requires underground pumping capabilities, a water supply, electrical supply and meter. A contract would have to be issued for the installation. This would involve a concrete base for the fountain, plumbing and electrical work (including an aboveground electrical cabinet), and a pit for the pump and other equipment. In summary, it is a bigger and more expensive job than one might expect. Yearly maintenance and future improvements are considerations.

It is true that Water Works has inherited the maintenance of some fountains in the City. We have relieved ourselves of this non-core business whenever the opportunity has presented itself. Agreements have been worked out with local business associations who have assumed the maintenance and costs associated with some fountains. Others have been decommissioned.

Alderman Donovan shared with me photographs of the fountain. It is truly beautiful. As a possible alternate suggestion, perhaps the fountain could be enjoyed just as well if it did not have a water component associated with it. There may be some alternatives that could be explored for its addition to the public way if the fountain was considered an art object

I have spoken with Alderman Donovan regarding Water Works concerns about this matter. It is my recommendation that the Common Council consider alternatives to a water fountain in this location.

Very truly yours,

Carrie M. Lewis, Superintendent

CL:mwb
C: Alderman Murphy, Vice-Chair
Alderman Donovan, Alderman Herron, Alderman Sanchez
Mr. Robert Harvey, Staff Asst.