

March 19, 2014

Rocky Marcoux, Commissioner
Department of City Development
809 North Broadway, 2nd Floor

Dear Commissioner Marcoux:

On May 14, 2002, the Common Council passed File Number 991763, an ordinance that repealed the City's Zoning Code and replaced it with an entirely new set of zoning regulations. Development of the "new" Zoning Code took over 4 years and involved the hiring of a consultant, the creation of a Zoning Code Task Force, the holding of numerous public outreach meetings and countless hours of City staff time.

Documents in the Common Council file, as well as minutes of the Zoning Code Task Force, indicate that creation of the new Zoning Code was guided by three primary goals or purposes:

1. Make the Code easier to use and understand. This was to be done through the use of illustrations, tables and a computerized search feature. In addition, simplification was to come through a reduction in the number of zoning districts.
2. Streamline the Board of Zoning Appeals review process, primarily by reducing the number of projects/uses requiring BOZA review. This was to be accomplished through updating the City's zoning map (to make the zoning classifications more closely match existing development), creating and applying "limited use standards" (if the standards are met, a special use permit is not necessary) and recalibrating site development standards (setbacks, density, etc.).
3. Provide enhanced protection of the physical character of Milwaukee's neighborhoods. The means of achieving this goal were to include the aforementioned zoning map updates as well as creation of overlay zoning districts (e.g., a conservation district) and developing new design standards for such features as signs, parking and windows.

In light of this information, I am requesting that you provide me and all members of the Common Council's Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee with written responses to the following questions:

1. Has the Department of City Development evaluated the extent to which the "new" Zoning Code (now over 11 years old) meets the goals set for it? If so, how did or does this evaluation occur?
2. Is it the position of the Department of City Development that the goals for the new Zoning Code have been achieved?
3. Based on the effectiveness of the Zoning Code in meeting these goals, do you believe further revisions to the Zoning Code are necessary?

4. How has the creation and implementation of limited use standards affected the Board of Zoning Appeals caseload?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Jose G. Perez
Alderman, 12th District