

July 18, 2003

To the Public Improvements Committee

Subject: Common Council Resolution File Number 030262

Dear Honorable Members:

Returned herewith is Common Council Resolution File Number 030262, being a request by Wisconsin Center District, for a special privilege to construct and maintain retaining walls, planting beds and a sign structure all within the public right-of-way adjacent to their property at 500 West Kilbourn Avenue, which was the Milwaukee Auditorium and now is to be called Milwaukee Theatre, currently undergoing renovation.

A new pedestrian entrance is to be created. The doors are approximately 55 feet north of the northline of West Kilbourn Avenue. The floor level is approximately 7 feet above the north sidewalk in this vicinity and therefore a ramp is in order to have barrier-free access. Due to the severe change of grade, they have proposed to start the change for a distance within the sidewalk areas and a retaining wall is needed to support the rising grade of the ramp and separate it from the Kilbourn Avenue grade. These walls vary from 0.7 to 3.2 feet above the sidewalk. They have told us that the east wall is to be approximately 48.5 feet in length and the west wall is to be approximately 46.9 feet in length. There is to be a 6-inch high curbing extending east and west, respectively, from each wall. The east curbing is to be approximately 21.8 feet in length and the west curbing is to be approximately 12.5 feet in length. There is to be a 2 foot 10 inches high railing on top of these walls and the curbing. Vehicular access for "drop-off" activity is to be provided abutting the ramp on their property by a one-way counterclockwise semi-circular driveway. Between the driveway and the Kilbourn sidewalk, there is to be a planting area. The wall along the sidewalk varies from 6 inches at the ends to as high as 3.5 feet above the sidewalk. It is to be approximately 101 feet in length. In addition to plant material in this planter, a pylon sign is to be installed. It is to be relocated from its former location. This structure is triangular in shape with approximately 8-foot wide sides and reaching a height of approximately 45 feet above the sidewalk. The signage on it is about 10 feet high and its bottom is about 28 feet above the sidewalk. There is to be a power conduit to the sign, since it is electrical. There is also to be a planting area in front of the original Kilbourn Avenue entrance in its reconfigured stair access. This wall varies from 6 inches to 12 inches above the sidewalk. It is to be approximately 74 feet in length within the right-of-way, with a 5-foot encroachment.

During one of our many contacts with design, construction or construction management personnel on the project for proposal clarification of the above items, we were informed that although not shown on the drawings presently in front of us, there is a desire to attach brackets and some lights to our light poles in the median of North 6th Street for the purpose of lighting the frieze (some architectural panels near the roofline) on that side of the building. Although similar panels are apparently to be on West Kilbourn Avenue and West State Street, it does not appear that the public right-of-way is involved in their illumination.

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Although the retaining walls, planting beds and sign structure will have an effect upon the pedestrian usage of the public right-of-way in this area, we are unable to determine, at this time, whether this is an adverse effect. With the retaining walls in place it appears that there will only be 5 feet to the present curblin. West Kilbourn Avenue, from the Milwaukee River to North 6th Street, is a part of the Downtown Master Plan for Pedestrian Corridors, and it is strongly anticipated in the near future that the sidewalk areas in this area will be widened approximately 10 feet thereby providing a sufficient width. This will ensure that the proposed items in the right-of-way will not have any adverse effect upon pedestrian usage. We have, however, prepared the attached resolution which, if adopted, would allow these items to presently occupy the public rights-of-way. The lights in the median of North 6th Street are also included.

Very truly yours,

Jeffrey S. Polenske, P.E.
City Engineer

Mariano A. Schifalacqua
Commissioner of Public Works

Martin G. Collins
Commissioner
Department of Neighborhood Services

JJM:cjt
Attachment