



Department of City Development  
City Plan Commission  
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee  
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Rocky Marcoux  
Commissioner  
rmarco@milwaukee.gov

Martha L. Brown  
Deputy Commissioner  
mbrown@milwaukee.gov

November 16, 2017

Alderman Jose Perez  
12th Aldermanic District  
City Clerk's Office, Room 205

Dear Ald. Perez:

I am writing in response to your letter dated November 9, 2017 (attached), asking the Department of City Development (DCD) to "set in motion" the process of rezoning Lot 4 of the Freshwater Plaza project to Industrial Mixed (IM).

In 2014, the zoning of the development site at S. 1<sup>st</sup> Street and E. Greenfield Avenue was changed after DCD worked closely with you and stakeholders in this area to formulate a redevelopment vision that took into consideration everyone's goals for what they thought was important for their neighborhood. After many meetings and conversations, a thoughtful plan was put forward. That plan garnered your support, and the support of your constituents, the developer, and DCD.

The collective decision to move forward with the current Freshwater Plaza plan reflected a shared understanding that E. Greenfield Avenue would be the gateway to the UWM Freshwater campus and a major point of access to the Harbor District. The stakeholders have made considerable progress in implementing this vision in the short time since our initial discussions about rezoning the Freshwater Plaza site.

- The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents has invested approximately \$50 million to construct an addition to the Great Lakes Water Institute. This facility is the new home of the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences (the first graduate school of Freshwater Sciences in the United States).
- The WE Energies Menomonee Valley power plant switched its fuel source from coal to natural gas. That change has eliminated the bulk storage of coal at the Port of Milwaukee site on E. Greenfield Avenue.
- WE Energies has purchased the former Solvay Coke site, and is in the process of executing an environmental cleanup at the property.
- The Harbor District Inc. was formed to facilitate a long-range land use plan for the greater Inner Harbor area. Working collaboratively with the City and neighborhood stakeholders, the organization is developing a Water and Land Use Plan for the Harbor District. It will be presented for Common Council approval in the near future.

To support the 2014 proposal, the City acquired Lot 4 by purchasing the parcel from the developer. Lot 4 was proposed for office use. The City made the purchase and provided a no-fee



option to the developer to purchase the site, running through September 29, 2019. This strategy allows the developer to pursue office users without the pressure of carrying costs and property taxes during the option period.

I want to emphasize that all parties were amenable to this at the time as part of the compromise that was reached to advance overall development at the site. The specific reference in the General Plan Development (GPD) is as follows:

*"Phase III will include all of Lot 4 and the water feature. Lot 4 will include a 3 to 6 story office building measuring approximately 100 feet by 160 feet with an adjacent 226 to 377 car 2 to 3 story parking structure. The office building will be approximately 45,750 - 91,500 square feet with a height of 40 feet to 80 feet. The parking structure measures 248 feet 6 inches by 160 feet. It will be approximately 20 to 30 feet tall to top of structure. The office building is set back from Greenfield Avenue 41.7 feet to accommodate the water feature. It's set back from the Eastern edge of Lot 4 3.8 feet. The parking structure is set back from the Eastern edge of Lot 4 by 3.8 feet. The water feature will be designed in conjunction with UWM."*

On August 15, 2017, I met with a broker representing developer Stu Wangard. He indicated that a national "off price/discount" retail chain(s) was interested in Lot 4. I indicated that the Department's position was to support the office use as described in the GPD.

On October 5, 2017, I met with Stu Wangard at his request and confirmed our position.

On November 2, 2017, I met with Dennis Klein, who is part of the development team for the Cermak grocery store. The meeting was held at Mr. Klein's request. I confirmed our position.

In summary, the existing zoning and plan are the result of lengthy, thoughtful discussions as to the highest and best use of the site between the various stakeholders, DCD and your office. The current plan represents a compromise that all parties, including the developer, agreed to. This plan, and a \$5.3 million tax incremental financing district, were approved by the Common Council and Mayor Barrett. By not including anticipated revenue from the development of Lot 4, the TID was structured in a manner that also supports a patient approach to seeking office tenants on that site.

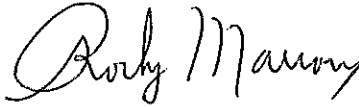
We agree with your statement that Freshwater Plaza should be a place to live, eat, play and shop. But, equally important, it should be a place to work. The office component of the original vision was important to the stakeholders to ensure a complimentary use to the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences and to provide family supporting jobs. In no way do we feel this will deleteriously affect the development to date.

It is my belief that changing the zoning for this parcel to facilitate development of the property for use by an off-price/discount retailer dramatically alters the original development deal that was agreed to and does not represent the highest and best use of the site. If you remain committed to a zoning change, DCD will file an application to begin that process. However, the Department will oppose the change.

Ald. Perez  
November 16, 2017  
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Thank you for your consideration of these points. Please advise me as to how you would like me to proceed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rocky Marcoux". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rocky Marcoux  
Commissioner

- c:
- Ald. Ashanti Hamilton, Common Council President
  - Ald. James Bohl, Jr., Chair - ZND Committee
  - Ald. Khalif Rainey, Vice-Chair - ZND Committee
  - Ald. Milele Coggs, ZND Committee
  - Ald. Nik Kovac, ZND Committee
  - Ald. Russell Stamper, ZND Committee
  - Lilith Fowler, Executive Director – Harbor District, Inc.
  - Ivan Gamboa, President - Harbor District, Inc.
  - Dr. Val Klump, Dean – UWM School of Freshwater Sciences
  - Tim Hoelter, President of Board of Harbor Commissioners – Port of Milwaukee
  - Paul Vornholt, Port Director – Port of Milwaukee
  - Dennis Klein, C.D. Smith Construction, Inc.
  - Tom Metcalfe, Senior VP-Power Generation - WE Energies
  - Stewart Wangard, Chairman and CEO – Wangard Partners, Inc.



**COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

**VICE CHAIR**

- Community and Economic Development Committee

**MEMBER**

- Judiciary and Legislation Committee
- Public Safety and Health Committee



**JOSÉ G. PÉREZ**  
ALDERMAN, 12TH DISTRICT

**BOARD MEMBER**

- Hispanic Elected Local Officials

**MEMBER**

- Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District Commission
- National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials
- National League of Cities
- Walker's Point Association
- Walker Square Neighborhood Association
- Kinnickinnic River Neighborhood Association

November 9, 2017

Mr. Rocky Marcoux  
Commissioner, Department of City Development  
809 North Broadway Street  
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Mr. Marcoux,

I write today to ask you to set in motion the process of re-zoning Lot 4 of the Freshwater Plaza project to Industrial Mixed (IM).

I want to make it a matter of record that I believe the current proposed office-only zoning is not the highest and best use of this property and will deleteriously affect the retail projects scheduled to open in the other areas of this development.

This Plaza is a project that could, with the right vision, result in a vibrant neighborhood where people, live, eat, play, and shop. A place where people can buy a pair of shoes, pick out an outfit, and grab dinner before heading back to their homes only a few blocks away. This is the sort of development that the Freshwater Plaza was intended to create and which I do not believe will be created if we so readily abandoned mixed-use projects.

Should you have any questions regarding this, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to hearing from your staff on this matter in the very near future.

Sincerely,

José G. Pérez  
Alderman, 12<sup>th</sup> District

CC: President Ashanti Hamilton  
Alderman Jim Bohl

RECEIVED  
 MILWAUKEE DEPARTMENT  
 OF CITY DEVELOPMENT  
 2017 NOV 10 PM 2:03

REFERRED

BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 TO: Marcoux & Koster  
 DATE: 11/10/17  
 ACTION  
 INFORMATION  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 COPIES TO:  
Brown, Lutzka  
Casanova, Misky  
Lasteo

