

**From:** [Bob Hartner](#)  
**To:** [MacDonald, Terry;](#)  
**CC:**  
**Subject:** Wisconsin Avenue Public Art Installar  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 08, 2009 4:15:18 PM  
**Attachments:**

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Dear Alderman,

I have been reading with great interest about the proposed public art installation on East Wisconsin Avenue, created by Janet Zweig. I found the proposed piece exciting for its originality and playfulness, as well as for its uniqueness in the overall inventory of Milwaukee's public art. For these reasons, I was greatly saddened to hear that the Common Council's Public Works Committee was less than receptive to the idea, with at least one alderman walking out during the presentation.

I am very sensitive to the fact the we live in a truly great city with a perpetual image issue. Milwaukee has long struggled with preconceived notions regarding its workforce, its competitive advantages, its ability to attract and retain young talent, and its openness to change and new ideas.

I am wholly convinced that the best way to fight these stereotypes is not to kill new ideas in both public art and otherwise, but to make smart, measured decisions while embracing the occasional risk. Looking at other cities with notable pieces of public art, it is rarely the "safe" and "conservative" pieces that are memorable, but instead the seemingly risky ones. The proposed piece has the potential to truly make an impression for its originality and its ability to transform the area around it. Public art should not consist entirely of conventional statues that disappear into the background and the landscape. After all, what good is paying for art that no one notices?

I urge the Common Council to reconsider its initial position regarding this piece and approve its installation. These types of decisions will go a long ways toward convincing both outsiders as well as many of its residents, that Milwaukee is the cutting-edge and dynamic place many of us know it to be.

Sincerely,

Robert Hartner