GREATER TOGETHER

INSPIRING A GREATER, GREATER MILWAUKEE



OCTOBER 2, 4PM, 2018, CITY HALL ROOM 303

The People's Flag Presentation to Milwaukee Arts Board Committee

What process was used to engage the creative community and the broader community in designing a new flag? Include a rough timeline of how and when various outreach efforts took place.

In March of 2015, a TED Talk prompted national interest in the design of city flags. In that talk, a national expert used Milwaukee's city flag as an example of a poorly designed and illegible flag. Designer Steve Kodis was interviewed for that talk. This dialogue caught the attention of local and national press. That prompted Kodis to launch a website to keep the dialogue going.

Later that year, in November of 2015, the flag project was taken on by Greater Together, a local group (now nonprofit) that leverages the talents of Milwaukee's design community to address issues of racial and economic inequality, working alongside organizations that have been working on such issues for years.

What is the city we aspire to?
Greater Together was interested in leveraging the Milwaukee Flag Initiative as a way to engage young people and the community at large in dialogue about Milwaukee today and the power of design to symbolize a more positive future. It announced the initiative more formally and began doing educational outreach about flags, creating discussion about design and the city among a diverse population. It began accepting entries for a new flag through the website Kodis created.

Dialogue and Engagement
The coalition of organizations engaged with Greater Together in partnership with the Zeidler Center for Public Discussion -- including the YWCA, Common Ground, AIGA, NAACP, ACLU, Radio Milwaukee and several others -- helped us spread the word. Greater Together's strategic partner, **The Zeidler Center for Public Discussion**, enabled us to put a special emphasis on engaging Milwaukee's youth and younger adults in a substantive way. Young people were engaged in discussions about their dreams and concerns for Milwaukee. We tapped a network of teachers we had worked with previously. We organized design workshops across the city via the Boys & Girls Clubs, elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. These schools include but are not limited to Washington High School, Brown Deer High School, Bradley Tech and Bay View High School. The group also visited colleges such as MATC, MIAD, UWM and Mount Mary University and held various in-person events at sites such as Coffee Makes You Black.

Outreach and Media
Press releases were sent to a comprehensive list of television, radio, print, and digital media outlets and coverage was extensive. (see attached media list) Media efforts included but were not limited to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Milwaukee Independent, FOX6, WTMJ4, CBS58, OnMilwaukee, Urban Milwaukee, 620WTMJ, Voice, Shepard Express, Community bulletins on V100.7, United Adworkers, 1MinStorys, and Creative Mornings. We also used social media campaigns on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram throughout the life of the project and ran paid Facebook ads.

More than 1,000 entries were received.

The Judges
A jury of experts met on April 23, 2016 to select five finalists. The jury included local historian John Gurda; Ted Kaye, author of "Good Flag, Bad Flag;" nationally recognized Milwaukee designer Xavier Ruffin; Jena Sher, designer with internationally recognized design firm Pentagram; and Steve Kodis founder of the flag movement. The jury members each received a small stipend and lunch. All other efforts have been done on a volunteer basis.

A Packed City Hall
A large event was then held at City Hall on May 14, 2016 to display the top 50 entries and to unveil the five finalists. Once again Greater Together's coalition of organizations engaged in outreach and press releases were once again sent, among other previously mentioned communication strategies.

The Presentation
Mayor Tom Barrett spoke at the City Hall event, commending the group's grassroots efforts. The 50 entries filled the atrium of City Hall and were on public view there for a week. We estimate that at least 1,000 people attended the event. The audience was diverse and enthusiastic. Hung side by side were designs by grade school children and design professionals. Reggie Jackson, a local activist and school teacher, spoke about the important role of positive symbolism in the quest for a better future for Milwaukee.

Voting
The public was invited to vote online on the five finalists after the event at City Hall. We once again tapped our coalition, using some of the same strategies to spread the word. This time, we also paid for advertising in local media. There was significant media attention at this time.

More than 6,000 citizens engaged in the voting. Greater Together announced the winning design one month later at an event at Radio Milwaukee on June 14, 2016. Greater Together invited a representative from the City of Milwaukee to participate. Rocky Marcoux, head of the city's Department of City Development, spoke at the event. He commended Greater Together's efforts, reinforced the city's commitment to equal opportunities and praised Robert Lenz' positive symbol, "Sunrise Over the Lake."

Adoption of the Winning Design
We began to make the selected design, "Sunrise Over the Lake" by Robert Lenz, available online and through area shops. In the two years since the design was unveiled, the flag has been embraced on a grassroots basis. It's important to note that the simplicity of the design, in keeping with the best practices in flag design, enabled the flag to be readily embraced and riffed on by residents, local artists, restaurants, breweries, businesses and clothiers across the city.

The People's Flag flies in front of cultural institutions such as Discovery World, has been reproduced in a mural in Walker's Point and the Beerline Trail near Riverwest and Harambee neighborhoods, has been adopted on beer labels and and has been made into a limited edition Fyxation Bicycle Company bike, among countless other examples. We have documented many of the ways the flag has been embraced on our Instagram account @mkeflag. **We have a database of 100 online news articles that we can make available upon request.**

Profits Support The Mission of Greater Together
All profits we have received have been put back into Greater Together, to support the nonprofit's programs. *Our intention is for any profits made through this initiative into the future to benefit the city through programs of Greater Together. A design mentoring program at Washington High School will be made possible as a result.*

When did the group's interaction with City officials begin?
We engaged with city officials early on, starting in the summer of 2015. We spoke personally to Mayor Tom Barrett, Rocky Marcoux at the Department of City Development, and various members of the Common Council, including Ald. Witkowski, Donovan, Kovac, Hamilton, Johnson, Rainey.

What prompted the term "People's Flag?"
The process was led by a small group of citizens passionate about creating a symbol the people of Milwaukee could embrace and take pride in. Out of deference to the existing flag, our group began informally calling the flag the "people's flag" to distinguish it from the official one. Now that the flag has been embraced by thousands of Milwaukeeans on a grassroots basis, the name has stuck.

Concern from professional designers about the practice of asking designers to work for free, entering competitions/contests, or doing spec-work.
AIGA, the leading design organization in the country, has a belief in the concept of "Design for Good." The People's Flag of Milwaukee Initiative is in strong alignment with this ethic to engage in projects that "benefit the world, our country and our communities."

Greater Together was funded, in part, by AIGA National as part of Design for Good.
AIGA supports Greater Together's mission to introduce young people and the broader community to the power of design and the importance of open and honest dialogue in the design process. In addition, we engage many designers to lead workshops, which can become transformative experiences for many of them.

We saw the Milwaukee Flag Project as a multi-dimensional opportunity:
1. Inspire dialog about the city we are today and the city we aspire to be.
2. Introduce young people and the broader community to the power of design.
3. Engage the professional design community to run workshops in new and unfamiliar places
4. Create a new positive and inspiring logo for a city we love.

AIGA's reservations about on-spec work are generally focused on the professional community and commercial ventures. The People's Flag was an initiative for the greater good, not an effort to save money. Indeed, hiring a designer to design a flag would have been much less expensive and far less inclusive.

Those who submitted entries did so with the clear understanding that all of the work was opened under Creative Commons Zero. This means that anyone is free to use these designs for any purpose, all for free.

This also means the City of Milwaukee is welcome to adopt the flag, if it should choose to do so.

From AIGA's website:
AIGA Design for Good highlights opportunities of engagement for designers to build their practice, expand their network, and have hands-on leadership opportunities. Design for Good recognizes the wide range of designers' work and hands-on leadership and professional development opportunities, which benefit the world, our country, and our communities.

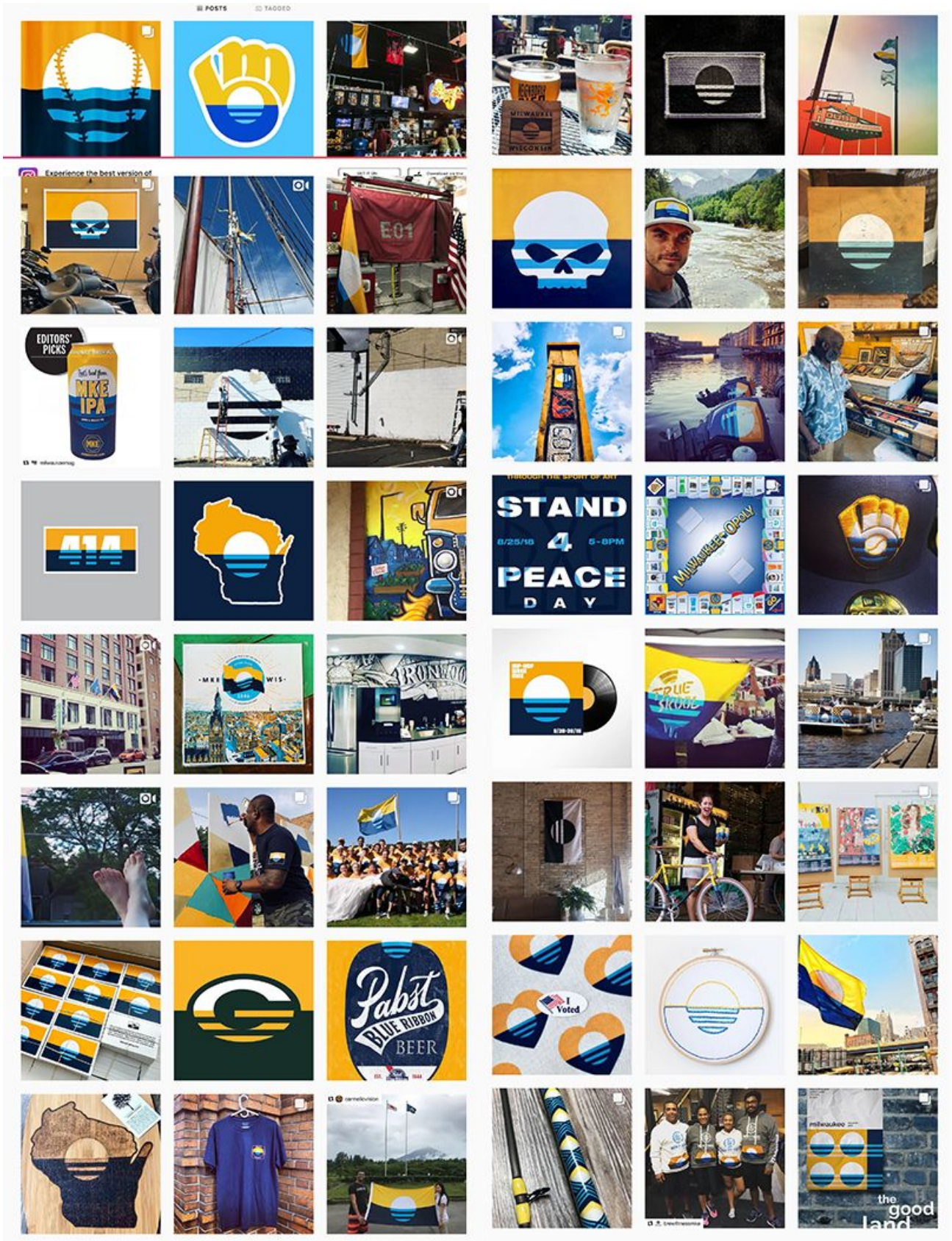
We've intentionally created an environment of openness and transparency. This was not competition or contest. There were no prizes, cash or otherwise. This project has an open-source ethic and was called a "design initiative."

Projects of civic engagement that are related to the public good fall under the organization's guidelines for "Design for Good."

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