



# City of Milwaukee

200 E. Wells Street  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
53202

## Meeting Minutes ZONING CODE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

**TEODROS MEDHIN, CHAIR**

**Stuart Mukamal, Ed Richardson, Ronald Roberts**

**Staff Assistant, Chris Lee, 286-2232**

**Fax: 286-3456, [clee@milwaukee.gov](mailto:clee@milwaukee.gov)**

**Legislative Liaison, Ted Medhin, 286-8680,**

**[tmedhi@milwaukee.gov](mailto:tmedhi@milwaukee.gov)**

---

Wednesday, March 25, 2015

2:45 PM

Room 301-B, 3rd Floor, City Hall

---

Meeting convened at 2:49 p.m.

*Present - Roberts, Richardson, Mukamal, Medhin*

### Individuals also present:

*Ald. James Bohl, 5th Aldermanic District*

*Spencer Coggs, city resident*

*Chris Rute, Development Center*

*Jeff Osterman, Legislative Reference Bureau*

### 1. [141766](#)

A substitute ordinance relating to maximum lot coverage for principal buildings in residential zoning districts.

**Sponsors:** Ald. Bohl

*Ald. Bohl said that the proposed substitute ordinance is a reasonable attempt to establish a maximum lot coverage standard in RS4, RS5, and RS6 zoning districts to prevent extremely out of scale homes from being built in residential neighborhoods. The maximum lot coverage standard may be exceeded with due process. One can appeal to the Board of Zoning Appeals for a dimensional variance. The legislation serves to protect the interest and sanctity of existing homeowners and neighborhoods, allow for consistent growth in residential neighborhoods, and protect against homes that will be significantly larger and inconsistent within the context of other homes in the area. Similar laws have been enacted across the country. His office has been concerned with an individual who has combined lots in a residential neighborhood with the desire to build a very large home.*

*Ald. Bohl submitted four articles to the file for the record.*

*Mr. Coggs testified as a resident and block watch captain in aldermanic district 5 where he shares the same concerns of Ald. Bohl pertaining to an individual who has combined lots with the desire to build a very large home. The proposed legislation will close a loophole and allow alderpersons to have some say on new residential housing being built in a residential area. The legislation allows for new buildings in a neighborhood subject to conforming to the character of that neighborhood.*

*Mr. Richardson said that the legislation, in its current form, is not administratively efficient due to being tied to the combination of lots. Plan examination staff will have*

*difficulty determining and tracking lot combinations due to the lack of a good tracking system. Lots can be combined through various means currently. The ordinance can be rewritten to have a maximum square footage cap or a maximum lot coverage percentage-based measure not tied to lot combinations.*

*Ald. Bohl said the proposed substitute ordinance can be amended to deal with the issue of maximum lot coverage without resorting to lot combinations; however, extremely large houses can potentially still be achieved with a percentage-based measure. Perhaps there should be an absolute maximum building square footage restriction similar to height limitations and setback requirements.*

*Mr. Rute said that perhaps there should be a maximum lot size or dimensions; however, keeping lots in range in terms of lot coverage will keep a neighborhood homogeneous.*

*Atty. Mukamal said that the proposed legislation has no legal issues. Maximum building square footage may be problematic. Maximum square footage for an improvement to a parcel is at the discretion of the owner. A maximum lot coverage percentage-based measure or lot size restriction measure is more permissible.*

*Mr. Richardson added that with a percentage-based measure, lot coverage can be reduced in percentage for bigger lots.*

*Mr. Richardson, amended by Atty. Mukamal and seconded by Mr. Roberts, moved that the proposed substitute ordinance, in its current form, meets the standards of legality and enforceability and consistency with the format of the zoning code but does not meet the standard of administrative efficiency because it is dependent on lot combinations, which would be difficult to administer; however, the proposed ordinance meets the standard of administrative efficiency subject to revisions that find an alternate means of proportionality of building to lot. There were no objections.*

*Mr. Osterman said that he will work with all parties to draft a new proposed substitute ordinance.*

**Meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.  
Chris Lee, Staff Assistant**