

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

February 26, 2015

Ald. Terry Witkowski
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Helping small businesses thrive: Local Business Action Team to hold public forums

Milwaukee Downtown (Business Improvement District 21) recently paid for Robert Walsh, the former small business director from New York, to address Milwaukee leaders and BIDs on how New York City very successfully multiplied small businesses and streamlined city processes to help them succeed. **Alderman Terry L. Witkowski** attended the day-long session for elected officials and community leaders, and he was struck by what he heard.

“The clear message that I heard from area business leaders is that change is needed, and there was no shortage of ideas about how to make Milwaukee a friendlier place for small businesses,” Alderman Witkowski said.

Alderman Witkowski continued: “At a Council committee meeting, a local business leader said that it takes 10 times as long to get certain approvals in Milwaukee as compared to some suburbs, and in some cases, he said, up to four inspectors are doing what one inspector does in surrounding communities.”

“If we are serious about creating jobs and economic development to address our poverty problem, we must improve the way we interact with and regulate small businesses,” he said.

Working with City of Milwaukee department heads, Alderman Witkowski sponsored a resolution that created a **Local Business Action Team (LBAT)**, including department heads from Health, City Development, Neighborhood Services, Licenses, Public Works and Information Technology. Each of these city departments may be involved in permits, licenses, inspections and approvals before a business can open.

The LBAT will be hosting three public forums in March to solicit input from local small businesses and BID members/stakeholders:

-More-

LBAT Seeks Input/ADD ONE

- **Saturday, March 7** at 9:00 a.m. at the Washington Park Senior Center, 4420 W. Vliet St.
- **Friday, March 13** at 9 a.m. in room 301-B at City Hall, 200 E. Wells St.
- **Monday, March 16** at 6:30 p.m. at the Robert A. Anderson Tower (third floor), 4001 S. 6th St.

Alderman Witkowski, co-chair the LBAT (with Commissioner Art Dahlberg of the Department of Neighborhood Services), said he wants the team to compile final recommendations in time for changes to be included in the 2016 city budget.

Business owners and others who would like to provide input and feedback to the LBAT – but who cannot make any of the upcoming forums – are asked to share their information with the team by emailing to license@milwaukee.gov (all information will be kept confidential, however respondents are also welcome to ask that their name and/or contact information be shared with the team).

Please go to www.milwaukee.gov/LBAT for or more information and updates.