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FOR INFORMATION CALL

June 27, 2005

Ald. Mike McGee, Jr.
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Ordinance Would Seek Disclosure, Reparations From Businesses With Ties To Slavery

*Ald. McGee to Discuss Proposed Ordinance, Participate in Panel Discussion at
Wednesday Town Hall Meeting*

A proposed ordinance that would require companies and contractors who do business with the City of Milwaukee to fully disclose any participation in or profits derived from slavery will be a key topic of discussion during a town hall meeting Wednesday night.

The meeting, hosted by Ald. Mike McGee, Jr. – the sponsor of the proposed ordinance – will begin at 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 29, 2005 in the auditorium at North Division High School, 1011 W. Center St. A panel discussion on reparations will also take place during the meeting. All members of the public and the media are invited to attend.

Under the proposed ordinance introduced by Ald. McGee at the June 14th Common Council meeting and now being discussed in committee, businesses and contractors seeking city contracts would be required to complete an affidavit verifying that they have searched all of the business or company records regarding investments or profits from slavery or slaveholder insurance policies during the slavery era.

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Slavery Reparations Ordinance/ADD ONE

A business or contractor acknowledging profits derived from slavery would be requested to release a statement of admission and apology to the citizens of Milwaukee, and any contractor or business disclosing activities relating to investments or profits from slavery or slaveholder insurance policies will be required to deposit an amount “equal to 100% of the dollar amount of the contract” into a special city account that will be used for funding scholarships, job training initiatives and entrepreneurship programs in the city.

The ordinance seeks to “put all of the laundry – even the old dirty laundry” of contractors out in the open for the public to examine, said Ald. McGee. “Slavery may have officially ended more than 140 years ago, but its dire and heinous impact on Blacks continues unchecked today,” he said. “As a city with a Black population of some 225,000 people – more than 37 percent of the total population – it seems to me only just to accurately and honestly hold up to the light contractors who are paid from our coffers. I believe we owe that to our citizens.”

The ordinance also includes specific penalties and sanctions for contractors who fail to provide the affidavit within a prescribed time limit or who fail to accurately disclose information related to slavery profits and/or participation. In a related topic, Ald. McGee said possible “economic sanctions” for JP Morgan-Chase Banks in Milwaukee will be discussed at the meeting because of the financial firm’s “participation in slavery.”

NOTES: The meeting Wednesday night will also include an update on a federal class action lawsuit filed in May against the City of Milwaukee, Police Chief Nannette Hegerty and the Milwaukee Police Department, the Milwaukee Police Association and individual but unnamed police officers by individuals who claim their constitutional rights were violated by police officers. The lawsuit was filed by Doris Jude Porter, aunt of police beating victim Frank Jude, Jr. on behalf of the Justice for Jude, Justice for All Committee.

Also, the Respect Kampain’s Street Code of Conduct – a street-level guide that includes rules to abide by and ways to avoid violence – will likely be addressed, the alderman said.