

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIR
Public Safety Committee

MEMBER
Anti-Graffiti Policy Committee
Finance & Personnel Committee
Steering & Rules Committee



ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

End the Circus, Solve the Problems

Perhaps we should address Milwaukee's issues first!

Statement of Alderman Bob Donovan February 28, 2011

I read with interest the article outlining Mayor Barrett's efforts to end the chaos in Madison. In doing so, two points jumped out at me. First, the proposal itself (take out the collective bargaining issue in the budget repair bill and make that a separate item in the biennial budget proposal) was really nothing new, since the Democrats in the state Legislature have been calling for largely the same thing for the better part of the week.

Second, what stood out for me was the catchy phrase he used: "*End the circus, solve the problems.*" Ironically, the same words could be used when referring to the City of Milwaukee.

End the Circus Tom, Solve the Problems

To say I was disappointed with the mayor's state of the city address wouldn't be quite accurate. To be disappointed would imply that I was expecting something more. Sadly, after seven years, we have learned to lower our expectations. To expect bold, decisive, visionary leadership from Mayor Tom Barrett is apparently asking too much.

End the Circus Tom, Solve the Problems

By all accounts the mayor is a nice guy, a loving father and a good husband. I agree, but after years of status quo leadership, you've got to ask yourself, when it comes to the mayor of our city, "Don't we need more than just a nice guy?"

I take no pleasure in saying these things, but Milwaukee is at a crossroads (some would say we've passed that point) and the stakes are simply too high to worry about ruffled feathers or hurt feelings. I am simply saying publicly what many people have been thinking and whispering about for years.

So let's take a moment to review what *should* have been discussed in the state of the city address.

-More-

Let's begin with one of my favorites – MPS. Suffice it to say that the taxpayers of Milwaukee pay well over \$1 billion a year to support a school system that (with few exceptions) continues to fail this community.

End the Circus Tom, Solve the Problems

Where is the plan for Milwaukee's shocking infant mortality rate? What are we doing about Milwaukee being (according to a federal study) the epicenter for the spread of AIDS in America? What steps are underway to address the shameful unemployment rate in Milwaukee's inner city?

End the Circus Tom, Solve the Problems

Your appointment of a task force (always the politician's best friend) to study what to do about the embarrassing decline of W. Wisconsin Ave. ignores the fact that it has been allowed to deteriorate for years. The city already spent a fortune for a downtown plan along with the fact that several people are working full-time (apparently with little success) to turn the area around. Forgive me for my ignorance, but I thought that was the job of the Department of City Development. Regardless, job number one should be to get rid of the panhandlers and vagrants throughout that area. While we're on the subject of downtown, what about the empty and stagnant Park East? What about our dwindling convention business?

End the Circus Tom, Solve the Problems

What ever happened to turning Milwaukee into *The Fresh Water Capital of the World*? Where is the vision for the lakefront or MacArthur Square for that matter? What plans are underway to reduce our ever increasing property taxes and fees? If Milwaukee is open for business like you say, you would be hard pressed to convince the developers of the downtown Marriott hotel.

Forgive me for mentioning this once again, but the police radios don't work. Oh, and by the way, has anyone noticed that after only one year and an expenditure of \$75 million, City Hall is falling down again?

I could go on and on, but simply put Mayor Tom, the enormity of your job has found you out.

As I stated previously, I take no pleasure in saying these things, but the time has come to speak plainly. If I am wrong, prove me wrong – the clock is ticking.

End the Circus Tom, Solve the Problems