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ROBERT G. DONOVAN
Alderman, 8th District

Public deserves open process on Malcolm X sale and sales of other public buildings

Alderman Donovan seeks public process involving RFPs

Statement from Alderman Bob Donovan October 22, 2013

Homeowners looking to sell a home don't limit the pool of potential buyers, so why should the city be doing such a thing with Milwaukee Public Schools properties?

I think it's not an appropriate way to sell MPS or any city-owned properties, and that's why I am introducing city legislation (allowed under state law) to establish a set of criteria under which the Common Council may or may not find that a city-owned property used for school purposes is underutilized. If this resolution (**attached**) is passed, and a school property is found by the Council to be underutilized, the city could move forward with the sale of the property, requiring potential buyers to submit plans under a Request for Proposals (or RFP) process.

Council rules would prohibit any member from unilaterally seeking an "underutilized" declaration for a school property located outside of his or her aldermanic district, and such a request would need to come from the local alderperson.

I believe such a resolution would provide the Council with a valuable tool that could be used in cases such as the one faced by St. Marcus.

More importantly, I believe our citizens deserve to have a transparent and open process that enables all interested parties to submit an RFP and have that information conveyed in a public hearing. Such a public process allows neighbors, residents, stakeholders and Council members to ask questions and thoroughly vet each potential buyer's plans.

My proposed resolution follows through on the original intent of state legislation sponsored by Sen. Alberta Darling and passed a year-and-a-half ago by the state Legislature, giving the city greater authority in selling or leasing vacant MPS buildings.

Further, does it bother anyone other than me that we are spending millions of dollars each year to bus MPS students all over our city when there are vacant school buildings sitting idle in many neighborhoods?

A kid who lives a few doors down from a vacant school is being bused to a school six or eight miles away? This makes absolutely no sense to me.

I look forward to discussing my proposed school buildings resolution with my colleagues, and I hope we approve it so we can help St. Marcus and others in the future.

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