



December 18, 2014

Ald. Terry L. Witkowski
(414) 286-2883

Council asks state to study merger of Bradley Center, Wisconsin Center boards

The Milwaukee Common Council on Tuesday called for the state legislature to study a merger of the two separate boards that govern the **BMO Harris Bradley Center** and the **Wisconsin Center District**, which includes the convention center, the Milwaukee Theatre and the UW-Milwaukee Panther Arena.

Alderman Terry L. Witkowski, the resolution's sponsor and a former member of the Wisconsin Center District Board, said he believed that the "competing interests" steering the two boards were hindering development of ten square blocks downtown.

"Now is the time to reexamine the governance of these sports, convention and entertainment destinations," Alderman Witkowski said. "With discussions taking place about potentially building a replacement for the Bradley Center and Phase Three of the convention center and an entertainment district, one would hope that the two boards would be talking."

"There needs to be cooperation here, and it's not happening," he added.

The state legislature created the Bradley Center board in 1988 and the Wisconsin Center District board in 1994, and Witkowski said legislative action is needed to better align the two bodies. "You have to ask whether the state would have created two separate boards across the street from one another in downtown Milwaukee, both running sports and entertainment facilities, if they had both come up at the same time," he said.

The resolution passed unanimously by the council Tuesday asks the legislature to study the logistics of merging the two boards and, if potential benefits are identified, to do so. Alderman Witkowski pointed out that the Common Council has no authority over the governance of these boards, one of which collects taxes, even though they occupy a large part of downtown.