



**Michael J. Murphy**  
*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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May 12, 2015

**Council President Murphy**  
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## **MKE Plays poised to transform some of Milwaukee's neediest play spaces**

*Wednesday news event will include unveiling of positive, transformative project*

The **MKE Plays** program, which endeavors to transform 12 of the city's most deteriorated playgrounds into models of local collaboration and renovation over the next three years, will be unveiled during a **news event tomorrow (Wednesday, May 13)** hosted by the program's principal architect, **Common Council President Michael J. Murphy**.

Joining President Murphy during **tomorrow's event – at 11 a.m. at Arlington Heights Park, 3429 W. Pierce St.** – will be **Mayor Tom Barrett**, Department of Public Works Commissioner **Ghassan Korban**, **Susan Lloyd** of the Zilber Family Foundation, as well as other sponsors/partners and additional members of the Common Council.

The program was approved by the Common Council in March, and Arlington Heights Park is the **first MKE Plays location** to be redesigned, with construction anticipated by spring 2016.

President Murphy said MKE Plays lays the groundwork for a new collaborative, community-oriented process for leveraging private investment in new play spaces. "MKE Plays turns to neighborhoods and asks residents – including kids – 'What kind of play equipment, accessories, improvements and amenities would *you* like to see at this playground?'"

**-More-**

## MKE Plays/ADD ONE

MKE Plays can also build on the success of the Playground Improvement Challenge Fund (authored by President Murphy and approved by the Council as part of the 2013 city budget), President Murphy said. “The outpouring of interest and support from philanthropic groups in funding MKE Plays has been tremendous, and I believe it speaks volumes as to the heartfelt need to brighten the lives of our children when we have the will and the right plan to do so,” he said.

**Susan Lloyd**, executive director of the Zilber Family Foundation, said a key reason the foundation is supporting the initiative is because it embodies the Zilber approach of engaging community members in meaningful ways.

“Trust and neighborliness, what researchers call ‘collective efficacy’ and others call ‘community capacity,’ is a stronger predictor of safety in a neighborhood than poverty or race,” Ms. Lloyd said.

**Alderman Bob Donovan**, whose 8<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic District includes Arlington Heights Park, said the program will “make things happen that otherwise wouldn’t.”

“City government unfortunately does not have the resources to make the kind of substantive improvements that will be realized by the MKE Plays program,” said Alderman Donovan. “I am very thankful that Arlington Heights is the first location for the program, and on behalf of the residents and kids of my district, I offer my sincere thanks to President Murphy and to the generous donors who are making the transformation possible.”

**Alderman Russell W. Stamper, II** represents the north side area where a second playground will also be reconstructed early on as part of MKE Plays. “With all that’s going on and the negative press around our city as a whole recently, I’m delighted to be partnering with MKE Plays and the Johnsons Park Neighborhood to bring a fresh space to the community that will continue to promote safe, clean and healthy neighborhoods,” Alderman Stamper said.

“By combining an intergenerational space that will connect our youth with our senior citizens, we hope to foster a communication between the two that can be built upon for years to come,” Alderman Stamper said.

For MKE Plays updates, please visit <http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/mkeplays>.