

13th

DISTRICT

ALDERMAN

Scott P. Spiker



The Garden District

200 E. Wells St. | Milwaukee, WI 53202 | 286-8537 | milwaukee.gov/district13 | Scott.Spiker@milwaukee.gov

FALL 19



Alderman Spiker delivers his inaugural speech at the Common Council with his family looking on.

Letter from Alderman Spiker

Thank you, Garden District! For those of you who missed it, Alderman Witkowski retired late last May after nearly 16 years as alderman and after 46 years of service to this city. We all owe him a huge debt of thanks for his hard work and dedication to our district and to Milwaukee.

In August, I had the good fortune of being elected as the new alderman of the 13th aldermanic district—the Garden District. I cannot express how incredibly humbled and honored I am to have received this support, and I was pleased to see that it was spread over the entire district. There was no corner where our message of positive, optimistic leadership rooted in a demonstrated commitment to our residents was not heard.

But this is just the beginning. I want to be the alderman not just of those who voted for me, but of everyone who lives here, pays their taxes, and expects a level of city services second to none. I want to be the alderman of everyone who loves this district as much as I do and who

wants to see it become even better. I want to be the alderman of everyone who demands a district as safe as they remember and who insists on one as vibrant as ours can become.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again. We live in a great district (the best, if you ask me!) in a great city... and don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Of course, we have our problems; no city doesn't. But they are problems that we can and must overcome...by working together.

Once again, I'm honored by the faith you've shown in me, and I can promise you this: no one will work harder to make our district—the Gateway to our fair city—the envy of the rest of Milwaukee. Thank you for trusting me with this weighty responsibility. I am ready for it.

NOTE: Due to State Statute 11.33, this will be the last newsletter from this office until after the election on Tuesday, April 7th. Private social media channels (Facebook, Nextdoor) will remain open, however.

Committee Assignments

Member

- Licenses Committee
- Public Safety and Health Committee

View meetings online:

milwaukee.gov/citychannel

Upcoming Meetings/Events

TUE DEC 3

Third Annual Tree Lighting

6:00 pm PROGRAM

7:00 pm TREE LIGHTING

At 6th and Norwich
(one block south of Howard)

THU DEC 12

Winter Town Hall

6:30 pm

Reagan High School, 4965 S. 20th St.

SAT DEC 14

Singing Songs of the Season

4:00 pm

At 6th and Norwich
(one block south of Howard)

TUE DEC 3 – MON JAN 6

Winter Wonderland Display

At 6th and Norwich
(one block south of Howard)

Events in the District

One of the things that makes our district great is the wealth of family-friendly events and activities taking place in it throughout the year. This summer alone we saw another successful **National Night Out**, which promoted stronger police/community relations, the fourth annual **Taste of the Gateway**, where local restaurants gathered to share their terrific cuisine with area residents, the first annual **Howl on Howell** event promoting local businesses on (you guessed it) Howell Avenue from Howard to Bolivar, not one but two local **Farmers' Markets**, the first ever **Family Health Night** with new partner Ascension-St. Francis Hospital, and **Frida Fest** and **Fiesta Selena** down at the Farmhouse Paint and Sip.

These events don't happen by themselves. It takes a committed group of neighborhood volunteers and businesses to make them a reality. If you are interested in being part of something bigger than yourself, something that makes a real difference in the quality of life of this district, please contact Alderman Spiker at 708-1884, and he'll put you in touch with other like-minded souls. Thank you! 



Alderman Spiker talks with members of Police District 6 at National Night Out.



Perfect weather and terrific food helped to bring a record crowd to the 4th annual Taste of the Gateway event.



The Holt Park Neighborhood Association partnered with Ascension-St. Francis to bring us the first ever Family Health Night. A participant goes right for the heart in a giant game of Operation!



Celebrating the life of the Queen of Tejano Music, Selena, the first ever Fiesta Selena took place this fall at the Farmhouse Paint and Sip.

Meet the New Community Liaison Officers

Please join me in welcoming Officers Michael Ward and Fabian Garcia, who are the new Community Liaison Officers (or “CLOs”) for Police District 6, our police district. Officers Ward and Garcia replaced long-time CLOs, Officers Felix and Dummann, who moved on to other opportunities. We thank them for their years of dedicated service.

POs Garcia and Ward both have backgrounds in engaging area youth and are infectious in their enthusiasm for working with the public. We are very lucky to have them. Be sure to say “Hi” to them at the district’s next crime analysis meeting! ▀



Meet the new Community Liaison Officers at Police District 6: Officers Ward and Garcia.

Payday Loans and Neighborhood Input

Score a victory for people power! A former payday loan store called “PLS” was looking to return to its location at 27th and Howard Ave (next to the old Toys ‘R Us) after abandoning the building for about three years. They sought to do so over the summer when our district was absent an alderman.

That didn’t sit right with me, so I appeared before the Board of Zoning Appeals (or “BOZA”) in July and asked them to wait until we had a new alderperson in place who could reach out to the neighbors and involve them in the process. The Board agreed to hold the item until September.

Once I became alderman, I then held a meeting for the residents in the neighborhood to the immediate east, after dropping a load of flyers in the area. There we heard from representatives of PLS and were able to ask them numerous questions and voice some concerns.

A short while later, BOZA held their hearing and I gave testimony

against PLS’s proposal to occupy the building as a “currency exchange.” There were many reasons for this, but one of them was the fact that they were looking to be open until 9 p.m. in the evening—far later than any bank—and that they had no security on the premises to deal with the possibility that they would be a good target for robberies. All they were proposing was a big picture window and some cameras so everyone could watch them being robbed.

Since this sounded to me and others like basically asking the Milwaukee Police Dept. to serve as their security, and since MPD is already stretched so thinly in our large district, I argued against their proposal. Fortunately, the Board agreed, and PLS will not be returning to the building anytime in the near future. (They have to wait three years to reapply, assuming the Board’s decision is upheld if contested in court.)

So, the bottom line is a business was looking to move into a prime location on the edge of one of our main commercial corridors without demonstrating to myself, the

also opposed), or the neighbors that they would be an asset to the area. We were successful in rebutting that attempt, and I think the area will be better for it. ▀

Ikon Hotel Loan

I came into office preaching a brand of fiscal conservatism that I take very seriously. We shouldn’t be spending money that we don’t have on projects that we’re not extremely confident will pay off. So when several of my colleagues proposed that the City issue \$9 million in loans to a developer looking to take the former Sears location at North and Fond du Lac (more recently, the Milwaukee Mall location) and build a hotel and adjoining convention center there, I said, “no way.” The City is taking a huge risk here relying on rosy projections, as evidenced by the Comptroller’s report on the matter. Joining me in opposing this loan were Aldermen Murphy, Donovan and Borkowski. Despite our opposition, the proposal passed, 11-4. ▀

MPS Works to "Green Up" the Garden District

Two new and exciting projects are putting a splash of green in the Garden District.

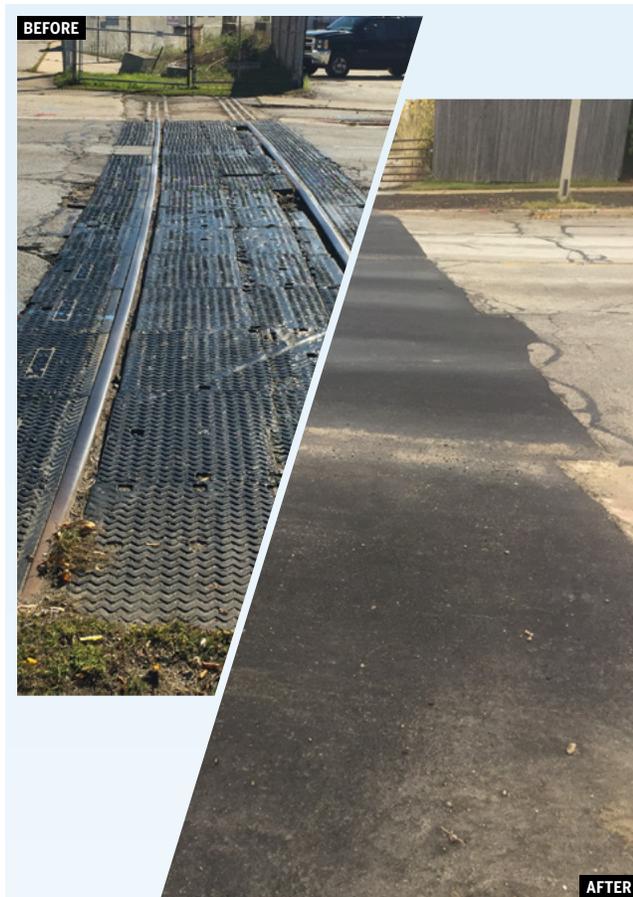
Southgate Playfield at 25th and Ohio was for decades nothing but a sea of asphalt and broken glass. Milwaukee Recreation has removed all of that asphalt and is in the process of replacing it with green space, nice new playground equipment (there was none before), and next year, a splash pad.

Further south at Burdick Elementary (Bolivar and Griffin), more asphalt is biting the dust. MPS is here partnering with the City, MMSD, and other partners on transforming the play area facing Bolivar with more green space, a new outdoor classroom, and stormwater-reducing native plantings and bioswales.

These changes are healthier for the kids and the environment they're going to grow up in. Win-win! ■



Students at Burdick Elementary will now be able to play ball on a grass field rather than on asphalt, thanks to recent improvements. Plus one to kids' knees and minus one to Band-Aid manufacturers!



After many years of attempting to get the ear of Union Pacific, we were successful in having them pay to remove the abandoned railroad tracks on W. Morgan Ave., just west of S. 20th St.



Did you love the little white rocks and weeds that used to be in front of the Dollar General parking lot on Howell near Bolivar? Sorry! Alderman Spiker worked with corporate on having them replaced with honest-to-goodness landscaping that makes things look more like the Garden District!

Flood Control

Help is on the way for residents near 5th and Armour who have been dealing with flooding off and on for years. The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (“MMSD” for short) is partnering with the City of Milwaukee on a major project in the area that will reduce flooding, improve habitat for plants, fish, and wildlife, and make the nearby creek look a whole lot nicer.

Improvements include creating a flood storage basin behind the former Central Steel and Wire Co. building (now Alro Steel), which will catch and detain water during floods, widening the culverts running beneath 5th and 6th St a little north of Layton, and removing the concrete lining along the banks of the creek between 1st and 6th St.

Alderman Spiker attended an open house with affected residents at the Water Tower on Oct. 2, where MMSD’s engineers reviewed the details of the project, phase 1 of which is scheduled to break ground in 2021–22.



MMSD’s Patrick Elliott explains flood mitigation plans to area residents at the Water Tower.

Details about the project can be seen online at bit.ly/WilsonParkCreek3 or by emailing callen@mmsd.com. ▀

Road Repairs

The Dept. of Public Works was able to show a lot of love to the residents of the Garden District this year. We received the longest list of road repairs in the entire city! Streets that were either resurfaced or repaved (or scheduled to be before the end of the year) included the following:

Abbott Ave. from 18th to 19th

Carpenter Ave. from 20th to 26th (finishing to 27th next year after a Water Works project on the block)

Eden Pl. from 8th to 11th (including 8th St., 9th Pl., 11th St., and Morgan Pl.)

Foster Ave. from 14th St. to 15th Pl.

Pine Ave. from Whitnall to Layton

14th St. from Foster to Edgerton

14th St. from Grange to Parnell

16th St. from Edgerton to just north of Holmes (including Vogel)

18th St. from Oklahoma to Euclid

19th St. from Halsey to Edgerton

22nd Pl. from Clayton Crest to Mallory will be completed in 2020.

And, of course, the biggie: **W. Layton Ave.** from Howell all the way to 27th

Is this enough? Not even close. We have many, many more streets in our district in need of repair and replacement. I will continue to fight to have the resources made available to improve the quality of our streets. Our district and our residents deserve nothing less. ▀

Business from the Burbs

Business is booming in the Garden District! More and more business owners are taking a second look at the City of Milwaukee and deciding to move their businesses from the suburbs into our district. Five examples from the last year or so:

Emerald City Catering took up residence in the former Walker’s Maple Grove building at 3555 S. 13th St., having located from South Milwaukee. **Alro Steel** left Wauwatosa behind to locate in the former Central Steel and Wire building at 4343 S. 6th St. **Knight Plumbing** and **Marcel’s Pizza** left Franklin and Greenfield, respectively, to find greener pastures at the old Airport Pantry and Dino’s buildings on Howell Ave near Bolivar. And finally, **Playtime Doggy Daycare** opened a second location at 12th and Layton to supplement their other home in West Allis.

A strong business community makes for a strong district. Welcome to all! ▀

Tree Lighting, Winter Wonderland, and Songs of the Season

Don't miss it! Tuesday, Dec. 3rd at 6 p.m. will mark the 3rd annual Garden District Tree Lighting at 6th and Norwich (a block south of Howard). Treats, crafts, songs of the season, and maybe even a visit from Santa will mark the occasion.

But the fun doesn't end there. For the next month, a Winter Wonderland of lights, holiday displays, and seasonal wooden cut-outs will be in full effect. Stop by with the family and take a stroll through the transformed Garden District Grounds at 6th and Norwich. You'll be glad you did! (If you or someone you know can help with setting all of this up, call Terry at **731-0472**.)

Finally, join us on Saturday, Dec. 14th at 4 p.m. for a new event called



This Chinese New Year Dragon is only one of the many creations of Reagan High School's art students (under the direction of Mr. Chad Sperzel-Wuchterl) for use in the Winter Wonderland.

“Singing Songs of the Season” where residents will gather to sing family-friendly songs of the holiday season. Worried that you won't know the words? Not a problem. The Garden District Neighborhood Association, with the sponsorship of local businesses, will have song sheets for

everyone. Songs will be led by volunteers and maybe even some surprise guests. As dusk arrives around 4:30 p.m., the 140 lighted displays and 30,000 lights will begin to light up on the circular path on the block, providing another free adventure for families. ▀



Alderman Spiker views the student art galleries at Reagan High School with Wisconsin's 2020 High School Teacher of the Year, Mr. Chad Sperzel-Wuchterl, and Principal Michael Roemer.

Ring Doorbell Cameras 2.0

In 2018, local businesses teamed with local police to roll out a pilot program in which free Ring doorbell cameras were given out to area residents. (They're all gone, by the way.) The goal was to improve community safety and to promote information-sharing about crime with other neighbors and the police.

Fast forward to this year... These same groups, spearheaded by the S. 27th St. and Gateway to Milwaukee Business Associations, targeted areas where calls for service pertaining to criminal activity were the highest in the district. In those areas, they held workshops and promoted the expansion of the camera networks in an effort to further deter crime.

The data isn't in yet, but the anecdotal evidence is promising. And it goes to show what can be accomplished when the police, the business community, and the neighbors all work together to stop crime in its tracks. ▀

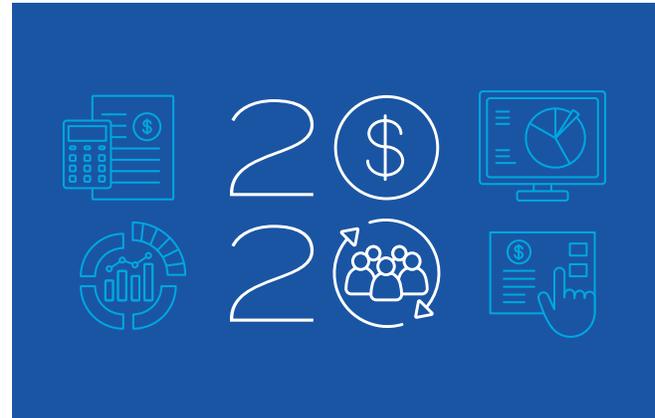
The City Budget

Please note that when this newsletter went to press, the budget process was still ongoing. Budget adoption was scheduled for Friday, November 8th.

Wow! When you have Mayor Tom Barrett and Alderman Bob Donovan both agreeing that this is the worst city budget they have ever seen, you know things are bad. There is a pension cliff looming in 2023 that—if we don't act now—will mean that the City has to find an extra \$90 million under someone's mattress at that time. But acting now means that we have to find \$8 million in this year's budget. Since about half of the City's (general city purposes) budget is devoted to the Milwaukee Police Department—resources which, by the way, we don't have enough of in our district despite paying the third-highest tax bill in the City!—the Mayor's budget is proposing to cut 60 positions through attrition. That can't make the City any safer.

But the alternatives aren't any good either. We can kick the pension can down the road and then meet our maker in 2023 when we fall off the cliff. We can cut the heck out of all of the other departments in the City that account for the other half of its (general city purposes) budget. Or we can ask the State to let us tax ourselves to make up of the difference, and hope(?) they let us. Again, none of these are good options.

I'd be remiss if I didn't point out that the State of Wisconsin, which has been collecting more and more tax revenue since the end of the recession, hasn't been shar-



ing that increased revenue with the City...even though a good share of it has been coming from the taxpayers of Milwaukee. And I'd also be remiss if I didn't point out that this is a big (though not the only) source of the problem we're facing.

Case in point: the 60 police positions that the Mayor's budget is proposing to cut amount to about \$4.2 million in savings per year. Want to know how much the Governor's 2% boost to shared revenue for the City would have amounted to had the Legislature not cut it out of the State Budget earlier this year? Yes, that's right: about \$4.2 million a year.

Update: Three different amendments were put forward to restore some of the cut police positions. I voted for all three. All failed on a 6-9 vote. ■



Person of the Year

The Garden District Neighborhood Association's very own Connie Wilson was awarded the South Side Business Club's prestigious "Person of the Year" award on October 10th for her years of volunteer work and dedicated service to the area. Anyone who knows her knows that there's no one who pours more of her time and energy into making our district the best that it can be. With her trusty lieutenant, Dawn Riegel, Connie has made the Garden District Neighborhood Association into a transformative force for good in our district, and has made "quality of life" a reality here. Congratulations, Connie, for this well-deserved recognition! ■

Alderman Spiker (right) presents Connie Wilson with a plaque to commemorate her recent Person of the Year award from the South Side Business Club.

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I was thrilled to be able to honor Ms. Betty Leer at her residence at Wilson Commons for her 30+ years of service to the community through the 4th of July Celebration at Wilson Park. She managed an army of volunteers and made sure that everyone got their ice cream...but not until the National Anthem had ended!



Communication is King

Back before I became alderman, I developed a bit of a reputation at City Hall for being relentless in following up with city departments on constituent services and needs. One of the things I always used to harp on was the need to keep people in the loop about what we were doing to help them with their problems.

Fast forwarding to today, as your alderman I will continue to drive home my favorite mantra: **COMMUNICATION IS KING**. If we're going to be doing something that will impact the residents and businesses in the district, then we need to let them know about it and, where possible, seek their input. It's not enough to do our job; we have to make sure the residents know what we're doing, why we're doing it, and make sure it's something we should be doing in the first place.

But this isn't an outlook I apply only to others; it's central to how I view the alderman's office itself. Over the next several months—and however many years I may remain as your alderman—I will continue to seek to engage the residents of our district in a variety of ways, old and new. Whether it's via group email and social

media communications, neighborhood association and block watch meetings, or the time-honored town hall gathering, I remain committed to talking with and listening to as many of our residents as possible. Democracy is a participatory sport, and we all need to get involved if we are to make the best decisions possible.

Therefore, I am making a commitment right now (mid-October, in the heat of the budget process) to hold a neighborhood meeting or walk every month from now until this time next year (if re-elected) so that I can reach every section of our district and ask the residents there personally about their hopes and concerns.

Thus far, I've been at neighborhood meetings at Holler Park, Wilson Commons, the Villa St. Francis, and in the Airport Gardens and Wilson Park neighborhoods. By the time this newsletter reaches you, I will have attended two more meetings at St. Charles Borromeo in the Gran-Ram neighborhood west of 27th and at Southside Church near Copernicus Park. If you and your neighbors would like to have a meeting in your area, call my office at **286-8537** and we'll see about getting something on the books! ▀