

August 25, 2014

Lakefront Development Advisory Commission
William H. Lynch, Chairman
312 E. Wisconsin Ave., Suite 210
Milwaukee, WI 53202

RE: LDAC Review of Sale of O'Donnell Park

Chairman Lynch:

I have been made aware of a recent letter from Chairman Broderick to you regarding the potential sale of O'Donnell Park to Northwestern Mutual. In his letter, Chairman Broderick stated "because the new development proposal for county lakefront parkland must be reviewed by LDAC before the county can take action on it, I have asked that the proponents of this proposal for sale of O'Donnell park to Northwestern Mutual to contact you to undertake the process of obtaining LDAC's recommendation prior to any action by this committee."

Northwestern Mutual is very excited about this proposal, and we look forward to public dialogue on this topic. To that end, we are certainly willing to appear before the Lakefront Development Advisory Commission to explain why Northwestern Mutual believes this transaction is in the best interest of the community, Milwaukee County and the company. It would be our preference that such a meeting occur as soon as convenient.

You will recall from the conversation we had when we met in your capacity as a board member of Preserve Our Parks that our proposal is fairly straight forward:

- We will purchase the O'Donnell property including the parking structure, pavilion building and plaza;
- We will make repairs and improvements to the parking structure and commit to keep it open for public use;
- We will honor all existing leases in the pavilion. It is particularly worth noting the long-term nature of the lease with the Betty Brinn Children's museum, which extends, with options, until 2033.
- At some point we may consider making improvements to the landscaping of the plaza.

In light of Chairman Broderick's letter we have reviewed the LDAC background information posted online (<http://milwaukee.gov/LDAC>) including the three resolutions creating and clarifying the role of LDAC, as well as LDAC's vision, criteria for making recommendations, and materials required to request a review.

While we are happy to discuss the proposal with LDAC, it seems clear from these materials that the transaction we are contemplating – the sale of O'Donnell and continued use in its current form – is not the type of transaction envisioned for an LDAC review or recommendation. Northwestern Mutual is proposing only to acquire O'Donnell Park, not to redevelop it.

Both the County and the City's original resolutions empowering LDAC specify that "all proposals for *new* development" [emphasis added] be submitted to LDAC before action can be taken. In fact the 2005 County resolution specifically prohibits LDAC from making recommendations for a number of changes, including minor maintenance for existing uses or zoning changes including special use permits.¹

The articulated LDAC criteria and LDAC's application for review are consistent with the foregoing directives and clearly geared toward developers who are proposing a new use of property at the lakefront – which again, Northwestern Mutual is not proposing.

Accordingly, in lieu of attempting to complete the application for review (which would result in virtually all of the questions being answered "not applicable") we suggest that the Commission examine the report of the County's Director of Economic Development that was drafted in preparation of the July public hearings on this proposal before the County Economic and Community Development Committee and the Parks, Energy and Environment Committee. In addition to the Director's 18 page report, 267 pages of additional documents and background material can be found in the County Legislative Information Center (CLIC) attached to file 14-610 (<https://milwaukeecounty.legistar.com/Legislation.aspx>).

We have also been informed that a report of the O'Donnell Park Working Group, led by County Comptroller Scott Manske, has recently been delivered to Board Chair Dimitrijevic, and an additional joint public hearing of the two Committees mentioned above is scheduled for September 10th.

Again, we believe the sale of O'Donnell to Northwestern Mutual represents a mutually beneficial opportunity for the greater Milwaukee community, for Milwaukee County, and for our company, and we stand ready to assist in moving this process forward.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Sincerely,



Steven M. Radke

cc: Supervisor Broderick
Supervisor Jursik
Chairwoman Dimitrijevic
County Executive Abele
ECD Director Whaley-Smith
Mayor Barrett
Common Council President Murphy
DCD Commissioner Marcoux

¹ A special use permit may be necessary to accommodate the existing O'Donnell Pavilion leases (Betty Brinn Children's Museum and Zilli's) under Park District Zoning if O'Donnell is privately owned.