

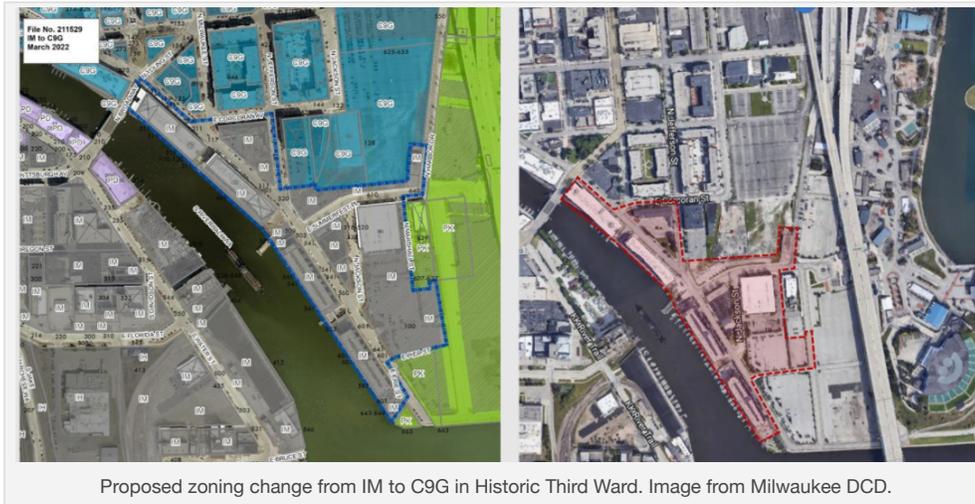


EYES ON MILWAUKEE

Third Ward Zoning Change On Hold

Change wouldn't stop proposed concert venue, and confuses neighbors.

By Jeramey Jannene - Mar 8th, 2022 04:38 pm



Proposed zoning change from IM to C9G in Historic Third Ward. Image from Milwaukee DCD.

A proposal to rezone the south edge of the [Historic Third Ward](#) near the festival grounds appears to have stalled.

Alderman [Robert Bauman](#) requested the [Department of City Development](#) (DCD) to prepare the change, even after learning it wouldn't apply to a [controversial, proposed concert venue](#) from [FPC Live](#).

"I think just from a general planning standpoint it would be wise to make this land consistent with the rest of the land in the Third Ward," said Bauman in January.

His proposal would change the zoning on several properties from "Industrial – Mixed" to the downtown C9G designation that governs the arenorth of E. Corcoran Ave. In addition, it would require theaters proposed for C9G zones with capacities in excess of 2,000 guests to get approval from the Board of Zoning Approvals. The FPC Live proposal already has a "vested right" to the existing zoning rules according to the City Attorney's Office, but the change would prevent future theaters from being built without special approval.

But on Monday afternoon, DCD said the alderman was effectively killing the measure after resident feedback.

"He has no objection to holding the file indefinitely," DCD planning manager Sam Leichtling told the City Plan Commission.

A five-page frequently asked questions document from DCD generated a substantial amount of feedback, even though it repeatedly established that the zoning change wouldn't require any existing use to stop and would have little impact on permitted future uses. The most notable changes would be to restrict future industrial uses in an area that has almost none, eliminate parking requirements and replace a 75-foot height maximum for a floor-area ratio calculation to control the maximum density. The Third Ward Architectural Review Board would maintain design oversight.

“The zoning change will not affect existing residential units,” said DCD in its letter. But much of the feedback came from condo owners subject to the change, including residents of the most valuable properties in the city that run along E. Erie St.

Leichtling said DCD, at Bauman’s suggestion, was recommending the proposed measure be “held to the call of the chair” and that no public hearing be held today. “That’s a fancy word for hold,” said staff assistant **Chris Lee**, clarifying the procedural steps to table the item.

But commission chair **Stephanie Bloomingdale**, after praising DCD for its work, opened the formal public hearing anyway. She said those who showed up for the virtual hearing deserved the opportunity to speak.

Attorney **Rodney Carter**, representing the Harbor Front Condominiums Association, said his association was one of the multiple groups asking for the proposal to be delayed.

Attorney **David Halbrooks** encouraged the commission to close the hearing to avoid any future confusion.

A written letter from **Carolyn Maduza** said the theater change portion was “incomprehensible” and “poorly written” and that Bauman needs to explain it and the timing to his constituents. It was written in standard zoning code language, which is likely to be obtuse to those not familiar with permitted uses, special uses and use classifications.

Bauman was not at the meeting and instead attended the simultaneously scheduled Steering & Rules Committee meeting.

The commission ultimately voted unanimously to adjourn the hearing and hold the measure.

FPC Live and partner Milwaukee World Festival, Inc. are still expected to request an easement for their proposed facility from the Board of Harbor Commissioners which controls the festival grounds. But council approval isn’t expected to be necessary. A group, Save the Third Ward, is proposing an alternative vision of developing a large park in the area.

Venue Site Plan

Renderings

