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LAND AND SPACE

Rezoning for proposed concert venue site near Summerfest remains uncertain. But it will not affect plans for the controversial development.



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A portion of Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward where a new concert venue is proposed is facing a possible rezoning.

But that action, which needs Common Council approval, would not affect the controversial indoor concert center proposed by FPC Live.

That's because that venue's plans were filed with the city in December under the current zoning for the site.

Meanwhile, Ald. Robert Bauman, whose district includes the Third Ward and who sought the rezoning, is now considering withdrawing that request.

There is "too much commotion" about the rezoning proposal even though it will not affect the FPC Live project, Bauman told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

"Not worth it," Bauman said, in an email.

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That amounts to a "U-turn at the last minute," said Stephanie Bloomingdale, chair of the Plan Commission, which was to review the rezoning proposal at its Monday meeting.

"This is a bit of an unusual situation," Bloomingdale said before the commission voted to delay acting on the proposal.

FPC Live wants to develop the facility, which would feature two separate concert halls, on a vacant lot south of the offices of Summerfest operator Milwaukee World Festival Inc., 639 E. Summerfest Place.

Those plans are drawing opposition from nearby condo owners as well as rival venue operators.

Under the grandfathered zoning, FPC Live's proposal doesn't require a Plan Commission and Common Council review.

However, those plans will need approval from the Historic Third Ward Architectural Review Board, where the proposal is pending.

The proposed rezoning covers the future FPC Live site as well as other nearby parcels.

It changes the zoning from industrial mixed to downtown — mixed activity.

That latter district is already in place for most of the Third Ward. It's designed "to permit a wide range of retail, service, light manufacturing and residential uses," according to the Department of City Development.

Notices about the proposed rezoning raised questions from Third Ward residents, said Sam Leichtling of the Department of City Development.

That led Bauman to ask for a delay in considering the change, Leichtling told commission members.

"I am contemplating rescinding the file entirely and leave all zoning exactly as it is now," Bauman told Leichtling in a Friday email filed with the Plan Commission.

The commission also delayed acting on another proposed ordinance initiated by Bauman.

It would require theaters with a capacity of more than 2,000 people to obtain a special-use permit from the Board of Zoning Appeals — an independent city panel.

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