



CHAT WITH THE CHAIR

SPECIAL EDITION JULY 2013

Dear Neighbors

It's been an exciting and busy time for the County Board.

First, we returned to the Courthouse this week after an electrical fire shut down **the facility for about two weeks. I'm proud to say that the County Board** remained open for business during the entire time we spent at the Coggs Center while the Courthouse was closed. Supervisors and staff might have been displaced during the Courthouse closing, but they never stopped doing the **people's business. Still, it's good to be back at our usual home at the Courthouse.**

Next, we announced that the War Memorial and the Milwaukee Art Museum came to an important agreement that will guarantee the integrity of the buildings and grounds of both institutions for generations to come. This historic accord was **the result of hard work by all involved, and I'm pleased that the County Board** played a key role in helping the two sides come to an agreement by bringing in former Supreme Court Justice Janine Geske to mediate when talks between the two became deadlocked.

The full Board is expected to vote on the agreement on July 25. For more information about the resolution, [click here](#).

It continues to be a pleasure to serve you throughout these busy times. Please feel free to contact me at any time, I look forward to hearing from you!

Milwaukee County News Updates
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Marina in our Community

BOARD MEMBERS PRAISE HISTORIC AGREEMENT

Milwaukee County Board Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic, along with Supervisors Gerry Broderick and John Weishan, today announced that a new agreement between The Milwaukee Art Museum and The Milwaukee County War Memorial, Inc. will help ensure the long-term vitality of the buildings and grounds of both organizations.

Under the compromise, the War Memorial Center/Milwaukee Art Museum will receive \$1,586,000 per year from the County from 2014 through 2023. This includes an investment of \$1,100,000 to the Art Museum and \$486,000 to the War Memorial. The annual funding commitment ends after the ten-year period, but the other portions of the agreement could extend for up to 84 years.

County capital improvement funding of \$10 million between **2013 and 2017 will supplement the Art Museum's planned private funding of \$15 million for a total \$25 million investment in improvements to the publically owned portions of the War Memorial and Art Museum buildings and grounds.**

Supervisors Weishan and Broderick, members of the Committee on Parks, Energy and Environment, praised the accord.

"This is a historic agreement because not only do both organizations benefit, but all of Milwaukee County benefits," Weishan said. "This is especially a victory for veterans because the pact promises to keep the War Memorial as a tribute to their selfless actions in service to our country."

Broderick said the pact would help preserve both institutions for generations to come.

"This agreement is the product of leadership and vision by all who were involved," Broderick said. "The Art Museum is a true jewel that is known world-wide as a symbol of Milwaukee, and the War Memorial honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice."

Dimitrijevic said that she was pleased to help assuring the pact was reached when she asked former Supreme Court Justice Janine Geske to mediate talks after the two groups had reached an impasse.

"I believe that having Justice Geske mediate the discussion between the two groups was a key to reaching this historic agreement," she said. "This is a win-win-win for the Milwaukee Art Museum, the War Memorial and the taxpayers of Milwaukee County. It's time to come together and make a long term commitment to our veterans and arts community. This investment will pay off for generations to come."

A special meeting of the Finance, Personnel and Audit committee will be held to consider the measure Thursday at 8 a.m. in the Courthouse before sending it to the Board at its 9:30 meeting.

July 2013



Marina in our Community

A Deal to Save Art and War Memorial

It's time to move ahead with this compromise

By GERRY BRODERICK

Finally.

An important, historic agreement between Milwaukee County, the War Memorial and the Milwaukee Art Museum has been reached in spite of the hurdles thrown in its path.

This significant deal ensures the integrity of the buildings and grounds of both entities and guarantees Milwaukee County residents will be able to enjoy these two treasures for generations to come.

Getting to this point wasn't easy.

It took a concerted effort by several parties, including War Memorial and Art Museum leadership, over the course of multiple years to come to this point. The Milwaukee County Board, led by Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic, also played no small role in this landmark pact by bringing in former Supreme Court Justice Janine Geske to mediate negotiations when talks deadlocked.

Even late objections by County Executive Chris Abele failed to stop this compromise from happening. The contributions made to the quality of our civic life by these two institutions are unquestionable. They deserve to be treated with greater respect than the county executive is showing them with his opposition to this deal.

The War Memorial represents a sacred trust between those who paid the ultimate price in service to our country and those left behind to honor their memory. An inscription outside the War Memorial tells us that its mission is to "honor the dead by serving the living," and it reminds us we have a duty to respect the dead, especially those who gave their lives in military service. A deteriorating War Memorial does a grave disservice to those American heroes.

As military veterans ourselves, we believe it is especially important to fulfill this responsibility to our fallen colleagues, and this agreement ensures we do that together as a community.

The Milwaukee Art Museum is a treasure, a symbol of this city that has been at risk for years. The Art Museum holds more than \$750 million in art, and drip pans over million-dollar paintings is not only a potential tragedy, it is the

height of foolishness.

With the recent Courthouse fire, we know the dangers of deferred maintenance. To further delay and defer improvements to the buildings and grounds of the War Memorial and the Milwaukee Art Museum would lead to greater costs for taxpayers in the future, as minor repairs become major projects.

In addition, the county's failure to financially support these two important institutions would put at risk the Art Museum's efforts to raise \$15 million in private funding for improvements to both. The private sector is raising considerable sums of money to support these publicly owned facilities, so this is not an unusual arrangement.

We have authored a resolution that will continue modest public support for both institutions for the next 10 years. After that time, the county will review the necessity for continued support. The resolution is expected to come before the County Board on Thursday.

The resolution calls for the War Memorial Center/ Milwaukee Art Museum to get \$1,586,000 per year from the county from 2014 through 2023. This includes a payment of \$1,100,000 to the Art Museum and \$486,000 to the War Memorial. The annual funding commitment ends after the 10-year period, but the agreements could remain in place for up to 84 years.

This is a compromise that will work. It is a modest investment in two important symbols of Milwaukee County.

It's been years in the making, but we finally have an accord that will protect these majestic institutions.

It's about time. Let's move forward, because the status quo is not acceptable.

John Weishan and Gerry Broderick are members of the Milwaukee County Board.

This Op/Ed first appeared online in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on July 22, 2013. [Click here](#) to read online

Marina in our Community

County Board Open For Business

The Milwaukee County Board offices are officially back open to the public after an electrical fire at the Milwaukee County Courthouse forced the office to be shut down for more than two weeks. Officials gave the go-ahead to reopen the office Monday afternoon.

County Board members and staff have been working in several different places since the July 6th fire that destroyed the Courthouse Electrical system. Staff members had temporary offices at the Coggs Center, and County Board meetings were held at Milwaukee Area Technical College and General Mitchell International Airport.

“We would like to thank everyone who helped us at those locations so Board members and staff could continue to work for the people of Milwaukee County,” County Board Chairwoman Marina Dimitrijevic said. “Dr. Michael Burke and his staff at MATC went above and beyond to accommodate the Board as it did the peoples’ business.”

County Board and Committee meetings will return to the Courthouse this week. That includes the July meeting of the entire Board Thursday, July 25, in the Board Chambers on the second floor. Elevator service has been restored to the floor.

There is still restricted access to the Courthouse. The 10th Street entrance is closed to the public until further notice. You can get into the Courthouse using the 9th Street and Wells Street entrances. You can also enter through the Safety Building or Criminal Justice Facility, which is handicap accessible.