



Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

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SUPERVISORS BRODERICK, JOHNSON, JR. AND JURSIK ANNOUNCE OPPOSITION TO O'DONNELL PARK SALE TO NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL **Three Committee Chairs Say Park Land Should Not Be For Sale to Private Company**

Milwaukee County Supervisors Gerry Broderick, Willie Johnson, Jr. and Patricia Jursik announced today that they will vote against a proposed \$14 million sale of O'Donnell Park to Northwestern Mutual, calling the deal inadequate and against the public interest.

Jursik said she would vote against the proposal because public access would not be protected to the park.

"The proposed sale does not protect the public's right to the use of the park," said Jursik, chairwoman of the Economic and Community Development Committee. "This private owner, Northwestern Mutual, will control use of O'Donnell Park, plaza and all. The agreement specifically provides that any representation not included in the written Purchase Agreement and three-page Operations Agreement shall not be legally binding. These two writings make no provisions for any public use or access rights."

"The proposal is a bad deal for the county. It ignores the value of the Pavilion. In the hands of a private party, the Pavilion has much greater value than that realized by the county."

Johnson, co-chairman of the Finance, Personnel and Audit Committee, said that lakefront park land should not be sold at any price, and he questioned whether Northwestern Mutual would maintain the property as park land open to the public.

"Milwaukee County should not sell this valuable piece of lakefront property," Johnson said. "The public interest must be protected, and this proposal simply does not protect the public interest. We have no guarantees that the all the property will be open to the public in perpetuity, and that is the only way I could favor the idea of selling this invaluable piece of property to a private company."

Broderick, chairman of the Parks, Energy and Environment Committee, said mainstream media reporting on the proposal amounted to "cheerleading" on editorial pages, and he said a deeper journalistic examination of the proposed sale was necessary to help the public understand whether the sale is really in the public interest.

"The Shepherd Express has done a great service to the community in outlining the many negatives which attach to the proposed sale of O'Donnell park land and the parking structure," Broderick said, referring to a recent Shepherd Express article. "It would be my hope that the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel would suspend their cheerleading for this flawed proposal long enough to also inform the public of the negatives."

Jursik predicted a close vote on the issue.

"I believe several supervisors share our concerns about this proposal," she said. "It is difficult to predict the outcome, but I urge my colleagues to vote against this unfair deal."

The sale proposal is set for a vote by the full County Board on December 18.

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