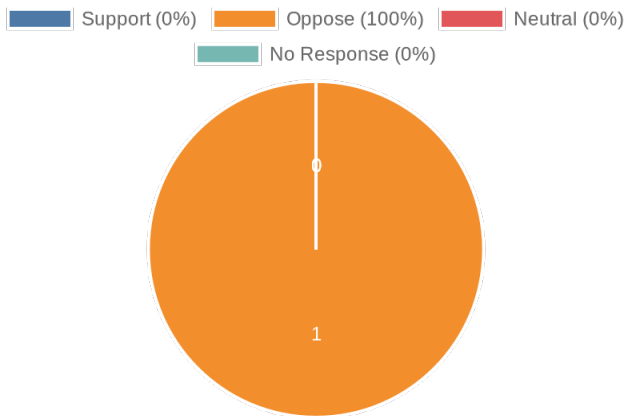


## Overall Sentiment



## Jeff Roznowski

Location:

Submitted At: 10:01am 06-16-26

Dear Members of the Government Affairs Committee:

On June 16, you will be continuing your discussion on an amended ordinance (2.04.020) to fill alderperson vacancies and to discuss the current vacancy in District 6, which you started and voted to hold on May 12. As the former alder of that district (2010-2016) and long-time resident (32 years) of that district, I wanted to comment and offer my input to your deliberations.

### Length of vacancy

According to the proposed ordinance sections B and E(1), an alderperson vacancy could last up to one year. In a democratic representative form of local government, that potential length of time when 4000 people would not be represented is deeply troubling and frankly unacceptable. While some may say this would be a rare occurrence, it is precisely the situation you face today when, given your stated preference is to have an election to fill the vacancy (section B), that next election to fill District 6 would not occur until April 2027! You clearly need to fill the District 6 by appointment as soon as possible

The people of District 6, made up largely of the Pasadena Neighborhood, whom I represented for six years, are very engaged, active and involved residents, as they should be. They rely on their local alder for any number of local concerns. For example, District 6 has been currently dealing with the sidewalk replacement program. It can be a very unsettling time and prompt many questions. The last time the sidewalk program occurred in District 6 was 12 or 13 years ago, when I was alder, and I received numerous calls and emails. Where do they turn without representation? Just this past weekend at around 7 am on June 13, several police vehicles with guns drawn, drones flying and the K9 unit engaged, there was a chase through the neighborhoods of 83rd and Clarke to apprehend 3 suspected car jackers. In situations like this, I would receive calls when I was alder to answer questions from concerned residents. Where do they turn without representation?

## Sense of urgency

As I write this email, it has been almost 7 weeks since the District 6 vacancy was announced, seven weeks without representation for 4000 residents and without a plan to fill the vacancy. For comparison, the City of Brookfield had an alder vacancy at about the same time in April, they announced their plan last week and are currently taking applications to appoint a replacement. Even if your committee approves something on Tuesday, the full Common Council still needs to vote to approve and if the plan is appointment, a committee then needs to be formed. The vacancy clock continues to tick on.

When your committee held this item on May 12, I was disappointed in how abrupt this action was taken. I especially felt sorry for the difficult position 3 brand new alders were put in (Saso, Small, Collins), as this was their very first council committee meeting. I did not view a sense of urgency in filling this vacancy, considering committee's now generally only meet once a month. I believe a special meeting would have been a good way to go.

I was originally appointed to fill the District 6 Alder seat in October 2010 when my predecessor moved out of the city. The total time from announced vacancy to my seating on the council was about 6 weeks. And this was when there were two alders per district! In your new environment of having only one alder per district (which I supported and voted for), it is particularly imperative to fill vacancies quickly.

I understand that ordinance 2.04.020 to fill the vacancy needs to be amended as it is currently worded to reflect a 16-person council with 8 districts and 2 alders per district. What I fail to understand is why this hadn't already been amended, given that it has been four years since the people of Wauwatosa voted to reduce the size and makeup of the Common Council? This certainly has contributed to the delay in filling this current vacancy. But it also begs the question if there are any other ordinances that need updating due to the changes in Council structure. Four years is a long time to wait.

I strongly urge you to fill the vacant District 6 seat by appointment as soon as possible, with special meetings if needed, so that perhaps the good and engaged people of District 6 will have democratic representation sometime this summer.

Thank you for listening.

Jeff

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