



Tom Barrett
Mayor, City of Milwaukee

February 5, 2021

To the Honorable, Common Council
of the City of Milwaukee

Honorable Members of the Common Council:

I am writing in opposition to Common Council file number 201297, "An ordinance relating to the nomination of members to the historic preservation commission."

This legislation attacks a fundamental principle of our municipal government, the balanced authority over boards and commissions. The long tradition of board members being nominated by the Mayor and confirmed by the Common Council ought to be affirmed, not cast aside.

While the Administration greatly values the Council's current role in the process, including the ability to recommend appointees, the proposed amendment would violate longstanding principles of separation of powers within City of Milwaukee governance.

Currently, there is a reasonable balance of authority between the Administration and the Council with respect to Historic Preservation Commission membership. The Administration nominates members and the Council determines whether nominees are confirmed. Under the present system, the commission staff is under the jurisdiction of the Council through the City Clerk's office. Even more significantly, decisions made by the Historic Preservation Commission can be appealed to the Common Council. If the Council were to have complete control over appointments, staffing and appeals, this would hardly be a fair system, let alone one that honors separation of powers.

I wholeheartedly appreciate and welcome your suggestions and candidate recommendations for all City boards and commissions. Thoughtful discussion and collaboration is the best path forward, and I welcome the opportunity to continue this work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Barrett". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Tom Barrett
Mayor