



October 30, 2012

Elaine Miller
Real Estate Manager
City of Milwaukee
809 N. Broadway Street, 2ND Floor
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Ms. Miller:

As you may know, over the past decade, St. Marcus Lutheran School has grown from about 100 students to serving over 600. Despite being almost 90% low-income, St. Marcus students perform at a very high level and over 95% go on to graduate from high school in four years or less. Finally, over the past decade, St. Marcus has invested over \$17,000,000 privately raised dollars to build infrastructure, improve the neighborhood and increase capacity.

As a result of these successes and the extraordinary demand for seats from parents and students, the St. Marcus Board of Directors has authorized a task force to consider the possibility of opening a second campus. The task force is due to complete its work over the next six months and report to the Board in January of 2013.

One critical aspect of the task force's work is to identify potential sites for a second campus. Given that St. Marcus is surrounded by vacant MPS facilities (there are three within 8 blocks of St. Marcus), we are compelled to look at these facilities as potential options.

I am writing to request an explanation as to the process by which St. Marcus could acquire one of the vacant MPS buildings for use as a second campus for St. Marcus School. In order to be able to move the task force's work forward in a timely manner, I would be grateful for the courtesy of a written response by November 15, 2012.

Should you have any questions, or need further information, I can be reached at (414) 303-2133 or via email at henry.tyson@stmarcus.org.

Thank you so much for your time, consideration, and a prompt response. Thank you for partnering with us to provide excellence in education to even more of Milwaukee's lower-income youth.

Sincerely,

Henry Tyson
Superintendent



Department of City Development
City Plan Commission
Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee
Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

Rocky Marcoux
Commissioner
rmarco@milwaukee.gov

Martha L. Brown
Deputy Commissioner
mbrown@milwaukee.gov

December 5, 2012

Mr. Henry Tyson
Superintendent
St. Marcus School
2215 N. Palmer St.
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Dear Mr. Tyson:

I am writing to respond to your letters of October 30, 2012 and November 21, 2012, regarding acquisition of vacant Milwaukee Public Schools buildings for use as a second campus by St. Marcus School.

At this point, the City of Milwaukee is working with MPS to market only buildings that have been declared surplus by the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. These properties are made available for sale through a request for proposal process. Department of City Development real estate staff provide property information and arrange showings of MPS property that is offered for sale.

When purchase is proposed for educational re-use as a school, City policy permits buyers that operate non-profit charter schools and private schools not affiliated with the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program. In light of the continuing inequity caused by the school choice "funding flaw," which reduces State funding to MPS, MPCP schools are not eligible to purchase vacant MPS property. (Ms. Miller's statement that MPCP schools could purchase MPS property subject that they pay full property taxes was incorrect.) This policy may be adjusted if the school funding formula is repaired. We encourage successful MPCP schools such as St. Marcus to join the City of Milwaukee in lobbying vigorously for repair of the formula.

I trust this responds to your questions. Please contact me if you require any further information.

Sincerely,

Martha L. Brown
Deputy Commissioner



Gonda, Jennifer

From: Brown, Martha
Sent: Monday, November 26, 2012 4:28 PM
To: Edwards, Myra; Gonda, Jennifer
Cc: Miller, Elaine
Subject: Communication from Henry Tyson, St. Marcus School
Attachments: 201211261621.pdf

FYI -- Bunkie Miller received the attached letter (PDF file) from Henry Tyson several weeks ago. She talked with him by phone last week regarding his interest in MPS properties, and received another communication from Henry today, which I have pasted into this email below. Bunkie has asked me to prepare a written response to Henry's original letter. I'll send over a draft for your review. If you have any thoughts about what that written response should say, please share them!

Martha

November 21, 2012

Elaine Miller
Real Estate Manager
City of Milwaukee
809 N. Broadway Street, 2ND Floor
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Dear Ms. Miller:

Thank you for spending a few minutes with me on the phone today to discuss my letter of October 30th regarding the interest of St. Marcus Lutheran School in acquiring one of the many vacant MPS properties.

From our conversation, it is my understanding that:

- a. Despite the large number of vacant MPS buildings, there are very few that have been declared available. Those that have been declared are either office buildings or designated for offices or housing.
- b. Schools that participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program can acquire these properties but there is a deed restriction that they are fully taxable. This is not the case for charter schools.
- c. The "funding flaw" pertaining to the funding of MPCP schools is unfair and costly to city tax payers resulting in an unwillingness of the city to sell to MPCP schools.

Regarding the three vacant MPS buildings within nine blocks of St. Marcus, you informed me that:

- i) Garfield is not available due to a request for use by the Bronzeville redevelopment authority. (Garfield is four blocks west of St. Marcus and has been vacant for at least 4 years).
- ii) Malcolm X has been designated not for school use and is a potential for "municipal use". (Malcolm X is four blocks north of St. Marcus and has been vacant for multiple years).
- iii) Lee Elementary is a nightmare building and you are unaware of the status.

In conclusion, I requested a response in writing so that as an interested party, I could fully understand the city's position and help articulate the city's position to other influencers. You informed me that you are about to go on sick leave but that you would do what you can to get me something. I greatly appreciate your help and support in this matter.

Please know that as a resident of the Harambee Neighborhood (I live 3 blocks from Malcolm X), and as the superintendent of St. Marcus, I am passionately committed to helping the Milwaukee Public Schools and the City of Milwaukee quickly and fairly redistribute these buildings. In doing so, more children will have access to high quality education; vacant, unproductive eye sores will be removed from our neighborhoods; and city tax payers will no longer have to pay for the upkeep of large, vacant facilities.

Thank you again for your assistance. I will be grateful to receive your written response.

For the Children,

Henry Tyson
Superintendent