

## **Alderman Backes Update**

*Published:*

Happy spooky season to all who celebrate! I personally have already binged one horror series and intend to get plenty more frights my way in the month of October.

As you are doubtless aware, South Milwaukee's trick-or-treating will once again be on the Saturday before Halloween this year: the 26th. I know my kids are already looking forward to it, and I personally am looking forward to seeing my neighborhood get flooded with kids once again; it's always a busy evening on Marquette Ave.

There are a lot of other things happening around town as well, including things new and exciting as well as things that might not be quite as exciting but are still critical to our city's present and future. Here's an update on some of the things we've had come our way at the council lately.

## **Budget season is upon us**

On this coming Tuesday (the 8th) at 6 PM, the common council and finance committee will have its first public meeting regarding the proposed operating budget for the coming fiscal year. We'll go over the budget in detail, department by department.

As you may be aware, conditions caused in large part due to the state's outdated and unfair funding models have got small municipalities like ours in a budget crunch. Basically, if you're not in a position where you're seeing significant new development, you're not getting much more money to keep your city functioning. And with our city being landlocked and actually having had negative net construction over the last year (due to the Everbrite campus tearing down many of its buildings), we once again find ourselves in a very challenging spot.

Our department heads always do an incredible job of finding ways to scrimp and save and operate with as little as possible. It's not fair that they're put in this position year in and year out, but until something changes at the state level, that's the situation we find ourselves in.

Here's hoping the new legislative maps will provide some hope of that issue being resolved in the future.

But for now, if you are interested in getting a first look at the upcoming budget proposal, come on out to city hall on Tuesday. The public will have opportunities to participate and provide feedback in November at a public hearing the week of Thanksgiving. But this will provide you with an opportunity to get all the information as it becomes first publicly available.

## **New projects in town**

There are some exciting new things coming to South Milwaukee!

At our most recent council meeting we approved Bucyrus grant funds to support the development of a new coffee shop and wine bar at the corner of 13th and Milwaukee in the building that previously housed Neutral Ground martial arts. And I have to say, the proposal was really impressive.

Virtue Coffee intends to be open every day of the week but Tuesday, with weekday hours from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. and weekend hours from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will feature 31 seats and will also sell premade foods like sandwiches and charcuterie boards.

Valor Wine will be open on Thursdays and Sundays from 11:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Fridays and Saturdays from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. It will feature 20 seats, a rotating selection of wineries, and also have various events, such as Derby Days and Oktoberfest.

The site will also be the office for Honor Interiors, an interior design company.

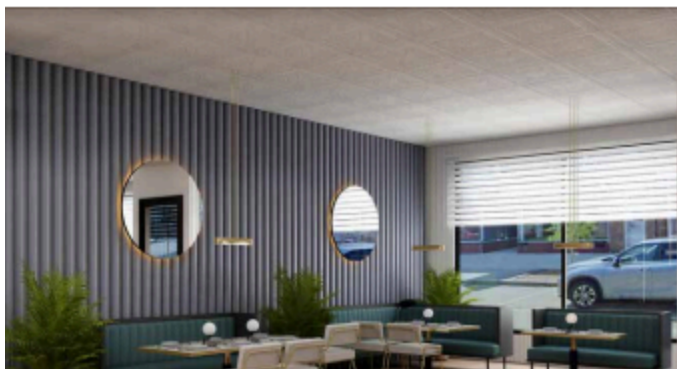
Significant work is about to begin to update the site, which includes aesthetic facelifts as well as ADA-compliant bathrooms and (excitingly) a new rooftop patio and event space.

Here are a few concept photos!

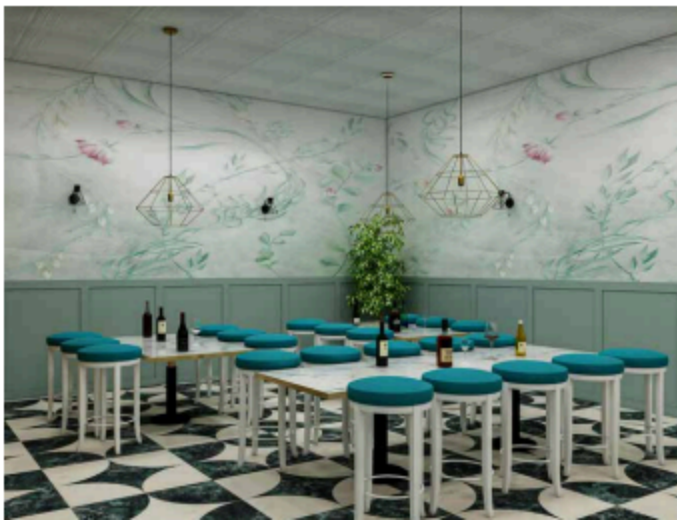
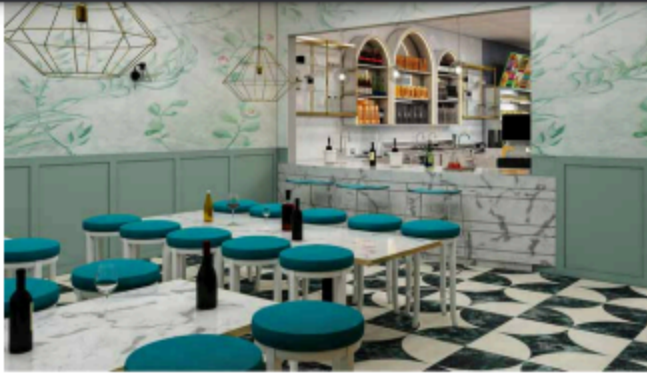




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South Milwaukee also recently had a ribbon cutting ceremony for Drop the Mic MKE, a podcast and recording studio located at 1213 Milwaukee Ave. What a cool new addition to our downtown!

In addition, if you've been walking down Milwaukee lately near China Chef, you may have seen some construction happening inside a building on the south side of the street. I don't have much information about this project yet, but it sounds like it's going to be a cocktail lounge of some sort, which is also exciting—it's something we don't really have here in town.

I've heard some rumblings of other businesses looking for homes here in South Milwaukee as well, which would be readily embraced by the community.

Overall, it's hard not to be excited about some of the things that are coming our way!

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*If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, email Alderman Backes at [tbackes@smwi.org](mailto:tbackes@smwi.org).*