

# TOWN OF ARCADIA

Trempealeau County



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## Minutes of Trempealeau County Cities, Villages, Towns, and Environment and Land Use Committee Forum

Tuesday, March 24, 2015 at 6:30 p.m.

Wade Britzuis, moderator, referred to the agenda; invited representatives to join the table; gave an introduction and the reasons for these meetings; stated that we are all in this together and all benefit. He reviewed the first meeting and that it involved the cities and towns that were directly affected by annexations. Tonight will be including public input and include all voices; to have a process and to invent something useful.

Introductions were made: Bob Tenneson, Jack Speerstra, Fred Boe, Dan Lilla, Ronald Tuschner, George Brandt, Roland Thompson, Robert Baecker, Jon Schultz, John Kimmel, and John Graff.

W. Britzuis then reviewed past annexations and talked about the new versions; spoke about relationships; changes; evolving; and again stressed that we are all in this together as a part of rural America; we like it here/love it here; and have a stake in this. The reason for meeting is for information exchange, getting heard, to get to know each other better, learn how to have intergovernmental meetings, how to deal with conflict when it occurs by listening/how to tune into the person speaking and listen for interests rather than the positions; we have common interests; and there is a need for communication.

Roland Thompson, representing the Town of Gale, stated that annexation is one sided for the township because they have no control or way to stop it the way the laws are set up. The reason for annexation is they can't do it in the County so they annex. The law needs to be changed in Madison. The Town loses control and has no input.

John Graff, representing the City of Galesville, stated that the last annexation they had was 8 years ago and have no plans to annex. Business wants growth (sales, production, and economy) and acquisition is part of growth.

R. Thompson stated that you can't blame the City, because it's the only place to grow. People pushing annexation are the people who want to develop land.

J. Graff stated that annexation should be for services, and it is by the request of the landowner.

Dan Lilla, representing the Town of Dodge, stated that annexation is not good for the township; there is a loss of revenue; the laws need fixing; it needs to be a group effort; he was here to learn; villages and cities should work with the township; and Madison should help us out.

Bob Tenneson, representing the Town of Preston, spoke about the loss of land, over 2,000 acres, to the City of Blair; both the City of Blair and the Town of Preston work well together; examples were given; they have been compensated at the Town level; the land lost was agricultural land, less than 20 people, and did not have much tax base.

## **Citizen Input**

John Jasin, from the Town of Arcadia, composed some questions he wanted answered. How to work through the annexation process: at the last meeting B. Baecker said to let the County handle the enforcement, reason--minimum or lack of guidelines on zoning; could you take steps to pass an ordinance or a cooperative agreement to adopt zoning requirements of County to make them your own and strengthen their zoning ordinances; if you use the same rules the path isn't as attractive to annexation.

Robert Baecker, representing the City of Independence, stated that the City of Independence adopted most of the County ordinances, not the hours of operation, height restrictions, or noise levels. Most conditions are regulated by the DNR. We want to protect the air and water; we are putting in 2 or 3 air monitors; we took the time (months) to put it together to be stringent enough; another concern of ours is for the economic condition the County is in---tax impact is positive; Towns can benefit; County can benefit from jobs, and tax base, and development; keep the sand mines regulated; referenced the High-Crush one year report; mines help the schools, Madison takes money from the schools; no one wants taxes to go up; and be diverse.

John Kimmel, representing the City of Arcadia, thanked everyone for the meeting. He cautioned losing local control; stated we can do more than Madison and we're doing it the right way; talked about property taxes of which most money goes to the County and schools; in economic development the City bears the cost of infrastructure; not being an agrarian society; jobs in the City; discussed the City of Arcadia's water; this is a good exchange of ideas and a good discussion, civilized; and spoke of compromise and the constitution.

W. Britzuis summed up: using the same rules and going through the County.

J. Kimmel had questions for Kevin Lien. K. Lien responded: the number of mines permitted and how much time: 28 industrial and 30 plus aggregate; larger sites are more active and have more inspections; NR135 requires annual inspections; industrial have more inspections, a plan review, greater pre-construction meetings; the County has 1 full time staff person dedicated and 8 others to assist.

J. Kimmel stated that Arcadia is blessed to have jobs; don't want to limit hours; global economy along with other states; restrictions hurt community and growth.

Pat Malone, a County representative, stated to be fair across industries.

W. Britzuis summed up: the difference in licensing: hours, height, and noise; these are what the County is interested in limiting.

K. Lien referred to the map and 1972; spot zoning—commerce or industry; 1980's met with Towns and asked what they wanted; 1996 the advisory committee met and the first non-metallic mining ordinance was worked on and adopted in 1997; in 2006 a revision was made and the hours were set, public hearings were held and people wanted to protect the rural quality of life and the resources are out in the rural area; differences with the annexations to the city is the city is not affected; the ordinance was drafted by the public and approved by the County—quiet, rural; and annexations affect the rural people and now they have lost their voice because a different governmental entity is now in charge.

Fred Boe, representing the Town of Burnside, stated that we know the cities' position of adding tax base; risk of rural development and tourism; individual property rights; he gave an example of creating a 10,000 hog operation in the downtown area and to relax your ordinance with odor, manure, pigs, money to the city, road use and that this is the same situations as the cities are using.

Jack Speerstra, representing the Town of Lincoln, spoke of no complaints from the City of Whitehall residents; having a contractual agreement but not being the same as a permit; Mayors don't get the complaints; we represent people that want to annex; referenced the boundary agreement; not wanting to send this to Madison; doesn't see the laws changing; having the power and to use it; listen to the people; sand mines permitted with regulations; and we can do this and still protect the quality of life.

W. Britzuis summed up: shared power and representation.

Ronald Tuschner, representing the Town of Arcadia, agrees with the Mayors, Fred Boe, and Jack Speerstra; shared responsibility; commonalities; a wide disparity in the three and to work through it; we all want health, safety, and welfare; divisiveness is not healthful; compromise--we can work things out; people don't have representation when there is an annexation; spoke of the Rossa Mine and Bill Vachon: able to get the decibels to 45 or under, lighting and sound can be controlled, more hours in the building designed to process and dry, keeping the sound below the limit, processing outside to get enough material by using larger equipment.

W. Britzuis summed up: there is a proposal that can do this.

R. Tuschner said, yes, this is a possibility; they are willing to bring in experts and work with you; money is there.

R. Baecker stated that there is a good working relationship with the Towns of Lincoln and Burnside, this is polarizing, see the business aspect and need in the County, open to work with the townships, and that the people came to the City of Independence.

W. Britzuis invited the County and Towns to sit down and work on it.

R. Baecker stated that yes; they already have it with Jack and Fred. We need to keep the townships and cities going.

W. Britzuis summed up: it is jobs, and the growth, is it incompatible with rural lifestyle.

J. Kimmel stated that the quality of life depends on the definition of it. He referenced the hog facility example given earlier and wanted to see a business plan for it. There are 2 choices to develop: tear down and re-build or annex.

F. Boe stated that that was not the point of his example.

W. Britzuis asked are there limits to annexation?

J. Kimmel stated that he didn't want to see the Town of Dodge connect to the City of Arcadia.

J. Jasin stated that annexation upsets the balance of taxes paid; increase of tax base, tax revenue; spoke of the impact to local school districts in funding by the State, example of Blair-Taylor; mill rate changes and taxes; does the mill rate drop?

R. Baecker went to the 3 school superintendents and said it will not affect school funding.

P. Malone introduced herself and her programs. She gave a presentation that included: the economy (Trempealeau County is still considered 100% rural by the federal government); change to manufacturing with more than 40% (Ashley); demand for employees has grown; trucking added to growth; health and education; explained the multiplier effect and the connection to all other industries in the County or region; jobs; where money is spent; where people live; access to large equipment/supplies/buying locally; low unemployment rate; more women in the workplace; a strong economy; diversity in the economy makes it stronger; mining data is suppressed and only a small portion of this data; demand for qualified employees; individual economy and community economy; value surveys; school aid and funding and the 5 factors that affect funding; and sales and use tax. J. Graff explained economic development as a whole package. P. Malone continued explaining economic development and opportunity cost; there is a cost to every decision made, who it impacts, and what are the impacts; a concern of being equitable to all industries; the data presented is 2-3 years old due to the time lag. She answered questions from the panel and audience: the poverty rate is significantly higher than urban areas and it has increased since 2008, free and reduced meals, lower per capita incomes, the demand and supply for labor should expect an increase in wages, and people make a difference.

J. Kimmel stated that Arcadia is a community of go-getters and referenced Waverly, Ohio that he visited after the flood. We are blessed and have a great opportunity.

Nick Gamroth, representing the County, spoke of the Blair-Taylor school district and that school funding/state aid is a complex issue; starting to look at the effects and numbers; it will take years to see the accumulative effects; next meeting we should invite the school district administrators; many factors; increases and decreases; and to look at the effects down the line. Does mining have an effect on schools; and spoke of the different tiers.

A resident from Independence stated that he is proud of the school, mining does not provide many jobs, and there is not much turnaround from the money.

Linda Mossman asked about the total valuation of the 28 permitted mines; referenced her small business and the business loan due every 3 years, property tax bill, sales tax, and paying more in taxes than her monthly mortgage; and gave an example of a mine and wants to use the money to reduce taxes.

R. Tuschner stated taxes have never decreased and expenses have gone up about 16%. R. Baecker spoke of the TIF districts. L. Mossman stated that she understood TIF districts, but if we have 28 mines we should see more services or less tax. Discussion continued on trying to keep the tax rate down, finding the values, the full tax will not be seen until next year after the first full year of service, and the Winn Bay example.

Karen Geske asked if it is smart growth; gave the example of Badger Mining and no new housing because people don't want to live near mines; look at places to live; look to the future; and where are we putting the mines, referring to the smart growth plan.

W. Britzuis summed up: when one decision is made it affects other areas and let's look at all that.

Kevin Werlien asked about the housing by Badger Mining.

George Brandt, representing the County, said this has been wonderful discussion/historic, sitting down to talk and share plans; referred to the zoning map and the transitional area; the zoning committee asked what can we do for the citizens in the County and how can we involve the townships; planning process is different in each township; responsibility to protect the environment and to serve the citizens in the township; is grateful for sitting in and learning other perspectives; try to figure out the County and the future; talking of opposite ends—can we have growth and conserve the quality of life; is it possible to buy blocks in the city; is it possible to stress the environment beyond its breaking point—we have enough animals to provide the nutrient needs for crops; and there are limits to growth.

Rose Ottum asked that we consider an overlay district so people know where they can build a house.

W. Britzuis explained an overlay district and summed up: we have a rural environment and economic development with jobs; we need to craft an answer because it doesn't exist now; what is the next step; and this is a working process to go forward.

R. Tuschner stated that he likes these meetings, concepts, and the way they are held; constructive; well run and emotions are held; accomplishing things; we've talked about: taxes, valuations of cities, towns, and county; jobs/wages; diversification of industrial and agricultural communities; regulations starting at the state/federal, county, city, and town; working together, get and give; and the divisiveness needs to stop.

W. Britzuis spoke about the next meeting, next month, and it would be worked out by the previous "committee" members.

**Topics for the next meeting:** taxes 101, overlay district, school district representatives, and property rights.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Beth Killian  
Town of Arcadia Clerk