

PERSPECTIVE

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Towns express grave concerns over the Towns Association

The Dane County Towns Association's animosity toward Dane County government is well documented. Now, years of disagreement over the county's rules to control pollution, water quality and urban sprawl – the county says the rules are fair, the Towns Association says they hamper local control – are now coming to a head as the Towns Association and Republican state lawmakers push to dramatically change the way zoning works.

Towns were recently given the ability to opt out of county zoning rules, as long as they adopted "comprehensive" land use rules of their own. But that change required town residents to approve such a change in an official vote.

Now, a new bill at the state level would abolish that requirement, allowing town boards to withdraw from

county zoning without a vote from their residents.

Some towns are so dismayed by the proposal that they are now openly questioning who the Dane County Towns Association really serves: townspeople or those working in real estate.

And some of those towns even went on record early this week to make their concerns public.

Representatives of the Town of Perry, the Town of Primrose and the Town of Oregon met to discuss the status of their membership in The Dane County Towns Association.

During the course of that meeting, "several areas of concern regarding the operation of the Association came to light."

In a letter to Mr. Jerry Derr, Board President and Members of the Execu-

tive Committee of the Dane County Towns Association, the towns laid out their concerns in writing. They approved the letter on Monday night this week.

The letter states: "We do not support the current pending legislation LRB 1041/2 whereby the citizens of a Town lose their voice to weigh-in as to the opt-out option by referendum or the Annual Meeting, where instead only approval by a simple Town Board vote could implement opt-out. The decision to advance such legislation did not take place at any executive committee meeting of the Towns association, and input was not sought from individual towns, neither was it on any agenda of DCTA meetings. We ask that you withdraw the bill because the legislation takes away local control of residents of towns, and that no action be taken until a vote of

the executive committee takes place after consulting the individual towns.

Lack of Transparency - Many Towns Association decisions are made without a vote of any kind and without input from the membership (or even all members of the Executive Committee). We believe the pending "opt-out" option voting/referendum clause for Dane County Towns legislation is but one example of this type of action. We would request that all policies, decisions, bills introduced (including the current one) be voted on by the executive committee, and that prior to that vote, individual Towns be notified of the issues so seeking their input.

Association Attorney - as the current Attorney is leaving the Association, we would suggest that a Search Committee be formed to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee regarding

the replacement of the attorney.

We are concerned that the Association can remain a well-informed source for Dane County Towns that have not opted-out of County Zoning while at the same time developing a whole new Zoning Administration for opt-out Towns.

Reconsider the capping of the Annual Dues, or at a minimum strive more equality of dues with the reference to tax base of the Township.

That a plan be formed regarding re-districting so that executive committee members be elected by at least three Townships active in the Towns association.

The above are a sampling of topics discussed at the meeting. We do have other concerns that perhaps can be addressed after your consideration and response to the above issues."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR