

Freedom Matters

A News & Opinion Paper

Dane County, Wisconsin

Preserving Property Rights

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Our republic limits government to securing individual unalienable rights to life, liberty, and property. These rights are eroded by legislatures, and by courts complicit with them. To encourage wise jurists and journalists to help, *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore that republic.

Dane County Comprehensive Planning: Mob Power and Sophistry versus Law and Liberty

by Bob Bowman

"Terrible," one reader said, about *Freedom Matters* of two issues ago (vol. 5, #8). "Superb," another said. Well, we gotta be somewhere between those two poles.

Freedom Matters vol. 5, #8 reviewed legal factors in an attempt by a leftist majority vote of the Dane County board to overturn democratic board processes which had led to a moderate-conservative leadership of the county zoning agency (currently called the ZLR) and of the comprehensive planning Steering Committee set up by a contract with the state and by the county's subsequent Public Participation Plan for same. Those facts, stated in the second paragraph of FM v5 #8, are not disputable. They are documented by the minutes and Resolutions of the Dane County Board and its committees.

Why should the public care? Why should *Freedom Matters* spend its resources on these issues?

Two very major reasons. **First**, there is a leftist agenda at work to use comprehensive planning as a way to take control of all private property in the county; you will no longer own any private property right save that of selling the so-called property, and in some cases, maybe not even that. **Second**, are we still a nation ruled by laws, not men, or have we become a nation being run by mob rule and judicial whim?

To which most of the public still says, "So what?" Sadly, there is a point at which we cannot save people from themselves. We see it tragically in cases of alcoholism or other drug addictions. We see it also in a society that is too complex for most citizens to know or have time to resist the forces that quietly steal their substance from them. Today the Law is like a thief in the night, that robs the public while the public is sleeping.

How have Leftists thus subverted the Law? They have done it, ironically, by promoting "public participation." Time was when the annual "town meeting," along with the ballot box, were adequate for a public participation that sufficed to protect us from governmental overreach. That time is mostly gone. Now, public participation is used as the purse-slitter's knife.

Who of us can afford to spend night after night in public meetings, in order to protect our property? The answer is very few.

Thus, the Leftist agenda created the "planning" process. They based it on "public participation" for the PR value of claiming that the plan it produces is what "The People" want. To control it, they run countless meetings hashing over minutiae with an ever dwindling public, before unveiling a document "produced by the public input," in which, oddly, the putative public put the governmental chains of State Socialism on themselves.

That Leftist process is going on right now in Dane County, and Leftists got mighty alarmed when they saw that the process had gotten in the hands of those not dedicated to putting Socialist chains on people. All of a sudden, the "comprehensive plan" was not going to be a Socialist Manifesto. Instead, it was going to provide a governmental structure geared for and planning for the ownership society that has made this nation the most prosperous in the world. We as a nation are not blessed with resources beyond those of other nations, except in one regard. We are a nation of Liberty and Property Rights, well beyond that of any other major nation in the world. It is that resource, **Liberty and Property**, on which our prosperity is based. It is that resource that our "comprehensive plan" must protect.

The proof that **ownership** protection is not what the Leftist agenda wants can be seen in the Leftist's comprehensive planning process to date. Dane County's process has entirely ignored the 14 local comprehensive planning goals set out in state statutes. The process has ignored those goals despite quoting them verbatim on its web site, and despite admitting that in taking state planning grant money, they are compelled to address those 14 state goals.

It is easy to see why Leftists are willing to try to overthrow state statute and county board processes to avoid addressing those 14 goals. Those goals include protection of property rights. They include providing adequate land for meeting market needs and for supporting a strong local economy and job base. They include "efficient" development, and when one tries to define efficiency, one finds that "price" or "cost" is the single best measure of efficiency. The plans the Leftists want will drive the costs of agriculture, businesses, and homes, right out the ceiling. Look to Portland, Oregon, as proof. High cost is a hidden agenda of Leftist planning.

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