

Freedom Matters

A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

The Christian Charity of Hauge's Church, as Revamped by Kathleen Falk

by Mike Byrne

In the December 17 edition of *The Mount Horeb Mail* is a letter to the editor from Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk. *The Mt. Horeb Mail* selectively headlined Falk's letter as follows: "Falk Supports Efforts To Preserve Hauge Church." That focuses our attention on Falk's right hand, so we don't notice what her left hand is doing. Not so good, *Mt. Horeb Mail*.

We at Freedom Matters have come to expect such political posturing from the county executive and her allies, who have shown an irrational opposition to residential development outside of urban boundaries. Falk polemically calls it urban sprawl and has threatened to use any means at her disposal to block it. In this pursuit, we have observed that those on her side practice a 'class warfare,' in which they will label successful people as "greedy developers" just to try to stop them from building a home or a business for themselves on the location of their choice on their own rural property.

We have a bulletin for everyone: the Hauge church is in no danger from David Gehl. It is still standing (empty), it is still owned by the Perry Lutheran Church (who refused to become embroiled in the efforts of the Perry Town Board to fight David Gehl over the siting of his buildings on his property just to the north of their church), it still needs significantly better upkeep by the folks who claim they want to preserve it, and it's no more threatened by Gehl's proposed home than it is by Boley's existing home just north-northeast of it, or by Bluschke's existing home just west-southwest of it.

So relax, Ms. Falk. There are no actions afoot to hurt the church, nor to invade the two acres of property on which it sits. Not one square foot of its church yard is threatened, nor has anyone done or proposed any palpable harm at all to it. We doubt that anyone who goes there to enjoy it would have a bad experience because another next-door neighbor is in residence 600 feet away from it. Indeed, a church without a congregation needs a peopled landscape around it, to give it the soul of a church.

Falk's letter concerns itself about court cases between the town of Perry and Mr. Gehl. Those cases could have far-reaching ramifications when you consider that Falk has the county requesting permission to enter one of the cases in support of the right of townships to zone. Gee, we thought that the county wanted to hold on to its zoning power. It's kind of touching that they might be willing to give it up.

Still, we've not known anyone in Madison with that kind of charity. Thus, the sincerity of Falk's offer may be doubted. We think she makes this offer because she knows there's not a chance in the world that Perry can win the suits.

It also seems odd that Falk's letter says she is siccing their taxpayer-funded legal eagle (i.e., the County Corporation Counsel) on Gehl, by directing him to file suit against Gehl for building a fence on his own land. Since Gehl has testified under oath that he built that fence on the advice of the attorney he hired to protect him from the Town government, it seems likely that he has a legal basis for building it.

That doesn't stop Falk from proposing to spend county taxpayer dollars on behalf of the Town Board or of a citizen group in the Town (if one of the town groups sues first), to call that fence a "nuisance." Is Falk thus egging the Town into making itself the nuisance?

You see, in the end, we doubt seriously that anyone would be bothering Mr. Gehl or trying to derail his home-building plans if there weren't a great big pot of public money to pay for the effort. And that is the crux of the matter if you subscribe to the "follow the money" theory of analysis. Never mind the apparent and horrendous overstepping of statutory authority by a very agenda-driven government.

Just consider this: this county executive wants to be your governor! Can you imagine how much state money she might spend on these sorts of quixotic and misguided land use crusades? With Falk in the governor's mansion, would anyone from Superior to Beloit be safe in their assumption that they could build their dream home on a beautiful property they own that looks out on a scenic landscape or lake shore, even if it is a legal building site by law, as Gehl's site was when he approached the Town Board about building on it?

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