

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.

Smart Growth: A \$100 Million Mandate

Wisconsin has 1921 towns, villages and cities. At an average cost of \$52,056 per comprehensive plan, that's a \$100 million dollar cost, statewide. Data to date suggest this will be at least the cost. On top of that, add the costs of "Smart Growth" lawsuits.

We print below (edited to fit) a "Smart Growth" letter from Citizens for Responsible Zoning and Landowner Rights Inc., (P.O. Box 16 Maiden Rock WI 54750 Tel/Fax 715-448-3213) sent to all Wisconsin newspapers.

Letter to the Editor:

.... [Smart Growth is] described as one of the most comprehensive pieces of land-use legislation considered in this state during the last 50 years. However, it WASN'T considered by the Legislature. It was developed by special interest groups and slipped into the 1999 Budget. It wouldn't have passed otherwise. It had to sneak in the back door.

Each Town must complete a comprehensive plan, so detailed it will require hiring a consultant. The State will determine if Town plans meet the law. That's not local control, as advertised; it's State control -- State management of private land.

Most Towns expect little growth -- little need for elaborate planning. At a meeting in Baldwin consultant fees were quoted -- \$40,000 to \$80,000. Just a beginning. How many Towns can afford a fraction of such costs? ... Is this a way to bankrupt Towns, thus eliminating them?

Now, Governor McCallum says he wants to force basic change. By 2004, he intends to withdraw all State revenues from local governments. Towns won't survive. Looks like he intends to eliminate Town government. Will Counties be next?

Town government provides basic services to every property owner. No frills; most Town officials are frugal. If the Governor wishes to reduce debt, he can't do it at the lowest level. ... Start with County and State -- they spend BIG money.

The State mandates many expensive programs; now they want to pull the plug. If the State is going to withhold funds, why should Towns follow their Smart Growth dictates? Fortunately, most Towns are holding back, not rushing to do a plan.

Once again, we must speak up. Tell your legislators they must address the Smart Growth issue. They have authority to make changes to protect property owners and Towns.

You have the power. People Power. Use it.

Very truly,
Marilyn F. Hayman, Chairman

On the same topic, the Dane County Towns Association sent the following letter to all Town Board Chairs in the state (1266 of them).

DCTA Urges Towns to Push State to Start Budget Cutting by Eliminating "Smart Growth" Mandate and Grants

The Dane County Towns Association believes the first step to reduce state and local spending should be the elimination of the mandate for so-called "Smart Growth" planning. Our County unit was never fond of the program to begin with. But with a \$1.3 billion state deficit, we can't afford it ever if were a great idea. With towns facing the loss of shared revenues, relieving them of the mandate to undertake the expensive "Smart Growth" process would be a major boost.

We're Not Opposed to Planning

We're all for land use planning. Dane County towns have had land use plans for years, and are constantly working on them. We've never needed a state law to force us to do what makes sense for our citizens. Town officials are already willing to grow in a smart manner. We've been doing that since our state was founded. We don't need a state bureaucracy, state grants and a statutory mandate to force us suddenly to start using common sense. The statutory requirements are far too elaborate for many towns, and unnecessary for the towns which are large enough to need them. Planning will continue without this mandate and program.

We Can't Afford the "Smart Growth" Mandate

Even if "Smart Growth" were a good idea, we can't afford it. With towns facing the loss of shared revenue, it's ridiculous to mandate that a town spend \$50,000 or more for an elaborate land use plan. ... We must repeal the statutory mandate and the grant appropriations for future years. Towns that want to undertake this extensive level of planning will still be free to do so. Those that don't can choose to use their remaining money elsewhere, such as on keeping snow plowed.

We urge you to contact your legislators and the Wisconsin Towns Association to let them know that the first place to cut spending and hold the line on property taxes should be elimination of the "Smart Growth" mandate and funding program.

Dane County Towns Association

For Those Who Want to Act

Citizens should contact their state legislators (see the phone book for how). Do so by March 1, because the budget revisions are being considered right now, and the time to act is short.

Readers' Bulletin Board. e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *Freedom Matters*

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