



TOWN OF WASHINGTON ♦ EAU CLAIRE COUNTY, WISCONSIN
5750 Old Town Hall Road ♦ Eau Claire WI 54701
(715)834-3257 ♦ Fax (715)834-3325 ♦ townofwashington.wi.gov

TOWN OF WASHINGTON FILES 2ND COMPLAINT AGAINST THE CITY OF EAU CLAIRE

~ For Immediate Release ~

Town of Washington, Eau Claire County, WI

On Friday, June 23, the Town of Washington filed a 2nd complaint against the City of Eau Claire in regards to the Orchard Hills annexation. The Town successfully sued the City in the 1st attempt to annex the land, resulting in the previous annexation being declared null and void by the court. In March of 2023, the City adopted a 2nd ordinance annexing the same 438 acres, including a portion of the Eau Claire County park, from the Town by a different method.

Regardless of the method, the annexation is wrong. The Eau Claire Plan Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Council (MPO), and the Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) have all rejected this project twice. The DOA concluded, "The proposed annexation submitted to our office on March 01, 2023 has been reviewed and found to be against the public interest." And the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources previously rejected the City's request to extend sewer service to the area. A second application to extend sewer utilities to the area, which the MPO has recommended denial, is currently under consideration by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. It is not unreasonable to anticipate that this may be denied by the WDNR as well.

Why the dissent? Because the proposed Orchard Hills development is far removed from the City's border and infrastructure. It cannot be readily served or converted to an urban center. It basically becomes a "village" of Eau Claire surrounded by Town rural residential and agriculture fields that serves no one well, nor should it be expected to. This is a reality recognized by numerous entities and the public. It was a matter that was studied and contemplated by Town and City planning documents and an intergovernmental agreement between the Town and City. The City now sees fit to violate these plans and its agreement.

Additionally, while not of the Town's financial concern, the associated costs for the proposed utility extensions and related infrastructure are mounting. How is the City going to afford the requisite millions? The City's financial woes have been well covered in recent weeks. The City is now approaching Town residents to annex to try and secure funding to off-set costs. Perhaps, it is time for the City to reconsider.

It is for these and other legal reasons that the Town filed a lawsuit against the City of Eau Claire. The filed complaint is attached.