

Town of Windsor eyes incorporation to secure borders

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DeForest and the town of Windsor may have ended their border skirmishes in 2010, but Windsor is exploring incorporation into a village as a way to permanently secure its boundaries and control its land use for years to come.

The latest push to incorporate was suggested last fall, but a formal process began this spring when town officials notified residents they were opening up discussions about whether to remain a town, merge with DeForest or explore incorporation to make Windsor a separate village.

Incorporating would give Windsor more control over its boundaries, but would also provide local control over zoning and land use. Zoning in the town is currently handled by Dane County, except for a small area that is zoned by Sun Prairie.

The town has held a series of meetings on a range of topics, including what impact incorporating would have on utilities and agriculture.

Chairman Bob Wipperfurth expects the Town Board to fund a fiscal analysis of incorporation later this month and to make a decision on whether to pursue incorporation this fall or winter.

"We took feedback from residents and the feedback we've been getting is that residents want the board to continue exploring a possible incorporation," Wipperfurth said.

Discussions about the town's governmental structure are nothing new. After losing significant chunks of land through annexation, the Windsor Town Board discussed a merger with the DeForest Village Board in 2000, but it was ultimately decided against.

Land disagreements contin-

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ued and in 2004, DeForest proposed to annex 2,200 acres in the town, prompting a lawsuit from Windsor. That dispute ended with an out-of-court settlement and the land divided between the communities.

The scuffles were eventually settled in 2010 when both boards approved a 20-year boundary agreement.

"I think it boiled up when the annexation occurred for the Walgreens distribution center on (Highway) 19 and some of the parcels down there. There was a lot of anger and hostility and that's where a lot of our discrepancies came in. We didn't really have

cooperative land agreements," said Judd Blau, DeForest village president.

The DeForest Village Board has not taken a stance on Windsor's incorporation inquiry as it seeks more information about implications for DeForest, but Blau is unconvinced of its benefits.

"Me personally, as village president, I don't know that there's a whole lot of advantages to it ... I think all the things they're trying to get, they would get by becoming one entity with us versus becoming two separate entities that are now competing in the same neighborhood so to speak," Blau said.

Blau said the DeForest Village Board has historically preferred merging to create a single community under a new name. But issues like tax differential, community identity and government structure helped undermine the last merger talks, and Wipper-

furth said many of those issues still exist in the eyes of Windsor residents.

Wipperfurth said the town has had a good working relationship with Sun Prairie on zoning matters, but as Windsor grows, local control might be more appropriate.

"It's really about meeting the needs of our residents. There are times when people want to create certified survey maps to do land division and I just think there's a better sense of awareness when our residents are dealing with their own elected officials, instead of going to Dane County, where many of those committees are controlled by people that don't really know a whole lot about Windsor," he said.

Windsor could explore incorporating through the state Department of Administration or legislatively through the state budget process, should the Town Board desire to do so.