

# DANE COUNTY

## Windsor incorporation vote Nov. 3

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After months of tension between the town of Windsor and DeForest elected officials, Windsor residents will vote in November on whether to incorporate into a village.

At its Aug. 20 meeting, the Windsor Town Board unanimously voted to set an incorporation referendum for Nov. 3.

The action follows months of frustration from DeForest officials after Windsor circumvented the traditional incorporation process by getting a non-fiscal item inserted into the biennial state budget passed in July.

Incorporation of towns typically goes through the state Department of Administration's Incorporation Review Board, a process that allows for input from neighboring towns and villages. But the latest state budget established conditions for allowing towns adjacent to third-class cities — those with

populations between 10,000 and 39,000 — to incorporate without going through the review board.

Incorporating into a village would deliver Windsor officials more control over current boundaries, as well as 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.

Town officials formally began a process in early 2014 when they notified residents they were opening up discussions about whether to remain a town, merge with DeForest or explore incorporation into a village.

After a series of public listening sessions, the town completed a fiscal analysis before residents eventually directed the board to pursue incorporation last November.

The Windsor push was motivated by more than a decade of land disputes with DeForest.

After losing significant chunks of land through annexation, the Windsor Town Board discussed

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a merger with the DeForest Village Board in 2000, but it was ultimately decided against. Land disagreements continued and in 2004, DeForest proposed to annex 2,200 acres in the town, prompting a lawsuit from Windsor that ended with an out-of-court settlement and the land divided between the communities. The scuffles were temporarily settled in 2010 when both boards approved a 20-year boundary agreement.

The DeForest Village Board in May formally opposed Windsor's incorporation.

Windsor town board chairman Bob Wipperfurth has touted incorporation as a way to project Windsor's rural and agricultural identity.