

## **Notes from Community Meeting - Concerned Citizens for Smart Growth October 24, 2017**

There were about 150 people in attendance at the meeting.

Steering committee members present: Mike and Joan Dickman, Hiram Lund, Gayle Nielsen, Emily Rozeske, Paul Steubs, Kim Ward.

Maps of wards and signup sheets were present so volunteers could sign up to help distribute the petition. A donation basket was present to help with yard signs, flyers, etc.

Gayle Nielsen gave a presentation on the potential impact of Premium Iowa Pork locating in the Town of Viroqua, in Vernon County. This included the impact on jobs, businesses, community, and tourism, with the focus on the proliferation of industrial, factory farms (CAFOs) that will be required to locate to the region and the ensuing contamination of groundwater, air quality and general health of the population.

- Read letter from local farmer, Rick Olson, who could not be present (figure included below)

Forest Jahnke spoke on the concerns of water contamination in a sensitive karst area, which describes the area in which the current PIP facility resides. Though most of the attendees at the meeting were familiar with karst, by a show of hands, he went more in-depth on the science of karst and why it is a special concern. Mentioned the loss of the small butcher shops such as the one in Gays Mills. Mentioned Kewaunee County – 3 Rivers impaired there and that county having the same geology as here.

Al Berg spoke about some of the health impacts of industrial farming and the loss of family-scale farms he has noticed in his work in conservation. He also mentioned some of the uses for pig parts and why this area may be attractive to PIP.

### **Community comments included:**

James Hallberg – Concern that the study quoted on the psychology of slaughterhouse workers and the increase in violent crime in slaughterhouse communities was racist. Stated any immigrants workers should be welcomed into the community and he would support them organizing into unions.

Duke Welter Trout Unlimited – The fight has to be done here at this level, not much legal leverage. No regulatory rules in place to protect. Push for Groundwater protection bills and zoning to protect. Work on town boards and the County for help with zoning. Keep pressing for answers and help from County and Township. He said the DNR doesn't have the will or the people to regulate these things. He emphasized more than once, the fight has to be done on the local level.

Susan Erlandson - (she fought the CAFO a few years back) – You can do this. You have the power. Everyone talk to 10 people and tell them about this. This is NOT a done deal. You have the power to stop this. Do not give up this fight!

Cowboy Joe from [Cowboy David's Bake Shoppe](#) in downtown Viroqua and a lodging facility on the edge of the Kickapoo Valley Reserve – The things that's awesome about this community is that it **is** community. Consider what groups everyone in the room belongs to. Joe is on the Viroqua Tourism Committee. They are working on a statement to stop this. Get statements from all the groups you belong to. Be courageous and take a stand.

Announcement was made for Swarm training, de-centralized water training to deal with water related threats to communities. November 9 at the Landmark Center, Room 202, in Viroqua. Meeting at 6:00PM.

Video of meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BJzrH264mQ&feature=youtu.be>

Greetings Gayle and Concerned Citizens,

Thank you for this response letter and the opportunity to speak out in defense of what is irreplaceable and could easily be lost forever without immediate and strong response.

As a third generation owner of a family farm less than a mile from the proposed slaughterhouse and a born and raised fifth generation farm person with family members (both historically and currently) owning and operating small, local, traditional family farms in the immediate vicinity, I must strongly protest this out of state and entirely inappropriate attack on the character and well being of this very special and increasingly rare area. The damage that will be done on so many levels must be fought vigorously on all fronts. The people at PIP must realize that this development is very likely opposed by nearly 100% of the local residents and tax payers. Knowing that and with literally hundreds of much more appropriate sites available all over the heartland, yet still attempting to force in this development, does not speak well of the owners and management of this company, and does not bode at all well for their future concern, consideration and care of our community, should they actually manage to accomplish their goal.

I am of course all in favor of our free enterprise system, however, myself, my family, my friends and neighbors have been very concerned for many years with the lack of regulation and control to guard our area against unwanted development and other inappropriate activities. It is my fondest hope that this development attempt will be a Bellwether to the Township, County and State that residents and environmentally sensitive areas need very much more protection in the way of Planning, Zoning and Licensing.

I should add that many friends and acquaintances from other areas who have visited are immediately charmed and protective of our locality. When informed of this possible development they are all without exception horrified and angry that this might be allowed to go forward. Please, let's do our best to protect and preserve, both now and in the future.

Sincerely,  
Rick Olson