

# A Better Mount Pleasant

**For Immediate Release**

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## **VILLAGE BOARD UNANIMOUSLY VOTES TO BLIGHT LOCAL BUSINESS FOR FOXCONN**

***“With no discussion or public comment, the Mount Pleasant Village Board rams through action to blight the property of a local business in Foxconn Area 1, after barricading entrance and charging owners with trespassing.”***

**MOUNT PLEASANT, WI JULY 13, 2021** - On Monday evening, the Mount Pleasant Village Board unanimously voted to blight eleven acres of property located along the I-94 Frontage Road, paving the way for land seizure through condemnation, in order to give it to Foxconn for the nonexistent LCD factory.

Mount Pleasant Village President Dave DeGroot rearranged the order of business on the meeting’s agenda to immediately vote on a motion to blight the property of Jack and Colleen Erickson, delaying public comments, and then moving directly into closed session. Forcing the Ericksons to wait nearly an hour before they were allowed to address village trustees about a vote they had already taken.

“In my years of attending all manner of public meetings, I have never seen such an amateurish act of cowardice by public officials,” said Kelly Gallaher, spokesperson for A Better Mt. Pleasant. “Not only did the Village Board deny the Ericksons an opportunity to address the board and plead for their land and business, when they voted there were literally no questions or discussion. I don’t think they even knew why they were voting. It was disgusting.”

In early 2021 the Erickson’s licensed scrap yard was cited by Mount Pleasant for public nuisance. The Village never provided a reason or plan for compliance. When Jack Erickson tried

to access his property after the Village barricaded his business entrance, he was met by a Mount Pleasant police officer who ticketed him with trespassing - on his own property.

Jack and Colleen Erickson were never opposed to selling their property for the Foxconn development. They only asked the Village to locate comparable property for them along the I-94 corridor and give them ample time to relocate their business. Village officials promised them they would and then let them sit for nearly three years, refusing to return the Erickson's calls for updates.

However, internal emails discovered by A Better Mt. Pleasant show that the Village intended to landlock the Erickson property as early as 2017. Information which was never shared with them.

“Jack and Colleen Erickson’s property is easily worth ten to twelve million dollars in today’s market,” said Gallaher. “The Village didn’t want to pay them that much, so they barricaded the entrance to their business and then sent them a citation demanding they clean it up - knowing it was impossible for the Ericksons to comply. When Jack Erickson tried, they used the Village police to ticket him with trespass and rushed through a vote to condemn his property.”

The Village of Mount Pleasant has conveyed nearly 1800 square acres of land to Foxconn. The Erickson property remains the last outstanding parcel of land not conveyed to Foxconn in Area I - apart from the Mahoney home which is now located within the gates of the failed development.

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*A Better Mt. Pleasant is a nonpartisan, community organization dedicated to advancing a fair, accountable and transparent local government in Mount Pleasant, Wisconsin.*