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MEMORANDUM

To: Dane County Communities
From: Dane County Towns Association
Date: June 1, 2012
Re: CARPC Dissolution

The two greatest responsibilities of elected officials are public safety and accountability for public dollars. It is in this vein that the DCTA is pursuing dissolution of the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission (CARPC). The DCTA supported the new RPC only because it was set up with elected officials (the Budget and Personnel Panel) in control of its overall operations. The Commission seeks to dismantle those safeguards so it may exercise its taxing power free of oversight by elected officials. Our fiduciary responsibility and duty to County taxpayers as elected officials leave us no alternative to dissolution.

The CARPC is working to eliminate the “checks and balances” we established in 2007. It has hired a lawyer to work to eliminate the oversight of elected officials by eliminating the authority of the Budget and Personnel Panel. Commissioners tried to set 2013 budget strategy in a closed session, backing down only when this obvious open meetings violation was brought to their attention. The Commission also has been moving to lease commercial office space without prior approval of elected officials and without regard to the substantial negative effect that would have on taxpayers.

There’s an even more basic problem: CARPC isn’t worth its cost. Since CARPC’s creation, the Commission denied just two applications for sewer expansions. Both of those decisions were reversed by the DNR. We’re spending more than \$800,000 a year on a Commission that has no power. It isn’t worth the money, especially in tough times like this.

We've also been disappointed that the Commission hasn't completed any of the Future Urban Development Area (FUDA) plans which were one of the Commissions major goals. The Commission was supposed to complete plans to encourage cooperation between towns and their neighboring municipalities within three years, by the end of 2010. We had hoped that CARPC would have these FUDA plans completed by now. Instead, only minimal progress has occurred. CARPC has managed to plan to move its own offices while being unable to complete the FUDA plans.

DCTA has tried at every turn to persuade the Commission to act reasonably. We are convinced that it cannot be salvaged in its current form. We are recommending that the communities in Dane County adopt resolutions to dissolve the CARPC so we can move forward to create an agency with strictly defined authority.

DCTA alone cannot determine what will replace the CARPC. We envision a small group of elected officials who will review requests for sewer service areas. We believe we can obtain the necessary professional services for these reviews from contracted services, reducing the cost to the community substantially. The experience we've gained since CARPC was created in 2007 has shown that the DNR will grant sewer service extensions even if the CARPC does not. It's important to assure that new sewer service areas meet environmental standards, but it doesn't take a substantial agency costing \$800,000 to do that.

There is substantial support for dissolution from the environmental community, the County Executive and many County Board members. We expect support from many other local units of government. They agree with us that the CARPC is not accountable.

The DCTA Board has recommended that communities in Dane County adopt resolutions to dissolve the CARPC. A model for this resolution is attached. We intend to visit town board meetings during June and July to explain the issue in greater detail.

Thank you for your attention to this memo.