



Mayor David A. Ament

3805 South Casper Drive • New Berlin, Wisconsin 53151-0921 • (262) 786-8610 • Fax (262) 786-6121 • www.newberlin.org

EMAIL: DAMENT@NEWBERLIN.ORG

October 17, 2019

Email: adam.ingwell@wisconsin.gov ONLY

Mr. Adam Ingwell
Wisconsin Public Service Commission
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Re: In Re the Application of the Waukesha Water Utility
PSC Docket No. 6240-CW-117

Dear Mr. Ingwell:

The City is in receipt of a copy of a draft Environmental Assessment prepared concerning the above-referenced Application of the Waukesha Water Utility. In that Assessment, the author notes that the review includes impact on the environment, as well as impact to the local residents and community, as well as natural resources.

We believe the Assessment prepared inadequately articulates the impact to residents of the City of New Berlin of this multi-year project, which involves the construction of 4.6 miles of water main and sewer mains, as well as the construction of two large reservoir tanks, 35' in height and 210' in diameter, each of which is anticipated to hold 9 million gallons of water, together with an associated booster station.

The location where the City of Waukesha intends to construct this reservoir and booster facility is in a historically significant area of the City. That location has been recognized by the City of New Berlin Landmarks Commission as a Historic District, and that is noted in the City's Comprehensive Plan, the portion of which deals with historic sites is enclosed herewith as Exhibit A. That status has been recognized by Waukesha County as they have posted a historical marker at this location, see Exhibit B. This monstrous facility will, in the opinion of the City, obscure and mar the landscape of this Historic District, which includes what has been known as the Cornfalfa Farm.

This Farm was designated as a Historic District by the City Landmarks Commission on May 20, 2004. The City of New Berlin Comprehensive Plan notes, in Chapter 4, an excerpt of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A. The Cornfalfa Farm represents a significant era in New Berlin's past, when farming was the predominant occupation of most residents of the township. Cornfalfa Farms achieved national significance due to the Asiatic Sheep, and also the apples contributed to the nation's food supply between

the World Wars. A Historic Marker exists on these lands, which references the fact that the Swartz Family (the operators of the Cornfalfa Farm) were internationally known and recognized producers of alfalfa, apples and Asiatic Sheep. As the Commission may be aware, the number of active farms in the City of New Berlin, Waukesha County and southeastern Wisconsin in general are rapidly decreasing. See SEWRPC 2035 Regional Land Use Plan, Farmland Preservation element and the Waukesha County Farmland Preservation Plan. Nevertheless, farming is a significant part of New Berlin's past and the Cornfalfa Farm site represents an important link to that history. Constructing this reservoir and booster station in this location will substantially undermine that link.

At a public hearing held at New Berlin City Hall concerning the City of Waukesha's initial Application for rezoning of this site, dozens of New Berlin residents appeared to voice their opposition to this project and in addition, signed petitions noting that objection as well. A copy of said petition is attached hereto as Exhibit C.

The portion of New Berlin, west of Calhoun Road, is considered its rural west side and the City has undertaken significant efforts as part of its Comprehensive Plan to prohibit the extension of sewer and water services into the area where this reservoir and booster station would be located, and has predominantly zoned the area as single family/residential with 5 acre minimum lot densities. As you can see, these actions do not represent a casual commitment to the preservation of the rural west side of New Berlin; but rather a tangible commitment to ensure that the legacy of the Swartz Family and others, who inhabited this area in the early years of the last century, will not be forgotten or their important legacy lost to the future.

In addition to the historic legacy of the City, it should be noted that the City is concerned about the impact on private wells in the City given the significant amount of excavation that will be done as part of the construction process for both the water and sewer mains, as well as the reservoir and booster station. As of today's date, there is no plan to protect the wells of residents of the western portion of New Berlin that might be adversely impacted by this excavation. It is ironic that a project intended to provide water to one community may indeed have the result of negatively impacting the water supply of their neighbor.

We wish to note that New Berlin fully supports the City of Waukesha's desire to address its radium problem by utilizing Lake Michigan water. Indeed, the City of New Berlin was in a similar position a number of years ago. However, it should be noted that the pumping facilities and infrastructure necessary to address the New Berlin situation were constructed fully within the City of New Berlin. While the City supports and appreciates Waukesha's need, the primary burden of the infrastructure related to satisfying that need should fall on the residents of the City of Waukesha, not just from a financial standpoint, but in the inconvenience in dealing with this massive infrastructure construction and the impact it will have on landscape.

With that background, the City has specific concerns with regard to the conclusions noted in the Environmental Assessment. Specifically, we take issue with the Finding in Section 4.3.1 of the Environmental Assessment that states the proposed pipelines are not expected to impact any land use plans of the municipalities they pass through. In New Berlin's case, there is not only pipeline, but the massive booster and pump station. While the infrastructure for the mains is not in conflict with the City of New

Berlin's land use plans, the booster station most certainly is, as the City's Comprehensive Plan acknowledges the history of this area. The construction of this infrastructure would undermine that history as detailed above. The Report minimizes this impact by stating it is "an agricultural field". With all due respect, to the City of New Berlin, this agricultural field is an important link to its history, as well as the agricultural history of the County and indeed, the nation. In addition, we disagree with the statement at the end of Section 4.3.2 which indicates that "landowners may find construction activities disruptive and may have the access to their driveways limited". That statement may be accurate as to a simple sewer relining or relaying. However, in this case, we are talking about 4.6 miles of area that will be disrupted in 750' segments over multiple years. I believe the magnitude of this project and the duration of its construction is not adequately reflected in the Assessment.

With respect to Section 4.3.3 on historic resources, the Report references cemeteries but does not acknowledge the fact that the area where the reservoir and booster station are proposed within a Historic District. We believe that a complete Report should at least acknowledge that fact and the significance the City of New Berlin attaches to this area.

It is our understanding that this Assessment will be submitted as an Exhibit as part of the Commission's overall deliberations. We would ask that the aforementioned comments also be filed, so the Commission has a more complete understanding of the impact of this project on the City of New Berlin.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David A. Ament", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David A. Ament
Mayor, City of New Berlin

DA/jb
Enc.