

“Boggsville—A Town Divided”

Dawn on the Boggsville Marsh brings with it a flurry of activity. With the growing light, ducks leave this wetland in great waves heading for fields to fill their stomachs with corn. Muskrats munch contentedly on young cattail tubers. Turtles come out to sun themselves on floating logs. In the nearby hamlet of Boggsville there is also a flurry of activity. Conversation centers around one thing, the Boggsville Zoning Board meeting.

It seems that quiet little Boggsville, where life usually moves at a slower pace, is entangled in a massive battle over development plans. The project proposes locating a Maxi-Mart department store and gas station on a 60 acre parcel of private land now known as Boggsville Marsh. At the fore-front of the controversy is Mr. David Dresser, president of Maxi-Mart Corporation. When asked for his view, Dresser said, “This is the best location for the business. It’s near the high traffic part of town unlike other properties in the area.” Marty Higgins, the construction project director, said, “It’s not a problem. Once this property is re-zoned, we’ve got plenty of fill for the site. I would expect construction to take less than ten months.”

Leesa Olsen, a member of the Boggsville Zoning Board and a local realtor, was quoted as saying, “I have no business ties to the venture, but feel that it will bring economic growth to Boggsville. I will vote in favor of the project.” On the opposite end of the spectrum we find local resident Elmer Willas, also a zoning board member, and his wife Bertha. “I’ve hunted that marsh for almost 40 years, and Bertha likes to bird watch occasionally” said Elmer. “Now where’s our granddaughter going to hunt when she grows up?”

Steve Pinick is the owner of the land in question. When asked how he felt about making a final decision that affects so many people he responded, “Mr. Dresser is a responsible businessman, and I feel that his proposal sounds acceptable. It’s nobody’s business but mine what I do with that land, no matter what Wahoske and his gang say.” This comment regarding Joseph Wahoske, the president of the Boggsville Rod and Gun Club, stems from both verbal and written reactions by Wahoske to the building proposition. Wahoske is quoted as saying “If people like them have anything to say about it, we’ll all be living in a concrete jungle. It’s all greed.” He also stated the Ducks Unlimited organization, of which he is an active member, will “fight for the preservation of this ecological treasure with everything we have”.

“Virtually everyone in Boggsville has something to gain or lose in this deal. Believe me they’re vocal”, exclaims Greg Kramer, local resident of 13 years and Dept. of Natural Resources Biologist. “It’s my responsibility to objectively look at the facts and determine how the project will affect the Boggsville Marsh and the local ecosystem as a whole. My report will be based on the local ecology, rather than the economics of Boggsville.”

Another person taking public heat over this issue is Mary Bennett, the president of the Boggsville Chamber of Commerce. She has public pressure from both sides to deal with.

It is plain to see that both the controversy and the town are powder kegs waiting for a match. This will not be easy to resolve due to the opposition of equal forces. The Zoning Board meeting, where the re-zoning of the Boggsville Marsh will be decided, will be the site of a heated debate. Hopefully the little town of Boggsville won’t remain a town divided.