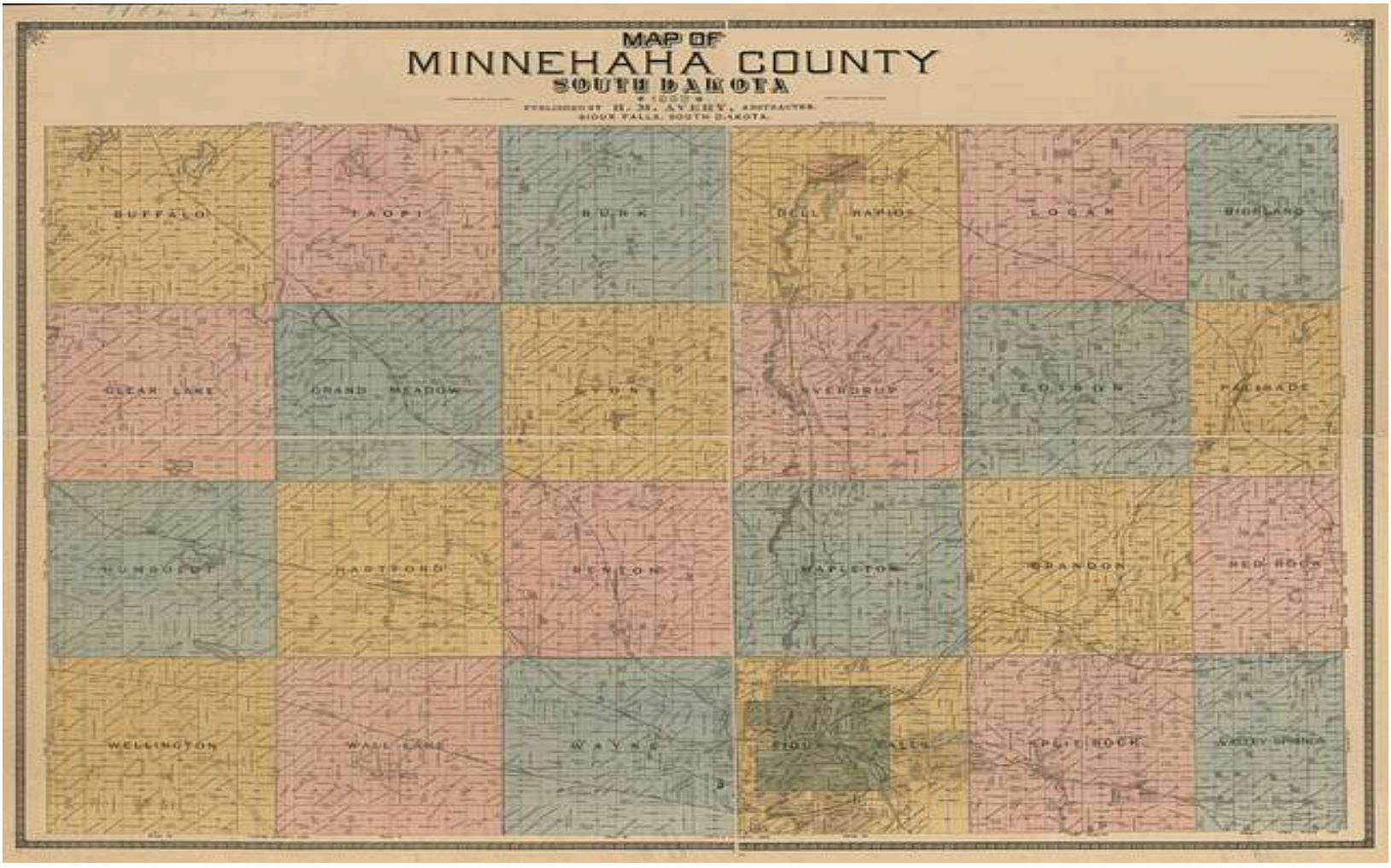
Sioux Falls Community

Chronicle

October 8, 2026

The History of the People of Sioux Falls



A Story of How the People of Sioux Falls became a Incorporated Territory

The City of Sioux Falls did not start as a “city” overnight, it started as several smaller communities that became a “territorial corporate government” over a hundred years. This is a story of those communities.

To tell this story, we must first begin with the seven (7) **townships** that have become a part of the "City" today.

1. **Sioux Falls,** began to be organized in the mid to late 1850's, as explorers came to the area to stake claims to becoming a centralized trading post in the area;
2. **Wayne**, organized in 1872 as an agricultural community;
3. **Split Rock**, organized between 1860-1870 as a homestead community, thanks to quartzite, became a wealthy industrial hub of the area;
4. **Delapre**
5. **Springdale**, within Lincoln County, organized during the 1870s and quickly became a collection of unincorporated residential communities;
6. **Benton**, organized in the early 1870's, it became an industrialized, community of farms, rich in agriculture and produce;
7. **Mapleton**, most likely the oldest township, having been organized in 1856, it became a wealthy economic agricultural, ranch community of homesteads. It survived the Civil War, Spanish American War, World War I and World War II.

While six of the townships primarily became a confederation of Homesteads, Farmsteads, the Township of Sioux Falls quickly became the hotspot for land companies, designed to industrialize the area, led by land speculation, corporate-land companies in the business to monopolize the land, natural resources, and minerals.

But first, let's define what a Township is:

A "**Township**" is a division of land or a unit of local government, a group of landowners under the "County" that form a governing board to manage the needs of the township.

- Townships are **36 square miles**,
- Townships are divided up in **36 sections**
- Each Township has a total of **23,040 acres**
- Each Township Section, has **1 Land Supervisor to whom governs over 640 acres**
- Each Township Section are further subdivided **4 Equal Subdivisions of 160 acres** each.

Today, the 7 Townships that currently reside as part of the City of Sioux Falls all have active Township Boards, which include a Mayor, City Clerk, Land Supervisors, and an Engineer, all of which govern the township, let alone form public policies.

1. Beginning in the year 1857, the **People of Dubuque, Iowa** formed the Dubuque Land Company, quickly grabbed a charter to stake a land claim of 640 acres along the banks of the Big Sioux River (north of 6th street), establishing the Village of Sioux Falls;
2. In 1862, the **People of St. Paul, MN** formed the Dakota Land Company as a business organization, to stake a land claim of 640 acres, also along the Big Sioux River (south of 6th street), establishing Sioux Falls City;
3. After these town sites became abandoned (1866-1873), by 1874, the remnants of those early town sites, re-settle the area, re-claim the 1,280 acres of land, and Incorporate themselves as the **Western Town Company**, and re-organize as the Village of Sioux Falls, and quickly begin rebuilding town buildings, streets, beginning to plan, zone, and create commercial and residential districts;
4. By 1884, with a little over 10,000 residents, they grabbed a "Charter" from Dakota Territory and Incorporate those 1,280 acres as the **City of Sioux Falls, S.D**.

It was during this period, 1885 to 1895, a group of men had traveled back to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and initiated themselves within a group, called the Shriners. They would create the **El Riad Shrine** in 1887, and this nonprofit charitable organization became a group of municipal officers, business leaders, landowners, realtors, and investors - who quickly pooled their assets, to build the early town buildings, the town hall, and to plat, zone, and develop the "Township".

Within this Township, the City of Sioux Falls quickly partners with the following:

- A group of Stonemasons grab a business charter from the State of South Dakota, forming **East Sioux Falls (1888)**, which became a community in the far east, to utilize quarries to collect, and make stone blocks to build the roads, buildings, and monuments;
- Another group of men grab a business charter from the State of South Dakota, forming **West Sioux Falls (1889)** in the far western edge of the township with the goal to sell residential plats, a business district to raise revenue to support the University of Sioux Falls, that quickly became a business school in the years that followed;
- And lastly, a group of men led by Richard Pettigrew organized and grabbed a business charter from the State of South Dakota forming **South Sioux Falls (1890)**, a Multinationalized Industrial Park south of 33rd Street, along what would become 41st Street. The profits from this community would be given to the "City" to generate revenue for future economic planned development.

There you have it, the **City of Sioux Falls** (downtown), partnered with East, West, and South Sioux Falls, to build out, and economically develop the Township of Sioux Falls.

One has to understand the history, the "Township of Sioux Falls" was platted and zoned in the late 1800's, and was made up of several communities - East Sioux Falls, West Sioux Falls, South Sioux Falls, and the "Village" aka Downtown Sioux Falls today. Each community held its own business charter to best manage the township itself.

Between 1890 to 1960, the four communities began to grow, merging together, and by 1972, had formed the **Municipal Corporation**, also named "City of Sioux Falls". This allowed them to centralize all 'governments' as one municipality thereafter, thus incorporating East, West, and South under the governance of one central government.

Between 1980 and 1990 the following organizations were formed -

1. the **Downtown Sioux Falls Corporation**,
2. the **Greater Chamber of Commerce of Sioux Falls**,
3. the **Sioux Falls Development Foundation**,
4. and finally, they formed a "**Group of Concerned Citizens of Sioux Falls**" that began to meet, to discuss, draft, and publish a Home Rule Charter.

This Group of People (1989) also formed the Forward Sioux Falls Initiative, a strategic business concept plan on how to develop, promote economic policy to build a wealthy, prosperous city in the future.

In 1994, they put their Business Charter up for public vote, asking the residents to approve their charter. It passed by a slim margin of 50.8% to 49.2%.

*The Home Rule Community was formed, hence the "**Territorial Corporate Government**" usurped governing powers from the people, to become a business-type organization.*

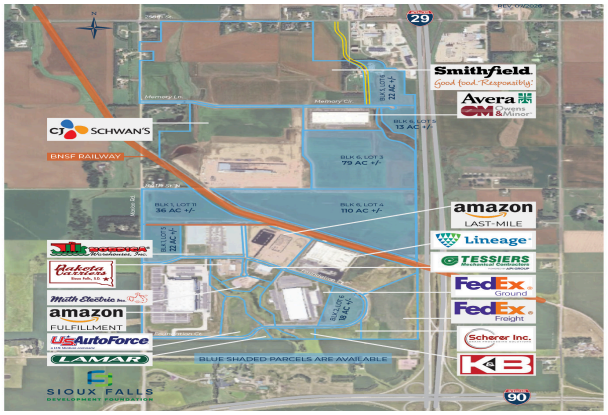
Over the next thirty (30) years, 1995 to 2025, this independent trade organization, now calling themselves the City of Sioux Falls, restructured itself, creating new departments, offices, and agencies, beginning the transition to the Shape Place's Planning and Zoning Ordinance (2013).

Over time, each section" has become annexed into the City of Sioux Falls, further subdivided into 1, 2, 3 acre parcels to be used for Residential, Commercial, or Both.

They begin to establish their **Enterprise Funds** - Water, Water Reclamation, Public Parking, Power and Distribution, Entertainment Fund, Sanitary, Internal Service.

The City of Sioux Falls begins to increase its profitability, to close to $3,000,000,000 billion by 2026, all of which, much of that profit is invested in Land Acquisition, in order to invest in those enterprise funds, mainly Water and Water Reclamation.

And here is where I begin to tell the Story of **Foundation Park**, in Benton Township!



In **Benton Township**, Sioux Falls Development Foundation purchased roughly 800 acres of land, pretty much 1 section of 640 + 160 additional acres to the north along County Road 130.

Amazingly, the "800 acres" are not contiguous to the City of Sioux Falls, as McCrossans Boy Ranch sits in between the 800 acres and City of Sioux Falls.

What they did was encourage the "City" to annex a narrow strip of land along North Marion Road to the west of the "Ranch" to connect the 800 acres to Sioux Falls.

Also note, one must learn who the "land supervisor" was for those 800 acres prior to 2015, much of the acres in this 'section' was a mix of Land Developmental Agreements (LDA's) which include Banks, Investment Firms, Developers, Builders, Realtors, etc. They had been working together to shape the land into a commercial district to be annexed into Sioux Falls for years. In 2016, Sioux Falls Development Foundation had purchased the land, then began the process of annexing the land into the City of Sioux Falls to build "Foundation Park".

A more in depth search, you see Foundation Park resides in Section #24 and part of Section #13.

For quick reference, the Walmart @ North Marion Rd/60th Street resides in Section #25 to the south.

As for **Section 24**, today known as Foundation Park, it has a very rich history. It was once designated to be part of a U.S Military Reservation.

In the summer of **1865**, a tract of land measuring ten miles long and seven miles wide was set apart by a military company to protect early settlements.

This reservation officially encompassed several areas, including sections **13**, **24**, **25**, and **36** of Benton Township.

During this time, military barracks and a stone commissary building were constructed nearby to support the garrison.

The name of this fort was Fort Dakota Military Reservation, and was established on May 5, 1865 by Lieutenant Colonel John Pattee and was initially named Fort Brookings.

The massive military reservation claimed an area of roughly **70 square miles, (10 miles by 7 miles),** to secure and protect the Big Sioux River Valley, and was originally first built in what was Downtown Sioux Falls (1860 to 1864) prior to abandonment.

This Section of Land has always been heavily sought after, to be utilized for local industry.

Beginning in 2016, it would become home to Foundation Park, which today, holds such businesses as Amazon, Fed-Ex, U.S Auto Force, and soon, Smithfield Food.

The **Sioux Falls Development Foundation**, has been leading the way in creating one of the most vibrant, secure, and growing economies in the nation. The organization was founded by a group of far-sighted business leaders, with the mission of improving the economy of the Sioux Falls region.

They are Responsible for working with the City of Sioux Falls, the Greater Chamber of Commerce of Sioux Falls, and Downtown Sioux Falls in creating the following:

- Foundation Park
- Sioux Empire Development Parks
- Regional Parks
- U.S.D Discovery District and Research Park
- The Downtown Parking Ramp

They have taken pride in themselves as a leading partner to the City of Sioux Falls in connecting local businesses to the Global Economy. In partnership with our regional airport, the Foreign Trade Zone and warehouse availability, Sioux Falls has the necessary assets to grow our local business community.

And here, we must tell the full story of the Foundation Park and Smithfield Partnership.

The truth be told, it all began as part of the purchase of Section 24, and the 800 acres in 2016...

My thoughts regarding the Minnehaha County Circuit Court's opinion in relation to the Smithfield Foods/Foundation Park situation, but first a little history shall we:

For those who do not know the full story, I wrote the document, "**The Worst Kept Secret**" a Promise to Build a Water Reclamation Facility for Foundation Park!

It is about the conspiracy led by the City of Sioux Falls to build a Water Reclamation Plant @ Foundation Park. IT all began way back in the year 2017, when the people at Sioux Falls Development Foundation and the City Government agreed to annex land south of Crooks to build an industrial park.

The men and women at **SFDF** *agreed to buy the land on the condition that Sioux Falls pays for, and builds a Water Reclamation Plant. But then COVID came and went, the City Government, then could not afford it, and seeked a way to convince someone to build the plant. Sioux Falls also wanted to redevelop the old Quarry as part of the S.F Park and Recreation Master Plan - this led to the investors of the Sioux Falls Parks, the Downtown Sioux Falls Organization, and the Development Foundation began to conspire together to seek investors.*

Former Mayor TenHaken had made several trips to China to seek potential investors, leading to convincing Smithfield to invest their own capital (from investors) to move to Foundation Park. All the meanwhile, during Covid, remember, Mayor TenHaken also aggressively worked with Smithfield to close the plant for a period of 30 days under the notion of "Stop the Spread".

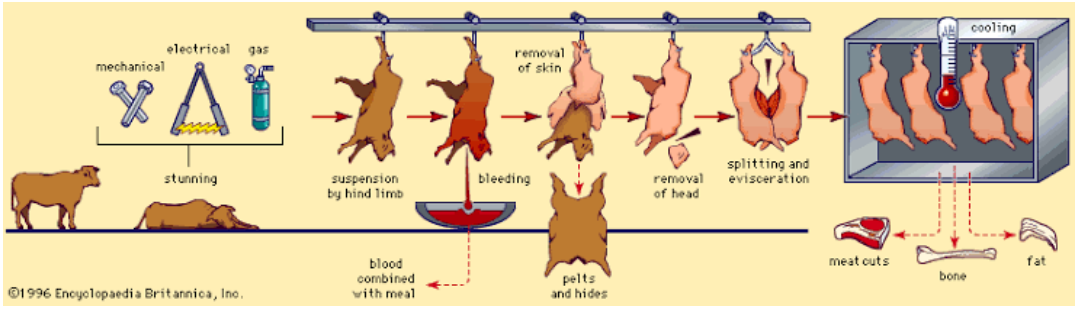
This is when the trips to China began. The City Government then began to hold many "Executive Sessions" with the City Council to hide the fact, deals were being made between the "CITY" , the Smithfield Corporation, and the SF Development Foundation. They begin to reach out to Denny Sanford as well as Mayor Tenhaken using his political connections to convince Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos to invest millions in the Quarry. ALL this being done behind closed doors.

ALL the while, the Benton Township landowners had no idea a "Meat Processing Plant" was coming to the area, this was never publicly noticed until the very last minute.

Yes, they allowed part of the land to become annexed into the City of Sioux Falls, but truth is, they were led to believe it would be light industrial, warehousing, and manufacturing. Part of the conspiracy was the fact, SFDF made cash offers to buy 3 of the 11 properties, but refused to make any offers for the other properties. And one of them, a large 90 acreage is worth upwards of $2,000,000 million dollars with a small lake/pond on it.

Placing a "Meat Processing Plant" right next to these properties, would fraudulently devalue the property values by nearly 70%, with no care to the lifetime investment made by the Benton Township landowners.

All the while, Denny Sanford invests his $50 million, Jeff Bezos invests his $15 million, and of course Smithfield promised to invest $1.3 billion for the right to move to Foundation Park, all of which the SFDF promised to build the Sioux Falls Water Reclamation Plant obtaining a large $90 million TIF which ultimately will be paid by the "Taxpayers". Of course the People of Downtown would love this, they have hated the Smithfield Plant downtown for nearly decade...it was 100% a conspiracy to defraud, and financially rape the landowners of Benton Township. And the Judge by the way it looks, after reading her opinion, agreed, the CITY GOVT did NOT follow proper procedures in informing and allowing for public discussion to be had related to this project. And this is where we are today.



But side by side during this development, occurring independently the City Council, led by then- at-large member Christine Erickson, led an effort to annex land on the east side of Sioux Falls, near the current Water Reclamation Facility, east of Benson Road.

This paved the way for a locally-owned cooperative named **Wholestone Farm's Cooperative Inc** - a group of farmers doing business in eastern South Dakota, wanting to build their new meat processing plant in Sioux Falls, S.D, thus taking advantage of a centralized location with farms that reside in the tri-state area - South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska.

And thanks to the fact, the city resides at the intersection of I-29 and I-90, the company was seeking to add more than 1,100 full time jobs in the city itself.

A Cooperative is defined as, **a group of businesses, farmers, investors that pool their assets together with the goal of involving mutual assistance in working towards a common goal.**

According to their website, they began in 2018, and are proud of our authentic, integrated structure and entrepreneurial spirit. Working together as a cohesive team, we will succeed in delivering consistent, high-quality pork products with exceptional service to our customers worldwide. Further, they have dedicated their time to local charitable organizations, offering financial support to local school systems, buying locally and providing food resources to those in need. Wholestone Farms believes in giving back to the communities in which we live and work. By doing our part to support and foster our local communities, businesses and organizations, we can help create the best possible life for our team members, families and neighbors.

However, a group of petitioners led by **Jeff Broin**, owner of Poet Industries, did not want the company coming to Sioux Falls, and had collected signatures to place on the November 2022 ballot, an attempt to outright "ban" new meat processing companies from residing inside city limits. If the voters had voted in their favor, it would have left Smithfield Foods as the lone company in Sioux Falls. And it had long been known, that Mr. Broin, like **Denny Sanford** and **Matt Paulson**, have politically financed, lobbied, and campaigned for the likes of Paul TenHaken, Rich Merkouris, Christine Erickson, Alex Jenson, and Sara Cole during this same period of years, not to leave newcomers, Jennifer Sigetti and Miranda Basye. Giving the trio a huge influence on city policy.

However, in November 2022, the voters voted not to ban any new meat processing plants in Sioux Falls, and Wholestone Foods Cooperative would soon begin building their facility in the months that followed the election. This meant, between January 2023 and December 2025, we would have had two meat processing plants doing business within the city limits, one owned by the Chinese, and one owned locally.

And here, the timeline begins to go dark, as the City Government, the City Council, and the Chamber of Commerce begin to conspire together, to protect their own private interests over 24 months.

As **Joe Sneve** alluded to on a recent Facebook posting, "the Sioux Falls City Council relies heavily on recommendation of the city planning office when considering conditional use permits and zoning applications."

This is true, the Council (and Mayor) relying on the planning, zoning, and public works offices for advice.

And here we must remember, the Mayor and City Council are part time public servants, many of whom have full time jobs outside their elected offices, and only serve four(4) year terms as 'elected' watchdogs over the city government itself. By city charter, their job are to guide public agenda as it relates to the public interest, let alone, they further upon advice and consent, direct the mayor's office to appoint city directors, alongside city boards, commissions, and committees to help formulate future policies, that help maintain keep the city government, made up of full time officers, agents, employees, the very people hired to conduct business as the City of Sioux Falls itself.

This means, your Mayor and City Council often take the government recommendations and advice on many projects, zoning and planning issues as it relates to city government, with no disregard to public opinion itself.

Current at-large representative, Rich Merkouris often alludes to this by making several statements, "if we do not listen to, nor take the advice of the experts, then we are not doing our due diligence when adopting future policy".

But, there was one such recommendation back in 2017. It was brought forward in lieu of the property holders - in the very beginning, before the land was even annexed, by then, the Assistant Planning Director, **Jeff Schmidt** who at the time read their letter of concern into public record, their concerns of foundation park. The City Council at the time, refused to adhere to their thoughts.

The funny part, in order for any such land to be annexed into the city limits, the land has to be continuous, meaning, attached to existing annexed land today. So what does the planning office propose - they further annex a small, narrow strip of land, along North Marion Road, to the east of McCrossan's Boys Ranch (not annexed). This then allows for the City Council to approve the annexation, despite not being continuous by nature. So, one can see, your mayor and city council were not acting in good faith, let alone conspiring with the folks at Sioux Falls Development Foundation, to make it work.

If you look at a map of Foundation Park, you see it resides within Benton Township, to whom it has an active board of land supervisors, to whom act as a sovereign governing entity in itself. In fact, prior to Sioux Falls Development Foundation purchasing much of the 800 acres in 2016, the site's prior ownership structure appears to have been through **development agreements and possibly multiple landowners or entities** rather than a single identifiable owner, as the land was being prepared for large-scale commercial development.

A **land development agreement (LDA)** is a legally binding contract that sets out the terms under which land will be developed, typically between a developer and one or more landowners, and sometimes a municipal or governing body. When **multiple landowner entities** are involved, the agreement must clearly define each party's rights, obligations, and share of the project. This broad relationship status between different entities, was what allowed for Sioux Falls Development Foundation to swoop in and purchase the 800 acres south of Crooks, and north of Sioux Falls at the time. The remaining 120 acres of land became annexed into the city, once SFDF was able to purchase the northern part along County Road 130.

Once completed, this allowed the City Government to begin conspiring, organizing behind a plan to reach out to Smithfield Food, who had been discussing closing the Sioux Falls plant, to partner them with Sioux Falls Development Foundation, to build a new meat processing plant in northwest Sioux Falls (outside of the city core), so long as the Mayor could find investors to make it feasible. Between 2020 and 2022, during the Covid-19 Pandemic, the mayor, Paul TenHaken takes business trips to China to meet with investors, to help build a coalition of banks, investors, business leaders to make the plan work. And somewhere between 2022-2023, Wholestone Foods Cooperative agreed to pause their own plans to build a meat processing plant, thus, the next phase now can begin, the northern 120 acres of land annexation along County Road 130 to build Smithfield.

To make all this work, the City Government had to work out partnerships with Denny Sanford to buy the current Smithfield site, for $50 million; while convincing Jeff Bezos the Amazon CEO to donate $15 million to cleanup, and help develop the former Quarry site in Downtown Sioux Falls. Once those deals were put in place, Sioux Falls Development Foundation alongside their own investors, agree to the $90 million T.I.F package, to use their own private money, to build the new Water Reclamation Facility in northwest Sioux Falls, which will be owned by the People of Sioux Falls, allowing the city government to collect "User Fees" for water and water reclamation.

All these public meetings were taking place behind closed doors, hence the Mayor's Office, the City Attorney, and City Council met in "**Executive Meeting**" fashion, to discuss the details of this Capital Project. These meetings are defined as, " a formal assembly of a company's senior leadership, including the mayor, city council, key department heads, and other key persons convened to discuss and decide on matters that shape the organization's long-term strategy and performance.

Unlike routine operational meetings, executive meetings focus on **strategic planning, high-level decision-making, and confidential discussions** that have significant implications for the company.

SDCL 1-25-2. Executive or closed meetings may be held for the sole purposes of: **(g)** Any blueprint, building plan, or infrastructure record regarding any building or facility that would expose or create vulnerability through disclosure of the location, configuration, or security of critical systems of the building or facility.

With that, the conspiracy was complete, the City of Sioux Falls got its Water Reclamation Facility, it convinced a local cooperative to stop its project to build a second meat processing plant in Sioux Falls, while it convinced Smithfield to not leave Sioux Falls, but to join Foundation Park, by getting the meat processing plant outside of the city core, while the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, Denny Sanford, and Jeff Bezos, and other private investors (not named), came on board to financially make this project doable.

In the end, the City Council, alongside the Mayor, were able to work around City Ordinance 160, avoiding mitigation with the Benton Township Landowners, to place a large, heavy-use, industrial facility in the backyards of private residential properties.

In the end, City Council leadership, led by Rich Merkouris, Jennifer Sigetti, Ryan Spellerburg, all took great pride in "Financially Raping" these landowners (property holders) of their lifetime investment, with absolutely no care for their opinion.

And this is what led to the lawsuit being brought against the City of Sioux Falls and the Sioux Falls Development Foundation - they knew what they were doing was a "conspiracy" to deceive private persons, of their constitutional right to life, liberty, property, pursuit to happiness!

Conspiracy, "**a secret plan by a group to do something unlawful or harmful**" to Financially Rape others of their property value. Financial Rape, "**a term sometimes used to describe an extreme form of financial abuse or, in different contexts, severe financial exploitation by corporate entities. It refers to a devastating, often coercive, manipulation of a person's financial autonomy.**"

And this is why the Minnehaha County Circuit Judge ruled as she did, stopping the "City" from unjustly acting in error, by not following their own rules. The City Government, the Sioux Falls Development Foundation, the Downtown Sioux Falls Corporation, the Matt Paulson's of the world found out what happens when you try to deceive people - they get called out publically.

Folks, Matt Paulson was the one, who often offered his airplane, to help Mayor Paul TenHaken get to and from Sioux Falls to politically discuss the capital project in Washington D.C, in China, and in Smithfield-Virginia. All with the goal to deceive, plan, and build the worst kept secret in Sioux Falls, S.D --- the **Water Reclamation Facility**!

Read the Timeline of Events from 2017 to 20256 - Worst Kept Secret, Water Reclamation Facility - For More Information, Check Out that Document Next!

A Water Reclamation Facility for West Sioux Falls, S.D



By, Mike Zitterich
Sioux Falls Resident