



## TOWN OF BARGERSVILLE

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Ladies & Gentlemen of the Greenwood City Council:

### **RE: Testimony of the Town of Bargersville Relative to the Approval of the Merger Plan with White River Township**

This statement is offered in writing on behalf of the Town of Bargersville. As elected officials of our respective communities, the Town of Bargersville respectfully requests appropriate diligence on the parts of our neighbors in Greenwood. We offer this testimony respectfully, and we request that respect be shown to the citizens of Bargersville in return. In the interest of brevity, the Town of Bargersville offers two primary suggestions for beginning the restoration of respect between our municipalities.

First, and most fundamentally, the Town of Bargersville has no interest in ongoing skirmishes with the City of Greenwood. These skirmishes waste our taxpayers' resources. It is time for this nonsense to be over, and we respectfully ask that you, the City Council of Greenwood, bring an end to the silliness. Bargersville respects the corporate boundaries of the City of Greenwood, and we respectfully request that Greenwood demonstrate its respect for Bargersville as a neighboring municipality.

Frankly, the Merger Plan which you are being asked to approve is deliberately flawed and shows no respect for the free and democratic decisions of the residents of southern White River Township. Those who have crafted the Merger Plan have openly disregarded clear and undeniable previous testimony by Bargersville residents, and the testimony of residents of southern White River Township, not to mention the conclusions reached by county officials. The Merger Plan continues to include allegations and insinuations that Bargersville's annexations are somehow invalid.

Let us be clear once more. The Bargersville annexations have ALREADY taken effect. The corporate boundaries of the Town of Bargersville have ALREADY been adjusted. The southern WRT annexations were more than 90% voluntary and have not been challenged by the City of Greenwood or by the landowners in the annexation areas. The residents of those areas have freely stated their preference, and we ask that you respect their decision.

We therefore ask that the Greenwood City Council select one of two options to demonstrate its respect for Bargersville's corporate boundaries. First, Bargersville would prefer that the Greenwood City Council insert language into its approval resolution positively affirming its recognition of Bargersville's annexations WHICH HAVE ALREADY TAKEN EFFECT. Alternatively, if you prefer, the Greenwood City

Council can vote to NOT approve the Merger Plan. To extend the current disrespect of the Merger Committee will only result in greater mistrust and long-term damage to our collective relationships.

In addition to requesting affirmative respect for your neighbor's corporate boundaries, and the free decisions of those residents, the Town of Bargersville requests that the Greenwood City Council affirm its respect for the basic principles of democracy by acknowledging that residents of the entirety of White River Township will be allowed to vote on the proposed merger. The principles of democracy that form the foundation of American government are traced back to the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States. Those principles provide that citizens are allowed to vote on the government that affects them. We believe that these same principles apply in Johnson County, Indiana.

The Merger Committee's suggestion that some White River Township residents should be denied the opportunity to vote on the merger is insulting on multiple levels. The Township's attorney, as well as the Johnson County Clerk, the Johnson County Election Board and the State Election Board have already stated that ALL RESIDENTS of White River Township are to be allowed to vote on the merger. We therefore respectfully ask that the Greenwood City Council refrain from continuing the Merger Committee's insult. In fact, such insults only serve to diminish the chances of a successful merger by unnecessarily alienating and galvanizing those people who might otherwise not care about the merger.

We respectfully offer that it is somewhat ridiculous to suggest that some of Bargersville's boundaries are in question while simultaneously arguing that Bargersville residents should be banned from voting on the merger. How can the Greenwood City Council place its own credibility alongside a suggestion that Bargersville residents should not be allowed to vote on the merger, when the merger, itself, questions the boundaries of Bargersville?

While there are additional points that we could offer with regard to the issue of voter eligibility, we will withhold those points at this time, while reserving the right to express them in the future, if necessary. The Greenwood City Council has the opportunity to separate itself from the Merger Committee's disrespect toward the citizens of Bargersville and the residents of White River Township by bringing at least this part of the silliness to an end. We hope that you will capitalize on this opportunity.

The Town of Bargersville has sought herein to present a simple, abbreviated proposal to the Greenwood City Council. In so doing, the Town wishes to state that it reserves the right to bring other matters forward at any time it deems appropriate. In addition, the Town of Bargersville hereby reiterates its objection to all points previously offered in response to the previous Merger Plan which were not addressed to the satisfaction of the Town. Our preference for brevity in this case stems from the practical recognition that, if the Greenwood City Council cannot affirm its respect for the basic principles of democracy and the simple premise of corporate boundaries, it is unlikely that finer points would be any more persuasive.

The old adage that the longest journey begins with a single step is true in this case. The conflict between our municipalities has gone on too long. Too many public resources have been wasted. Too many disrespectful actions have been undertaken that will linger in the hearts and minds of our citizens

for years. It is time for this silliness to be over, and we sincerely and respectfully request that the Greenwood City Council begin that process tonight.

Most sincerely,  
The Bartersville Town Council