

## Author, Dodge County, Incorporated: Big Ag and the Undoing of Rural America (Sonja Trom Eayrs)

It's imperative for the MPCA to hold a public meeting that will accommodate all attendees.

I understand that industry boys packed the public meeting on April 28, 2026, while local residents who are impacted by this large operation were turned away at the door and unable to voice their concerns. This is standard protocol for the industry, as the industry historically packs public meetings with industry folks. This is part of the corporate playbook as discussed in my book, Dodge County, Incorporated: Big Ag and the Undoing of Rural America.

<https://www.sonjatromeayrs.com/>

Nearly 25 years ago, a large dairy operation was proposed just a few miles north of our farm in Dodge County, Minnesota. The dairy operation would've been the largest dairy operation in the State of Minnesota at the time. The fight continued for several years. One evening, the meeting was moved to the old Claremont High School. The township residents showed up at the old high school and were surprised to see nearly 200 folding chairs occupied by corporate executives, including Land O' Lakes, Monsanto, Hormel, Cargill, and other companies. Corporate theatre at its best. There were insufficient chairs for the township residents. Although the township residents were blindsided that evening, they nonetheless remained vigilant and were eventually successful.

Today, rather than send corporate executives to meetings, the industry sends insiders. Several years ago, we went door-to-door in my home Township. We asked residents to sign a petition calling for a special meeting, so we could put local planning and zoning in place and stop the proliferation of factory farms, as our family farm is surrounded by 12 swine factory farms, housing an estimated 30,000 hogs in a 3-mile radius. While dozens of residents signed the petition and called for a special meeting, they were blindsided the night of the special meeting. As local residents showed up at the special meeting, they were surprised that the road grader and other equipment had been backed out of the building. The equipment area was converted to a meeting room, and at least 200 chairs were occupied by members of the hog industry, undoubtedly members of the Minnesota Pork Producers Association (MPPA). A corporate rally.

If the MPCA is going to conduct a public meeting and take public comments from all concerned citizens, the MPCA needs to hold a public meeting in a larger space that will accommodate residents and allow them an opportunity to voice their concerns. It is also essential that the MPCA require that those attending the public meeting sign in to the meeting and provide their contact information.

For more information, see Dodge County, Incorporated: Big Ag and the Undoing of Rural America. <https://sonjatromeayrs.com/>

“A fast-paced legal thriller, filled with a few good guys and too many villains. I wish it was fiction, but it isn’t.” —SARAH VOGEL, author of *The Farmer’s Lawyer*



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