



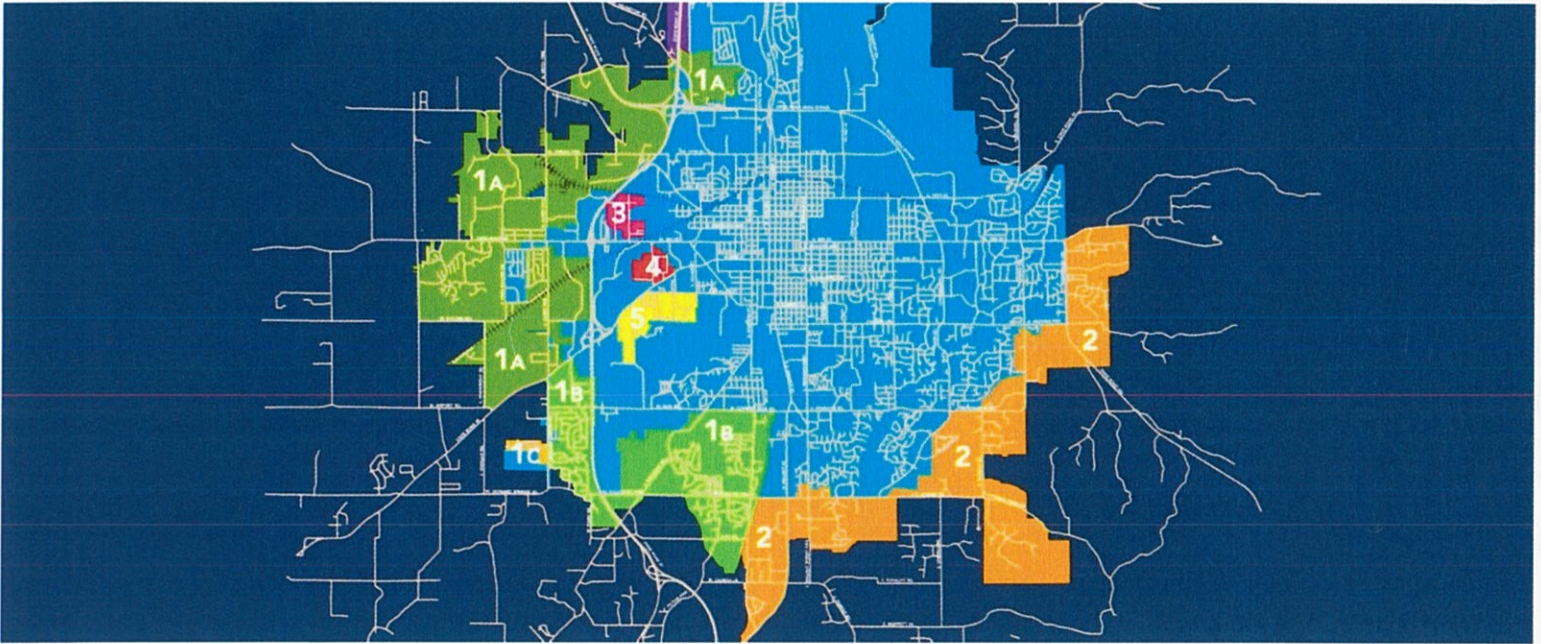
## The Dissident Democrat

Take Bloomington back from real estate profiteers and their enablers.

EXHIBIT

19

# Remonstrance Campaign Leader: "Can You Hear Us?"



*The largely successful four-month campaign by Monroe County residents to gather remonstrance forms to stop Bloomington's forcible annexation of its suburbs ended on January 6, 2021. Margaret Clements, one of the anti-annexation campaign's prime movers, offered the following observations at a Monroe County Remonstrance Closure Event, held at the Monroe County Courthouse.*

**T**hank you, Commissioner Thomas, for your kind introduction. From the beginning of this process, back in May of 2021, when we learned that the Mayor and the City of Bloomington had decided to go forward with their ill-advised, aggressive annexation plan, you have been so kind and generous in working together to devise a plan that raised awareness, reduced error, and had the chance to convince the Bloomington City Council to vote no on annexation. I want to thank you for your insights.

Since that time, Sandy Sabbagh, who has been a tireless volunteer throughout this process, and I have held more than thirty driveway events across all of the annexation areas where we worked with residents to get signatures, to help them gain volunteers, and at which we could coordinate the process that has proven to be successful across all of the annexation areas. Ellen Siffin has been working steadily and intelligently gaming all of the various possible legal outcomes of this effort.

Even though I am not in any annexation area, I have been working every day since May, as an unpaid private citizen, from 7 in the morning to 11 at night to defeat annexation. In essence I have been working for free doing what the populace wants while at the same time, their tax dollars are paying the salaries of people who are doing to them what they don't want.

Although the Mayor and six members of the Bloomington City Council would not listen to the people when they pleaded with them to vote no on annexation, and the City Council would not consider that the people demonstrated that they had the necessary 65% to void annexation with their petitions this summer, and the City Council was urged to consider how divisive their aggressive annexation plan was, they refused to listen to the people.

So, in a pandemic, the public went door to door seeking signatures from residents across the 6,600 parcels involving more than 14,000 people, hundreds of residents mobilized with their clipboards, their counterparts, and they set about getting signatures on remonstrance petitions. Resident by resident, signature by signature, we have achieved an historic accomplishment.



Margaret Clements

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**In eight out of nine of the originally proposed annexation areas, we are confident that the annexation will be voided or has already been cancelled due to overwhelming public opposition because we have worked to secure more than the 65% of the necessary signatures to void annexation. We are still kindling hopes that the largest annexation area, 1B, will also be voided. We were encouraged that in many of the areas, 80% or more of the property owners signed petitions.**

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Are you ready for this, people? As of January 5, 2022:

- Area 1A had 1,092 signatures sent in while only 962 signatures were needed for cancellation.
- Area 1B had 1196 signatures sent in while only 1,073 were needed to contest.
- Area 1C had 92 signatures sent in while only 69 were needed to cancel.
- Area 2 had 1069 sent in while only 864 were needed to cancel. And do you know what? That was yesterday. I have a record of over 1,086 signatures in area 2 and there were only 70 people who said they wanted to be annexed...only 4%.
- Area 3 had 76 signatures sent in and only 66 were needed to cancel and I heard they got one more.
- Area 4 had 66 signatures sent in and only 60 were needed to cancel and I heard they got one more.
- Area 5 had 62 signatures sent in and only 60 were needed to cancel and I believe they achieved the 80% total assessed value calculation that cancels annexation as well.
- Area 6 demonstrated early on that more than 90% were opposed, so their annexation was cancelled.
- Area 7 demonstrated that more than 90% were opposed, so their annexation was amended out of the ordinance.

This process has been arduous and unfair. The balance was tipped in the city's favor with this Rube Goldberg creation of a Monster process. This process has been a bureaucrat's dream come true while at the same time it has been a nightmare for the citizenry. We have essentially been fighting with our hands tied behind our backs while blindfolded. But you know what? I am hopeful that the good people of Monroe County have prevailed. We will find out over the next few weeks.

So, in closing, I would like to ask Mayor Hamilton and the Bloomington City Council: Have we spoken in a

voice loud enough that you can hear us this time? Are you listening? Can you hear us? The people of Monroe County do not want to be annexed into the city of Bloomington.

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## 2 thoughts on “Remonstration Campaign Leader: “Can You Hear Us?””

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