

# Walmart suing Burlington

Seeks to halve tax payment to city amid 'dark store' controversy

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BURLINGTON — Walmart is fighting to cut the taxable value of its Burlington store nearly in half, in the latest incident of "dark store" taxation, an issue that has divided state lawmakers in Madison.

Walmart has filed suit against the City of Burlington, accusing the city of excessive taxation, in a

civil action aimed at slashing the store's assessment from \$8.6 million to \$4.5 million.

Wisconsin state tax law allows big-box retail stores to pay taxes on active properties at the same rate that they pay on vacant properties, or "dark stores."

If Walmart succeeds and its property tax bill declines, Burlington could lose \$80,000 a year in tax revenue that either would have to be trimmed from city services or would be made up by homeowners and others paying higher taxes.

No trial date has been scheduled in the civil dispute, which is pend-

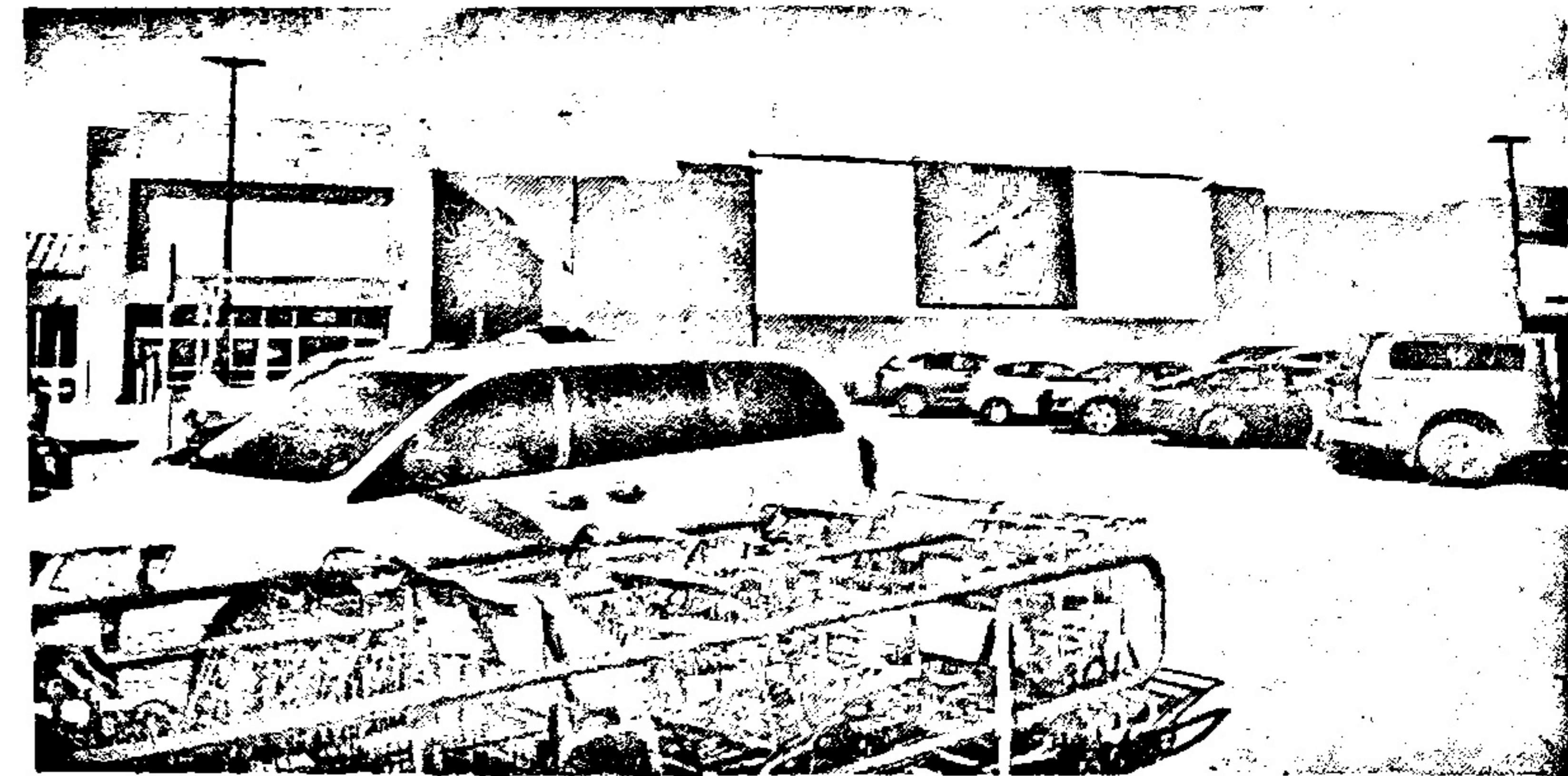
ing before Racine County Circuit Judge Eugene Gasiorkiewicz.

Walmart filed the suit in December, but court records show that the parties agreed to postpone action in court until the city had Walmart's tax bill ready for 2021.

Burlington City Manager Carina Walters declined to comment, citing the pending litigation.

Walmart spokesman Charles Crowson declined to comment except to issue a prepared statement calling Walmart "a responsible corporate citizen everywhere

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The Walmart store at 1901 Milwaukee Ave. in Burlington is valued at \$8.6 million for tax purposes, but Walmart is asking a judge to reduce it to \$4.5 million and also order Burlington to pay a refund.