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**DISTRICT I**

December 23, 2025

*To*:

Hon. Marisabel Cabrera
Circuit Court Judge
Electronic Notice

Anna Hodges
Clerk of Circuit Court
Milwaukee County Appeals Processing Division
Electronic Notice

Joseph A. Abruzzo
Electronic Notice

Brenda Alexandra Colina
Electronic Notice

Aman Singh
Electronic Notice

You are hereby notified that the Court has entered the following opinion and order:

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2025AP1194 Village of Hales Corners v. Aman Singh (L.C. # 2025FO281)

Before Geenen, J.[1]

**Summary disposition orders may not be cited in any court of this state as precedent or authority, except for the limited purposes specified in WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(3).**

Aman Singh, pro se, appeals from an order of the circuit court dismissing his case due to untimeliness and because Singh had already exhausted all possible remedies. Based upon a review of the briefs and the record, we conclude that this case is appropriate for summary disposition. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

[1] This appeal is decided by one judge pursuant to WIS. STAT. § 752.31(2)(b) (2023-24). All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version.

## BACKGROUND

On January 12, 2018, Singh received a citation for being in Whitnall Park after hours. Although the citation ordered Singh to appear in the Hales Corners Municipal Court at an appointed time, Singh did not appear. The municipal court entered a default judgment against Singh and he paid the fine.

Four years later, in 2022, Singh filed a motion to reopen the default judgment with the municipal court, arguing that the default judgment was void. The municipal court denied the motion. Singh appealed to the circuit court, which found that the municipal court properly denied Singh's motion to reopen. Singh appealed to this court. Because no appeal lies from a default judgment in a municipal citation case, WIS. STAT. § 800.14(1), our review was limited to the circuit court's rationale for denying the motion to reopen, not Singh's defenses to the underlying citation. ***Village of Hales Corners v. Singh***, No. 2023AP716, unpublished op. and order (Ct. App. Dec. 5, 2023). In a footnote, we explained why this court could not and would not review Singh's defenses in light of the limited scope of our review of the municipal court's order:

> Singh further attacks the subject matter jurisdiction of the municipal court arguing that "16.01" is not a valid municipal ordinance and a county ordinance states that county parks close at midnight. However, this court's review is limited to Singh's motion to reopen, and any defense to the citation is outside the scope of our review.

***Id.*** at 5 n.5.

We affirmed the circuit court. Singh filed a petition for review with the Wisconsin Supreme Court; the petition was denied.

Referencing the footnote, Singh "filed a new motion [to reopen] in the municipal court focusing on defenses to the citation instead of jurisdiction." The municipal court denied the new motion without a hearing, explaining that the case "has already been through the entire appellate process and [his] Motion does not raise any new issues." Singh again appealed to the circuit court, which dismissed Singh's appeal as untimely and because Singh had already exhausted all of his remedies.

Singh again appeals.

## DISCUSSION

Singh alleges that the municipal court erroneously exercised its discretion when it denied his motion to reopen without holding an evidentiary hearing, and that the circuit court erroneously exercised its discretion when it found that his appeal was untimely.

On appeal, we review the municipal court's decision denying the motion to reopen de novo. ***Village of Williams Bay v. Metzl***, 124 Wis. 2d 356, 361-62, 369 N.W.2d 186 (Ct. App. 1985). While ordinarily we would review the municipal court's record, ***id.***, the municipal court here found that Singh's claims were precluded as a matter of law as the result of his prior appeal.[2] Whether claim preclusion applies is a question of law that this court reviews de novo. ***Northern States Power Co. v. Bugher***, 189 Wis. 2d 541, 551, 525 N.W.2d 723 (1995).

[2] Singh contends that the municipal court was required to conduct a hearing on his motion to reopen. We disagree. WIS. STAT. § 800.115(5) permits the municipal court to enter an order denying the motion for failure to state grounds upon which relief may be granted. The municipal court clearly concluded that Singh's motion did not raise any claim that allowed him to circumvent the preclusion doctrines.

## I. Singh's Appeal is Procedurally Barred.[3]

Singh's appeal is premised on a misunderstanding of the above quoted footnote in our prior decision and a misunderstanding of the appropriate use of the court system and the propriety of repeat litigation. The footnote served to explain the court's scope of review in light of Singh's appeal and the relevant law, not an invitation to file a new motion to reopen. We are similarly limited here, and our review is not of any defenses Singh might raise, but on whether evidence in the record supports the municipal court's decision denying the motion to reopen.

Singh correctly notes that "nothing in WIS. STAT. [§] 800.115 limits a defendant to filing just one motion [for relief from a prior municipal court judgment]." An extensive body of case law, however, does.

First, some of Singh's claims were raised and addressed by this court's prior opinion relating to his first motion to reopen the municipal case. Singh is not entitled to raise those claims again and is bound to our prior decision. Issue preclusion bars the relitigation of an issue

[3] As we warned Singh in another case involving appeals of the circuit court's dismissal of municipal appeals, "it is the appellant's responsibility to ensure completion of the appellate record and 'when an appellate record is incomplete in connection with an issue raised by the appellant, we must assume that the missing material supports the [circuit] court's ruling.'" ***Village of Hales Corners v. Singh***, Nos. 2022AP1325 & 2022AP1327, ¶13, unpublished slip. op. (Aug. 15, 2023) (citing ***Gaethke v. Pozder***, 2017 WI App 38, ¶36, 376 Wis. 2d 448, 899 N.W.2d 381 (citation omitted)). The docket sheet for the current case reflects that the circuit court dismissed this case because Singh "has exhausted all remedies up to and including the Supreme Court of Wisconsin" and because the appeal was untimely, but states none of the court's other conclusions or findings. Singh correctly notes that in a case such as this, our review is ordinarily a de novo review of the municipal court's decision and therefore a transcript may not always be necessary. However, in this appeal, Singh specifically puts the circuit court's findings and conclusion that the appeal was untimely at issue. In the absence of a transcript, we do not know what facts gave rise to that conclusion, and Singh fails to otherwise adequately develop the timeliness argument on appeal. *See* ***Gaethke***, 376 Wis. 2d 448, ¶36. We nevertheless do not rely on the transcript deficiencies here to affirm the municipal court's decisions, because we affirm on other grounds.

of law or fact in a subsequent action when the issue has been actually litigated and decided in a prior action. ***Bugher***, 189 Wis. 2d at 550.

Second, once a matter has been litigated between parties, the matter may not generally be relitigated based on arguments that could have been, but were not, raised in the first round of litigation. *See e.g.*, ***Kruckenberg v. Harvey***, 2005 WI 43, ¶19, 279 Wis. 2d 520, 694 N.W.2d 879; ***Bugher***, 189 Wis. 2d at 551. The court system does not allow a party to repeatedly try to bring the same case under different theories, piecemeal. The system requires finality of judgments and does, in fact, prevent repetitive litigation. ***Bugher***, 189 Wis. 2d at 551.

Therefore, the denial of a motion to reopen does not green light a second or third or any other successive motion to reopen the same case under a new theory or a repackaged version of the prior motion. Rather, the doctrine of claim preclusion provides that a final judgment on the merits in one action bars parties from relitigating all matters "which were litigated or which might have been litigated in the former proceedings." ***Kruckenberg***, 2005 WI 43, ¶19 (citation omitted). If a subsequent claim between two parties arises from the same factual underpinnings as the first claim, the subsequent claim is barred from future consideration and it does not matter if the claim was not actually litigated, but that it *could* have been litigated even if it was not. ***Parks v. City of Madison***, 171 Wis. 2d 730, 734-35, 492 N.W.2d 365 (Ct. App. 1992).

Singh's claim relies on facts and legal theories that were known to him or that he could have raised but did not, both when he originally defaulted and during the pendency of litigation over the first motion to reopen. Singh cannot now bring another motion to reopen the Whitnall Park citation on grounds that were or could have been raised in the earlier challenge. The fact

that Singh may have had a meritorious defense is not relevant; he was obligated to bring that matter to the municipal court before he defaulted.

The municipal court's decision denying the motion to reopen is consistent with the controlling law. *See, e.g.*, ***State v. Casteel***, 2001 WI App 188, ¶¶23-25, 247 Wis. 2d 451, 634 N.W.2d 338 (explaining that repetitive litigation of the same matters is an abuse of the appellate process, which a court has inherent power to prohibit). We therefore affirm. We further caution Singh that he may face sanctions if he continues to raise claims for relief regarding the municipal citation case underlying this appeal. The issues Singh is attempting to raise have been resolved, and the matter has been through the entire appellate process. Accordingly, Singh is on notice that this court is prepared to impose appropriate sanctions should Singh persist in making repetitive allegations, regardless of whether they are packaged as motions, petitions, or appeals. *See* ***id.*** at ¶¶23-27; *see also* WIS. STAT. RULES 809.25(3), 809.83(2).

IT IS ORDERED that the order is summarily affirmed. WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this summary disposition order will not be published.

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*Samuel A. Christensen*
*Clerk of Court of Appeals*