

VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH

Newsletter

SUMMER 2022

HOURS

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Temporary Hours:
Closed on Thursdays

CONTACT INFO

130 N Chestnut Street

Village Hall
(715) 273-4742

Police Department
(715) 273-3275

DROP BOX

Payments and/or paperwork can be submitted using the 24-hour drop box on the front of the Village Hall.

PAYMENTS

The Village accepts cash, check and/or Point and Pay (online) payments.

Transition, Change, and Growth

Message from Becky Beissel, President, Village of Ellsworth

Dear fellow community members,

I would like to share about some transitions taking place within the Village.

As of June 13, Administrator Clerk-Treasurer, Nicole Stewart, is no longer employed with the Village. The decision to terminate the contract was one the Board did not take lightly, but one we felt was in the best interest of the village.

Also, the Board accepted the resignation of Trustee Scott Feuerhelm on June 20. Scott's work will be taking him to Colorado for the next year making it too difficult for him to continue to serve as a leader in this community. We wish Scott all the best and thank him for his three years of service on the Village Board.

Vacancies in key roles such as these are always



difficult; however, the Board is committed to moving forward in a positive direction and is optimistic for the future of our community. We have begun our search for a new Administrator Clerk-Treasurer and I hope for Board approval for the appointment to fill our vacant board seat at our July 11 Board Meeting.

While change is sometimes hard, I've never been one to steer clear of it. When done strategically and intentionally, change signals growth, improvement, and momentum. I find change to be exciting!

Speaking of exciting, how about that new Main Street? And the progress on the new library! And the painted flower planters and new mural in East End! And another successful Cheese Curd Festival!

Let's keep this momentum going! I thank you for your support and trust.

You're Invited: Village Meetings

We strive for transparency here in the Village and you will become most informed by attending our Village meetings. Due to open meeting laws, we must strictly adhere to our posted agendas. Every topic or angle of every issue may not be discussed at every meeting. However, regular attendance allows you to follow discussion and gain an understanding about how decisions are to the benefit of Village residents.

Update: The Old Junior High

Turning Our Largest Blighted Property Into a Productive Asset

The old junior high building, located at 254 S Chestnut Street, has been the "elephant" in the community for several years. The property was sold by the school district for \$1 in 2005 in good faith that it would become a dinner theatre, then sold to a close-out warehouse company (where it was later condemned, with 16 tons of rotting food inside), then sold to the most recent owners who used it as a salvage storage facility. It has a long and challenging past. Year after year the property has continued

to deteriorate and generate many complaints to the village and police department.

The property is not only an eyesore but a drain on our property tax base. A property that could be producing a tax base of \$60,000-\$100,000 each year has only been generating \$2500. The topic of "the old junior high" came up time and again during our comprehensive plan update this spring, ranking at or near the top of the list of issues residents would like to



see addressed in our community. Overwhelmingly, residents want this issue dealt with once and for all.

The current owners of the property contacted the Village in April expressing an

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...The Old Junior High, continued from previous page

interest in selling and asking if the Village was interested in purchasing. The Village Board extended a purchase agreement in the amount of \$25,000 (the amount of the last property sale 10 years ago). The offer was accepted. The Village will be using a portion of our American Rescue Act Plan (ARPA) funds for this purchase, so these dollars will not come out of the general fund. The sale will close on August 1.

Cost of Demolition

The Village Board received a rough estimate for demolition from one of our engineer partners, CBS², in the amount of \$943,000.

One June 21, the Village President and several trustees presented a proposal to Pierce County for a portion of their \$8 million in ARPA funds to help pay for the cost of demolition. The county would benefit, too. By investing those funds into a project that will increase both housing stock and tax base, both the village and the county come out ahead.

The Board is also pursuing the option of turning this property into a Blighted Tax Incremental District (TID) for residential use.



Doing so will offer the village the means to pay back any costs associated with the project using the increase in tax base from the property. Our goal is to utilize this approach so there will be no tax impact to village residents. There will be a Joint TID Review Board meeting on July 18 at 5pm to discuss this option.

Know we are working strategically and methodically through this process with the village's future and best interests as our top priority.

Plan [2022] Continues

Updating the Village of Ellsworth Comprehensive Plan

We're now to the final stage of our Comprehensive Plan update. Our steering committee, Village committees, and local organizations will be reviewing a draft plan over the next several weeks. This plan will be available for the community to review before final approval, as well. Please keep an eye on our website, Facebook page, and The Pierce County Journal to learn when it is ready for review.

We are still on track for Board approval at the September Board Meeting which will allow us to use this as a tool as we create our 2023 budget.

The final plan will include goals for each of the nine essential elements (Issues and Opportunities, Housing, Transportation, Utilities and Community Facilities, Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources, Economic

Development, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Land Use, Implementation), along with steps on how to achieve them. A need for secondary plans may come out of the process (i.e. Complete Outdoor Recreation/Parks Plan, Downtown Design Guidelines, etc.)

Another benefit of having foundational plans is that they make us more competitive for grant opportunities. With budgets being as tight as they are, this opens up additional funding opportunities for our community.

Thank you to all who have assisted in this project by providing feedback. We truly are building a community plan!

Updates and data results can be found on our website: villageofellsworth.org/our-community/plan-2022

[PLAN] 2022

ELLSWORTH, WISCONSIN

Benefits in the Numbers

Our focus is on creating a proactive and empowering approach that will provide us some control over the development of the property, allowing us to decide what happens with that property in the future, how best to integrate it back into the neighborhood, and eventually recover our investment.

While no development plans have been selected, based on approximately 26 residential units (townhomes, fourplexes, etc.), the project would generate:

\$5-5.8 million

in additional tax value

\$98,000-120,000

in additional annual tax base

\$2.9 million

of additional household spending infused into our local economy

Celebrating National Night Out! Neighborhood Block Parties

Celebrate National Night Out with us on Tuesday, August 2, 2022!

National Night Out aims to build neighborhood camaraderie and enhance the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement with block parties hosted by residents.

We're seeking volunteers to host a party in their yard or on the street in their neighborhood. Officers will stop by each block party and meet the community. If you would like to host a block party, contact Jen at the Police Department at 715-273-3275 or email wagner@ellsworthpolice.org.

