

Update: The Old Junior High

Turning Our Largest Blighted Property Into a Productive Asset

Progress is being made on the Old Junior High site. The Village is currently working on a Site Assessment Grant through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation for funding which will assist in the demolition of the building. The Village is continuing to seek other funding sources for the demolition to reduce the total cost of the project as much as possible. The Village has contracted with an engineering firm, cbs2, to work with the Village on the site demolition process. They recently completed a material assessment and an asbestos abatement plan. This information will be used for the bidding doc-

uments for the demolition of the building, which will be used to attract a responsible company to complete the demolition and disposal of the structure. As the process continues you will likely see more activity on the site.

The Village's goal for the site continues to be for much-needed multi-family housing. All data continues to show that the Village has a significant housing shortage. Additional housing will allow the community and area businesses to grow. We encourage all of those interested to watch for future agendas related to the project and to attend upcoming meetings.



Frequently Asked Questions

Here's What You've Been Asking



What is happening at the old ShopKo building?

A property developer has purchased the property and is making updates to make the space more marketable. It is currently being used as warehousing for a company that is building a facility somewhere else, with plans to be moved within a year.

Now that the library is moved, what's the plan with the old library and the Senior Center?

We asked cbs² (engineering firm) to conduct an initial space study for the old library, Village Hall, and the new library's lower level. This initial study was done at no cost. Those results will go to our Finance, Buildings, and Purchasing Committee soon for discussion on the next steps. Once our Finance, Buildings, and Purchasing Committee has made their recommendation for the best use of current Village space, we will be working with the Senior Center to secure a location for them. The Senior Center is a great asset to our community and we want to support them and their mission.

I heard there are discussions about the Village becoming a 'sanctuary city' and having unauthorized immigrants live in the old junior high. Is that true?

There are no such discussions happening at the Village and the old junior high is not safe for human habitation.

COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

If you attended the successful Winter Walk in Cairns Woods in February, you surely saw Steve and Sherry Marson bustling around the event, leading volunteers and making sure everything went off without a hitch. The Winter Walk attracted over 200 families from in and around the Ellsworth community to enjoy a peaceful, lighted walk in the woods. Bonfires, smores, hot dogs, and cookies were also a much loved activity at the event—all for free.

The Marsons are active members of Ellsworth Trails, a group who inspires outdoor recreation in the community by creating safe and multipurpose trails. The group's first project was revitalization of the trails at Cairns Woods. The Marsons and other volunteers from the community have put in many hours into researching the trail network, clearing the trails, building and placing benches in the most scenic spots, and planning for future maintenance and routes to connect the trails to others in the community. We thank the Marsons for being Community Champions and for their work with Ellsworth Trails.



SPRING 2023

HOURS

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

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.

It Takes a Village

Message from Becky Beissel, President, Village of Ellsworth

Dear fellow community members,

It takes a lot of people, both inside municipal government and outside, to make a community run.

Within the Village Hall, a shoutout to our police dept who has been operating 2 officers shy of a full team since January. And a job well done to our public works department for their great work with snow removal this crazy winter season. There's been lots of progress happening in our administration office. And congratulations to our library on a successful first couple of months in their new space!

But municipal governments can't do it all and we rely on our local organizations and volunteers to join in to make Ellsworth a better community for all. We hosted our first Community Summit at the end of March. This was a recommendation that came out of our Comprehensive Plan, as an opportunity for all organizations (the Village, schools, churches, non-profits, etc.) to update each other on their current initiatives,



seek collaboration, and share successes so that we're all pulling together and in the same direction.

As I looked around the room at the Community Summit, I couldn't help but notice a lot of familiar faces. It should come as no surprise to see the same names and faces repeatedly. These folks are the movers and

shakers, the ones who are dedicating their time and talent to bettering our community for no personal gain. Their only motivation is to create a better place for those who live here. As a resident or stakeholder of Ellsworth, we should all be sure to recognize these individuals; we need them, we appreciate them, and we thank them.

I've decided to formally recognize these superstars by giving a "Community Champion" shoutout each quarter. They will be announced in our quarterly newsletters—starting this issue!

Wishing you all a warm, bright, and happy Spring!

Welcome to the Team!

Meet our Newest Hires at the Village of Ellsworth

Welcome, Kim Brummel!



Kim joined the Village of Ellsworth Police Department as our new Administrative Support personnel on March 13. We are happy to have Kim with us as the new friendly face to greet the public

at the Ellsworth Police Department window in the village office.

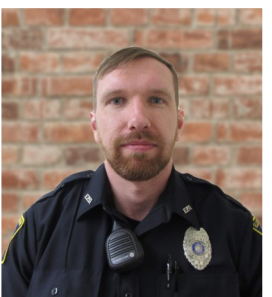
For the past 23 years, Kim worked in the finance department at Wiseway Transportation in Hudson, WI. She is looking forward to doing something totally different than what she has been doing and excited to be working in a field that she went to school for.

When Kim is not at work, she enjoys quilt

making and spending time with her three horses.

Welcome, Cody Tomlinson!

Please welcome Cody as a new patrol officer for the Village of



Continued...

Welcome to the Team (continued)

Ellsworth Police Department! Cody started with us on March 16.

Cody comes to us with 2.5 years of law enforcement experience as a patrol officer. He graduated from UW-River Falls with a bachelor's degree in criminology.

Cody is looking forward to building relationships within the community and doing his part to help keep Ellsworth a great place to live!

When Cody is not busy patrolling the streets of Ellsworth, he enjoys weightlift-

ing, cooking, and spending time with his dog.

Welcome, Marcy Kopp!

Marcy joined the Village of Ellsworth as our new Deputy Clerk in the village office on February 27.

As Deputy Clerk she will assist in a broad range of duties including cus-



tomers service, licensing, accounts receivable, and elections.

Marcy previously worked as the Day Report Center officer at the Pierce County Jail. She is excited to work with the small community that she has previously been a part of for years!

When she is not at work Marcy likes to spend time with her family and is excited to start the next chapter of building their small hobby farm.

Downtown Design Guidelines *Encouraging Consistent Standards in our Downtown Districts*

The need for design standards in our commercial areas was identified through the Village's Comprehensive Planning process. Many other communities have established design standards to promote a quality appearance and character of their downtowns. The Village would like to do the same and has teamed with UW-River Falls to begin working on developing Downtown Design Guidelines to improve and enhance the appearance of our downtown areas.

The objectives are to improve the downtown environment for residents and visitors, promote economic development, ensure that future investments support the community's vision for an attractive and inviting downtown, and promote community character. The guidelines will focus on the exterior appearance of a building and surrounding area and will be developed to work in conjunction with the Village Zoning Ordinance. The Village's goal is to develop standards that are functional and easy to follow. The Downtown Design Guidelines will target new construction as well as existing buildings that are making modifications. The implementation of Downtown Design Guidelines will not require a building

owner to make any changes at this time. When the building owner or tenant chooses to modify the building exterior they can use the established guidelines as a tool to comply with approved standards. Over time as buildings are modified the new standards will be implemented and the appearance of the designated areas will show the charac-



ter that the Downtown Design Guidelines promote.

Items that can be included in the Downtown Design Guidelines are windows, signage, parking, dumpster enclosures, wayfinding, lighting, landscaping, exterior colors/materials, and stormwater management. Districts will also need to be established, the design standards for Main Street and East End do not need to be identical. The uniqueness of each area can be en-

hanced through the standards. Residential areas will not be included. The Village recognizes that for the Downtown Design Guidelines to be truly effective, they need to be reasonable and not a burden to the building owners and tenants. Community support and buy-in will be very important. The Village will look for ways to make it easy for the guidelines to be implemented. Implementation guides and packets will be developed so that property owners will have examples and options as they start working on the building design. A variance process will be an option for those who need accommodations outside the approved guidelines.

The Village Community Development Authority (CDA) is spearheading the development. The CDA has begun evaluating existing conditions and analyzing community needs and desires. The Village is planning to have the new Downtown Design Guidelines approved by the end of the year. Public involvement will result in a better product for the community. We encourage all of those who are interested to attend meetings and provide input throughout the process.

Current Village Grant Applications

Pursuing Funding Resources to Assist in our Community Projects

We've been busy shaking the bushes to find funding for projects in our community.

Library Commons Project

These grants would fund the exterior landscaping and gathering space at the new library. The following grants have been submitted: Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (\$50,000) and we will hear the results on May 1. AARP Community Challenge (\$50,000) and we will hear the results on May 15. Kubota Hometown Proud (\$100,000) will be announced on July 1. Pierce County Health Healthy Spaces (\$20,000) will be submitted by April 30 and announced in June. We were also selected as a finalist for the Power of 100 Spring Impact Award (\$10,000) and will be presenting our project on April 13.

Village's 1st Annual Community Summit

Creating Connections and Collaboration



One of the recommendations in our Comprehensive Plan was to hold an annual "Community Summit. The purpose of the Summit is "...to bring together Village and local organizations to discuss issues and opportunities, identify projects to work towards, review Comp Plan progress, etc." In addition, this annual gathering will provide an opportunity for organizations in the community to get to know each other better and share their goals, projects, and future plans to uncover opportunities for collaboration.

We held our first Summit on March 28 with representation from over 20 organizations. The meeting kicked-off with a short welcome by President Becky Beissel on three types of people (from

Old Junior High Demolition

The Village has applied for the maximum amount available (\$150,000) for the Site Assessment Grant through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. We hope to hear the results in the coming weeks.

Grant/Piety/Strickland Street Infrastructure Project

The Village Board approved in February to pursue the Safe Drinking Water Loan/Grant Program for financial assistance to replace the aging water and sewer lines around the old junior high, Strickland, then Piety to Main, and also N. Grant Street. This could be a multi-million dollar grant. We should hear news later this summer.

the book Give and Take by Adam Grant);

Givers: They give more value than they are interested in receiving.

Takers: They take more value than they give.

Matchers: They like to keep score. Any value they give, they must receive back.

The session was an inspiring one as the room was full of Givers.

Representatives of each organization shared their organization's mission, current projects, and in some cases, wishes for the future. After the presentations, many stayed back to mingle and ask questions and share ideas for referrals. We have a lot of passionate and dedicated individuals in our community and if you have the heart of a giver, we encourage you to seek out an organization or project and get involved.

Thank you, Dale Hines!

Trustee Dale Hines concludes his service on the Village Board this month when the newly elected trustees take their seats.

We thank him for his time, talent, energy, and leadership on the Village Board for the last two years. The Village has seen some major shifts and changes and Dale's input, guidance, and thoughtfulness were invaluable.

Thank you, Angie Fisher!

Angie Fisher, our office assistant for the last five years and who recently transitioned into our Deputy Treasurer, has put in her resignation. Her last day will be April 6.

Angie was a jack-of-all-trades and quick to jump in and help wherever needed, always with a smile and a positive attitude.

She's been a critical team member through the transition we've seen in the Village Hall office these last few years. We will sure miss her and wish her all the best in her next chapter!

Coming Soon: Video Stream Meetings

We are working on technology upgrades in the Village Board Room which will allow us to video live-stream our board and committee meetings. Up to this point, we could only offer an audio experience to those attending virtually. We hope to have things set up by May. To virtually attend meetings, click the Zoom link in the meeting agendas on our website calendar.