

Update: The Old Junior High

Turning Our Largest Blighted Property Into a Productive Asset

Work continues at the Village as we plan to address the old junior high site. As a recap:

The Village is working with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation to apply for a Site Assessment Grant for up to \$150,000 that could be used towards environmental site assessments, asbestos abatement, demolition, etc.

Our Community Development Authority has determined the goals of redevelopment to be: to increase housing stock, to fit within the neighborhood/community, and to produce enough tax base to pay back the TID.

Further discussions are pointing towards a mixed development project consisting of townhomes and a small 2-story apartment building. The development would be geared towards middle-income residents (annual household incomes from \$45,000-\$115,000).

We're also looking into the infrastructure surrounding this property. The wastewater pipes are 100 years old. We knew they would need to be updated regardless of this project. We are pursuing the Safe Drinking Water Loan/Grant Program for financial assistance with this project.



Join Our Team!

Are You Looking for a New Career in the New Year?

The Village of Ellsworth offers employees a wide range of benefits: health & dental insurance, health savings account contributions, Wisconsin Retirement System pension, paid holidays, and generous PTO. Come join our team!

We are currently hiring for the following positions: Deputy Clerk (full-time), Police Department Admin Assistant (part-time), Police Sergeant (full-time), Police Officer (full-time), Police Officers (part-time).

Learn more on our website at www.villageofellsworth.org/employment-opportunities

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.


What is the plan with the old library building?

Our Finance, Buildings, and Purchasing Committee will be meeting soon to discuss Village owned property/buildings and the best use of space. If it is determined that it is best to sell that property we plan to use a more hands-on business recruitment method to ensure the right business goes into the property.

What will happen to the Senior Center?

Once our Finance, Buildings, and Purchasing Committee has made their recommendation for the best use of the current library building, 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.

When will the new library finally open?

We're so glad you asked. You all are invited to the Grand Opening! More details can be found here. 



ELLSWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

GRAND Opening EVENTS

• MONDAY • JANUARY 23rd	RIBBON CUTTING 6PM Milestone takes place on front step. LIBRARY TOURS 6PM-8PM Learn about our library's newest areas and amenities from Friends and library staff.
• SATURDAY • JANUARY 28th	CHILDREN & FAMILIES OPEN HOUSE 10AM-12PM Experience the new RCU Children's Area and WESTconsin Storytime Playspace with stories, activities, treats, and crafts.

ELLSWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY
388 West Main Street, Ellsworth, WI



VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH

Newsletter

WINTER 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.

A Time For Reflection

Message from Becky Beissel, President, Village of Ellsworth

Dear fellow community members,

I hope you all had a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season.

As one year ends and another begins it's always a good time for reflection; what did we accomplish, what can we celebrate, how can we improve, and what are our goals for the new year? As a community, we did some pretty notable things last year that are worth celebrating! It feels like we are gaining some traction and I have no doubt that 2023 will be even more impressive. Who's excited?!

We tackled a lot of planning in 2022, completing the update of our Comprehensive Plan. The planning continues in 2023 with a Complete Outdoor Recreation Plan (COR Plan). There's the ongoing joke about plans gathering dust on a shelf. I prefer the quote "if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail" from my good friend, Benjamin Franklin. I can assure you that at the Village, we're committed to using these plans as our path forward. Having such plans are also a common requirement when applying for grants, which we plan to do much more of in the future.

We'll be teaming up with the folks at Mississippi River



Regional Planning Commission for our COR Plan. And again, there will be opportunities for you to be involved as we gather input, feedback, and ideas. This COR Plan will then lead into the creation of a Parks Plan in 2024. Pickleball, anyone?

I want to emphasize that we're doing all this hard work as a community. Residents, Ellsworth Arts, Ellsworth Trails, the

Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, our local churches, and other local organizations are all working on making this a better community. Thank you, all!

On a more personal note...

I received a call from Jerry Deschane, Executive Director of the League of Wisconsin Municipalities last month telling me I was nominated to join their Board of Directors. It was quite the honor knowing that I was nominated by one of my peers in the state (Mayors, Presidents, Administrators, etc)! I did decline at this time, knowing that my attention will be best spent here in our community.

I can't wait to see what the year brings!

A Look Back on 2022

Planning, Changes, and Forward Progress

As we wrap up another year we wanted to take a moment to look back on what we've accomplished at the Village of Ellsworth in 2022. Some items are more exciting than others but all are necessary as we continue to progress forward.

Work Began on the New Library

Work began in earnest on our new library building in April. A big thank you to Library Director, Tiffany Meyer, the Library Board, the Library Building Ad Hoc Committee, and the Construction Oversight Committee for

the time and dedication in seeing this project through.

Main Street Project

We all celebrated our newly resurfaced Main Street (and colored crosswalks!) this spring. Not only is it more smooth to drive on, but it instantly improved the look of our downtown. Plus, the project came in under budget (WI DOT pays for the driving lanes, Village pays for the parking lanes).

Continued next page...



Residents voting for their top priorities during one of the Comp Plan Town Hall Meetings.

A Look Back on 2022 (continued)

Isabelle Creek Bank Restoration Project

We took advantage of the Water Quality Trade for Phosphorus Program through the DNR to shape and place rip rap (fabric and rock) along 1375 feet of the Isabelle Creek to protect it from further erosion. This gives us credits to apply to our phosphorous limits when discharging.

New Sidewalks

The current state of our sidewalks ranked as one of the top concerns by residents during our Comp Plan feedback sessions. The Village installed 2159 square feet of new sidewalk in 2022, with more planned for 2023!



A portion of the Isabelle Creek bank was shaped and rip-rapped this summer.

Micro Surfacing Project

We resurfaced 47,000 square yards of Village streets this year. While this was a slight inconvenience for residents, the benefits are great—and a good investment of your tax dollars. By doing this slurry project we are able to extend the life of our streets by several years.

Purchase of the Old Junior High Building

The Village of Ellsworth was able to acquire the property at 254 S Chestnut Street. This was the first step in ensuring a more productive (and safe) use of the property in the future.

Village Staff

We implemented a staff restructuring at the Village with the hiring of our new Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer, Brad Roy, in September. The Board also voted on the creation of two new positions in our office; a Deputy Clerk and a Deputy Treasurer. The Deputy Treasurer position was filled by our current office assistant, Angie Fisher. We hope to hire for the Deputy Clerk position this month.

Updated Comprehensive Plan

After six hundred survey responses, three



Village of Ellsworth purchased the blighted old junior high property with ARPA funds in August.

town hall meetings, five focus group meetings, and several steering committee meetings the Village Board approved the community's updated Comprehensive Plan in October. Just in time to incorporate some of the plan goals into our 2023 budget.

New Employee Handbook

A lot has changed since the last full revision of the employee handbook in 2012. Our Village department heads and staff worked with a consultant to create a handbook that is current with today's human resource best practices and reflective of our dedication to becoming an employer of choice.

Where Do Our Property Taxes Go?

How Annual Property Taxes are Distributed

We get it—none of us like to see that bill come at the end of the year. The state of Wisconsin has established the means to fund local entities (municipalities, counties, and schools) through property taxes.

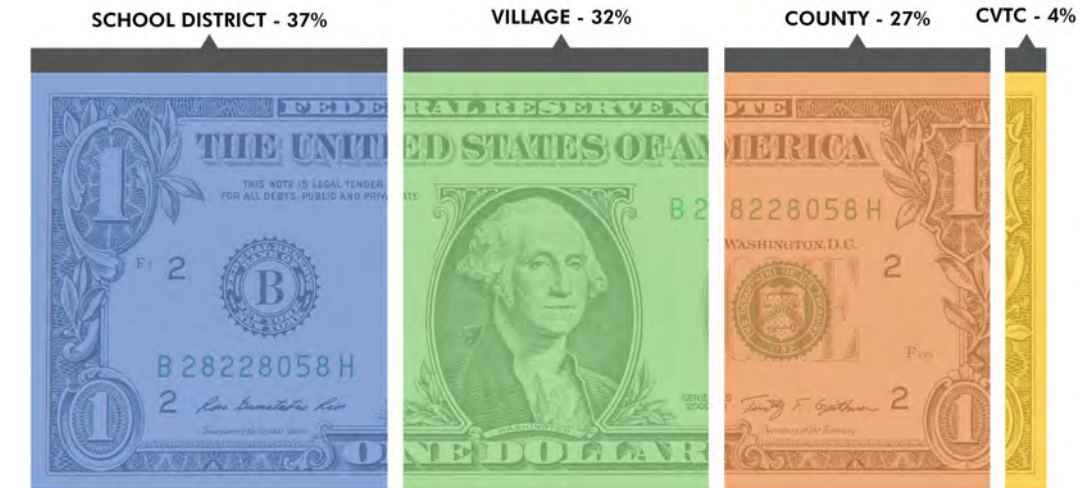
Here in the Village of Ellsworth, your property tax bill is divided among:

Ellsworth School District (37%) used for operations of our public schools, such as salaries, busing, curriculum, and electricity.

Village of Ellsworth (32%) used for things such as employee salaries, streets, snow plowing, parks, and our police department.

Pierce County (27%) used for operations and services at the County such as county roads, Sheriff's Dept, Nugget Lake, and salaries.

Chippewa Valley Technical College (4%) used for operations of our regional technical college for things such as salaries, curriculum, and training.



Looking Forward to 2023 Where We Plan to Focus This Year

With the Village Board approval of our updated Comprehensive Plan in October, the Board had a guide to follow when determining how to prioritize projects for 2023. Here's some of our top projects:

New Library Opening

First up, we're finally opening our shiny new library! Quite literally a decade in the making, we're happy to finally be to this point. What a testament to what this community is capable of – \$2 million in private funding was raised to make this project a reality.

Development Plan for Old Junior High

We have the building, we have an idea of the type of development that would be best for the area. The next step is finding a developer and getting a demolition plan in place. A project update can be found on the back page of this newsletter.

Review/Update Village Ordinances

We will be teaming up with Chris Holtkamp and team once again to tackle a complete review of our Village Ordinances. As with anything, it's good to give them a fresh look

from time to time. Special focus will be given to zoning, historic preservation, land division and subdivision regulations, and floodplain ordinances to effectively align the Village ordinances with the Comprehensive Plan and ensure future development meets community priorities and values.

Complete Outdoor Recreation Plan

There were many requests in our Comprehensive Plan feedback for a more strategic and expansive approach to our parks and outdoor recreation offerings here in Ellsworth. The first step in addressing this is to create a Complete Outdoor Recreation (COR) Plan. We'll be teaming up with our partners at Mississippi River Regional Planning Commission as a more cost-effective way to create this plan. They'll be starting early this year by conducting surveys, etc in the community. Having a COR Plan will set us up to complete a Parks Plan in 2024 and also allow us to apply for recreation type grants.

Grant Opportunities

We're going to be more aggressive with

grant applications in the future as a way to make our municipal budget stretch further. There are a few grant opportunities we're excited to pursue in 2023. We are applying for the Vibrant Spaces Grant through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). This is a \$50,000 placemaking grant that, if received, would finish the

exterior activity space of the new library. We also have two Main Street properties looking to utilize WEDC Community Development Investment Grants. This is a 3:1 matching grant to be used for renovations. We're excited for these possible investments in our downtown. And finally, we're working with our engineer partners to apply for the Safe

Water Drinking Loan/Grant Program to address the aging water and sewer infrastructure on N Grant St, S Piety St, and around the old junior high area.

Live-Streaming Village Meetings

Since COVID, the Village of Ellsworth has been offering an audio option as a way to virtually attend our meetings. While this has worked as a temporary fix we feel a video option will offer a better experience for attendees going forward. Stay tuned for more information once it becomes available.

Community Summit

It was recommended in our Comprehensive Plan to consider hosting an annual 'Community Summit' to bring together the Village and local organizations to discuss issues and opportunities, identify projects to partner on and work towards, review Comp Plan progress, etc. We hope to plan our first summit meeting sometime this Spring. You all will be invited so watch for more details.



Concept drawing for placemaking space (under former drive-thru) for the Vibrant Spaces Grant.

Snow Removal



Commercial and residential property owners are responsible for shoveling sidewalks adjoining their businesses/homes within 24 hours of any snow event.

Dog Licenses



All dogs 5 months of age or older must be licensed annually. All dog licenses expire December 31 of the year they were issued.

Fees are:

Before March 31: \$10 for an altered animal and \$12 for unaltered animal

After April 1: \$15 for an altered animal and \$17 for unaltered animal

New residents and pet owners have a 30-day grace period to license your pets.

Spring Election



The Village President seat and three Trustee seats are up for re-election/election in spring 2023.

Each of these seats are for a two-year term. The deadline for filing nomination papers was January 3. Here's who you'll see on the ballot:

President

Becky Beissel, Incumbent

Trustees

Lance Austin, Incumbent

Ryan Bench

Andrew Borner, Incumbent

Tom Schutz

The Spring Election takes place on Tuesday, April 4, 2023.

Trustee Dale Hines has decided not to re-run this election term. We thank him for his time, talent, energy, and leadership on the Village Board the last two years. His term ends in April when the newly elected Trustees take their seats.