

## **Town of Verona, Annual Town Meeting, April 17, 2018**

### **Minutes**

The ANNUAL TOWN MEETING for the Town of Verona was held on Tuesday, April 17, 2018 at the Town Hall, 7669 County Highway PD. Although at the same location and time as the prior year, the Town posted meeting notices at Miller and Sons Grocery, the Verona Public Library, and the Verona Town Hall. The date was included in the annual newsletter mailed to the billing addresses on property tax bills mailed December 12, 2017. A meeting date reminder was emailed to subscribers of the Town of Verona listserv several times and posted to the Town of Verona website.

Staff present: Planner/Administrator Amanda Arnold and Clerk/Treasurer John Wright

Town of Verona Board Supervisors present: Manfred Enburg, Mike Duerst, Doug Maxwell, and Chair Mark Geller

Others: See sign in sheet. Twenty-nine people were present (not counting non-residents Arnold and Wright); however, not all signed in and Chair Geller abstained from all votes. Geller noted that the Annual Town Meeting is set by State Statute to convene on the third Tuesday of April each year for the 1,253 Towns in the State of Wisconsin. Geller noted that this is a meeting for and run by the qualified electorate of the Town of Verona.

Call to Order – Town Chair Mark Geller called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. He introduced himself and the Chair of the Plan Commission and 4<sup>th</sup> Supervisor Douglas Maxwell, EMS Commission member and 2<sup>nd</sup> Town Board Supervisor Mike Duerst, Public Works Committee Chair and 3<sup>rd</sup> Supervisor Manfred Enburg, Planner/Administrator Amanda Arnold, and the Clerk/Treasurer John Wright. He noted that Enburg and Maxwell had just been re-elected to the Town Board for another 2-year term.

Geller gave a brief history of the Township: it was established 171 years ago, and like many towns in the state was originally thirty-six miles in area. He touched briefly upon the diminishing size of the Town due to City annexation. Towns, Geller noted, provide for the public health and safety of its residents in addition to managing elections, public records, and taxation.

**Motion:** Mike Duerst of 7309 Riverside Road moved to approve the minutes from the April 18, 2017 Annual Town Meeting; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Mathies of 3121 Nor Del Hill Road. **Action:** A simple voice vote had a majority in attendance in favor with none in opposition. Motion carried.

Chair Geller, without objection, gave a review of accomplishments. He noted the approval by the qualified electorate in 2016 to authorize the Board to sell residual acreage at the current site, to sell the property at 335 N. Nine Mound, and to use those proceeds to fund the construction of a new Town Hall, Salt Shed, and Public Works Building. The new facilities were occupied by Town staff on February 1, 2017 and the old site and buildings sold in August of the same year; all of this was accomplished without incurring debt. Geller observed that the new community center space has been rented and used for a variety of social and educational functions since its construction, including a practicum conducted by the new Fitchrona EMS Chief Patrick Anderson on the proper use of the Town's AED (Automated External Defibrillator). He noted the pollinator garden on the west side of the building that was planted and is maintained by the local FFA group; the rest of the site has been prepared and seeded for a prairie restoration thanks to the help of thirty local volunteers. This fall, an association of local landscapers will install plantings in front of the hall for their annual community project.

Chair Geller then gave a report on updates to the Town of Verona Comprehensive Plan, finances, and future planning. The projected completion will be around the first week of June this year; it will be a guiding document for the Town for the next ten years. The Plan update is timely, it was observed, because of an increase in new home starts and housing plans. Geller noted that residents, Town Board, Commission, committee, and staff members met twice to establish a Vision Statement and a set of Guiding Principles.

He then read the Statement and Principles aloud. There followed a brief review of the 2017 annual audit prepared by Johnson Block. Financially, Geller observed, revenues and expenses have been fairly flat for the past six or seven years with notable spikes in spending for the completion of the new site and associated buildings. Due to the lack of debt, the Town has a current borrowing capacity of approximately \$15 million. It was noted that property taxes continue to be the main source of income and the maintenance and reconstruction of roads the major ongoing expense. This year, a large portion of the Capital Roads budget is dedicated to replacement of the Old PB bridge. The Public Works Committee has continued to develop a Capital Improvement Plan that includes the implementation of best practices that reduces costs while extending the life of local roads. Town of Verona Planner/Administrator Amanda Arnold reviewed highlights within the financial summary for 2017. A copy of the current audit can be found here: <http://www.town.verona.wi.us/government/budgets-and-financials/>. Chair Geller then turned over the meeting to the qualified electorate at 7:24 PM.

Dave Lonsdorf of 1717 Beach Drive asked whether the tax income generated by new homes would likely exceed the expenses associated with increased costs of road maintenance, Town staff time, etc. Clerk/Treasurer John Wright stated that municipal levy limits that have been in place since 2006 were instituted in large part to assure that new growth was overall financially neutral regarding the local mill rate (the local tax rate charged per thousand dollars of assessed valuation). However, the relationship between new homes and the local levy is more complicated than one might think. Wright noted that he created a table that was included in the 2018 proposed budget that detailed the relationship of the many variables involved: <http://www.town.verona.wi.us/images-docs/2012/08/2018-Narrative-Budget.pdf>. There followed a brief discussion of the Woods at Watch Hill, Driftless Ridge, Deer Haven, and Fox Hill condo plats. Manfred Enburg of 7710 Riverside Road suggested that Town staff develop a spreadsheet that includes new homes, their valuation, and what year the improved value was or will be added to the tax base. It was noted that the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission may be able to provide some data that Town staff may be challenged to compile on their own.

Lonsdorf stated that his basic question was still left unanswered. Doug Maxwell of 11691 Mid Town Road stated that a new \$1 million dollar home would generate \$3,000 in local taxes if the mill rate is \$3.00 per thousand (note: the current Town of Verona mill rate for 2017 pay 2018 taxes is \$3.79 per thousand valuation). Maxwell further pointed out that roads within condominium plats are private, so the Town has no costs associated with their construction or maintenance and that wear of Town roads is typically attributable to non-residents passing through our community. To illustrate his point, Maxwell noted that there are seven Town residences on Whalen Road; however, the average daily traffic count on that road is 3,800. Enburg observed that existing residents, not just those new to the community, have been requesting more services. How then, does the Town provide more services with a restricted local levy to keep up with increased expectations?

John Senseman of 3199 Shady Oak Lane wanted to know the opinion of newly-elected City of Verona Mayor Luke Diaz towards the proposed Legend's End development. It was noted that the City of Verona developed a North Neighborhood Plan in response to a developer's (later Geller confirmed as Pan Capital LLC owned by Melissa Wee and Ken Keryluk) proposal in spite of this approximately 600 acres of land being in Area B of the City and Town of Verona Intergovernmental Agreement approved in 2016 to define growth. Area A is a growth area for the City that is to be uncontested by the Town; whereas Area B is a potential growth area for either the Town or the City. Chair Geller noted he was proud of Town of Verona

resident participation in the discussion of the North Neighborhood Plan at the City. The Legends Edge proposal includes two 300 unit apartments and a 350 unit hotel in addition to some commercial development that would include a grocery store. Chair Geller noted he has reached out to Mayor Diaz and hopes to meet soon; Geller met previously with former Mayor Hockhammer. Tom Mathies of 3121 Nor Del Hill Road reported that the original allowable building height of 100' proposed for Legend's Edge was reduced to 65' in February of this year.

Steve Sheets of 6362 Goose Lake Drive wanted to know whether hearsay regarding purchase of the Wingra Stone gravel pits on County Highway PD by Epic Systems, Inc. had any merit. Chair Geller stated that he meets quarterly with representatives from Epic and they had not expressed an interest in that land. He further noted that Wingra President Bob Shea is supportive of the Legend's Edge proposal. Lonsdorf questioned who would be responsible for ensuring that a former quarry is adequately remediated. Would it be Dane County, the DNR, or some other agency? Kevin Farrell of 7440 Rolling Meadow Road asked about the geographic location of the Northwest Neighborhood Plan; in response, Arnold pointed it out on a projected map of the area. Wright reported that the paperwork has been submitted by the City of Verona to the Town of Verona to annex approximately 198 acres comprising the North Neighborhood Plan. Most of the property is in agricultural use, but there are two residences that will also be lost to the City. The City plans to install streets and other services for a mix of residential and commercial development.

Jim Kinney of 6953 Rock Ridge Court noted that the land within the Northwest Neighborhood Plan is in proximity with the City of Madison and just as likely to be annexed by Madison if Verona does not annex it first. Chair Geller conjectured that it would be more costly for the City of Madison to provide services to that same area than it would for the City of Verona. Kinney stated that exercising the Purchase of Development Rights from property owners bordering both cities could slow annexation of Town properties. Mike Duerst asked about the ownership of the sewer interceptor line that was installed north of Epic's campus which now extends to County Highway PD. Wright responded that this was a long-range plan by Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District to construct this extension. There followed a brief discussion about Town residential development of land at a density of 2.0 acres compared with the higher density that would be allowed if the same land was to be annexed by either city.

**Motion:** Mike Duerst moved to increase the compensation for the Town Chair from \$6,000 to \$7,500 per year; 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jim Kinney. **Discussion:** Several residents in attendants expressed their appreciation to current Town Chair Geller for the many hours he has dedicated to the position. **Action:** A simple voice vote had a majority in attendance in favor with none in opposition. Motion carried. It was noted that the change would not be effective until the third Tuesday of April, 2019.

**Motion:** Dave Lonsdorf moved to appoint a Town weed commissioner; 2<sup>nd</sup> Manfred Enburg. **Discussion:** Chair Geller expressed his interest in considering a Public Works Director for the Town who could oversee noxious weeds or appoint a weed commissioner. Lonsdorf noted that if the Town were to mow two weeks earlier, seeds would not set and weeds could be kept to a minimum along the Town rights-of-way. Tom Mathies stated that he thinks education would be more effective than enforcement through penalties. Mike Duerst was supportive of a second Town Patrolperson to assure more effective mowing. **Action:** Upon Lonsdorf's request and agreement with Enburg as the second, the Town Chair allowed the motion to be withdrawn. Lonsdorf requested that the Town develop a plan to address noxious weeds and to present the plan at the Annual Meeting in 2019; without objection.

Jim Kinney stated that he has been a resident of the Town for 15 years. He noted that with consent, a City can annex territory that is contiguous with their corporate boundary and there is no recourse for a Town to oppose. He continued that in his opinion, our current Patrolman is not adequately supervised. He contended that the Patrolman had an incident with a resident while removing trees within the Town right-of-way near Timber Lane and Mid Town Road; this could not be corroborated at the meeting. Shirley Maurer of 7399 County Highway PD reported that Dane County Highway required her to relocate a tree two feet further into their property because of its proximity to the County right-of-way. She wondered if the Town would be so particular. Kinney asked about the location of an obstruction within the Town right-of-way discussed at a regular Town Board meeting he attended recently; Chair Geller responded that he believes it was a block wall. Geller agreed to contact Kinney with the location at a future date.

There was brief discussion regarding the parking of vehicles along Town road rights-of-way. Wright gave a brief summary of the rights of a Town to order the removal of encroachments within the road right-of-way which were incorporated into newly adopted Chapter 6 Highways. However, Wright continued, a vehicle is not considered as an encroachment since it is not a fixed object. Jim Kinney noted that trees along County Road PD present a sight line hazard when attempting to turn to the left or right from Country View Road. Sherry Waldhart of 1667 Borchert Road asked where the proposed Deer Haven Estates is located. The entrance would be approximately opposite Beach Road off of Sunset and to the north.

**Action:** Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.

Approved:

Minutes Prepared by: John Wright with review by Amanda Arnold