



**Village of River Hills**  
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River Hills, WI 53217

Village Hall: 352-8213  
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March 6, 2023 [North Shore Neighbors }

Happy Spring to the residents of River Hills. The purpose of this column is to provide regular updates to the Village on developments at Village Hall and other actions taken by the Village Board. So here goes:

### **THE GROVE**

Probably the biggest project that the Village Board, the Plan Commission, our Village Manager, Tammy LaBorde, and our professional advisors have undertaken is securing water for the 51 homes that will be built by Cornerstone Development on the 53 acre property on Brown Deer Road that the Village owns. I am pleased to tell you that the Village has negotiated and signed agreements with the City of Mequon and the Mequon Water Utility to bring water to the northwest corner of the property, which will be available for the homeowners at The Grove. The final steps in this process will be to obtain approvals and permits from the Public Service Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

The Village is responsible for building the water system, which will be operated by the Mequon Water Utility, with a line snaking through the University School of Milwaukee campus up to County Line Road. This will allow USM to satisfy their water needs using Lake Michigan water rather than pumping water from wells scattered around their property. This should be a big win for neighbors of USM as we have heard reports of declining water quality and pressure from the extensive pumping that the school does and it was likely to get worse. The Plan Commission and the Village Board approved the required zoning changes and the amendment to

the Comprehensive Plan at meetings held in October and January, respectively, following a public hearing on the proposals.

Cornerstone has been working on landscape designs, engineering work, infrastructure construction and stormwater and lighting plans, and continues to be extremely excited about the prospects for the development. We hope to close on the sale of the land to Cornerstone by the end of May.

### **OTHER UPDATES**

In other news at Village Hall, here are some actions taken by the Village Board, upcoming projects and a couple of other tidbits.

(1) The Village was allocated roughly \$150,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds from the federal government, which were designated for very specific and limited uses. After talks among Village staff and at the recommendation of Tammy and our Superintendent of Public Works, Craig Schroeder, the Village Board authorized the installation of solar panels on the roof of Village Hall at a cost of roughly \$127,000 and to use the balance of the ARPA funds to install video and audio equipment in the Village Board room and make premium payments to employees who worked through the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. My thanks to Trustee Jon “Ike” Isaacson for his research and advice to Craig and our vendor, Arch Solar. We have some minor roof repairs to do to accommodate the solar panels and once that is completed, the panels should go up, hopefully by the end of May. We project that these panels will generate sufficient power to meet the needs of Village Hall and at times, to provide a surplus to the grid.

(2) The Board authorized the expenditure of \$2,500 to remove the overgrown arbor vitae surrounding Village Hall and replacing it with native, low maintenance shrubs that flower at different times. Before the new plantings are done, Village Hall is slated to be repainted.

(3) We had almost 40% of our registered voters vote in the February primary, which is a remarkable number for that type of election although the Wisconsin Supreme Court Race attracted a lot of attention and drove voter turnout. Dan Knodl received 70% of the Republican vote in the race to succeed State Senator Alberta Darling while Jodi Habush Sinykin was unopposed on the Democratic side of the ballot. Janet Protasiewicz received 54% of the vote in the non-partisan race for Supreme Court Justice, while Jennifer Dorow secured 28% and Dan Kelly 12%. This compares to the November turnout of 85% where the referendum on the increase in the tax levy passed with 58% of our voters in favor of the increase. Thank you for your support.

(4) Tammy and I have been working with our colleagues in the other Milwaukee County municipalities and with the League of Wisconsin Municipalities to fix our broken system of funding local governments. There are a number of proposals in the Governor's budget that would increase the amount of shared revenue. Currently, our Village only receives \$20,000 in shared revenue funds from the State. The County and all 19 of the Milwaukee County cities and villages are having the same fiscal challenges as River Hills, so something needs to be done to allow our communities to continue to provide the services that residents need. There is some optimism among the government relations folks at the League that something will come out of the budget negotiations given the size of the State's surplus. Stay tuned...

(5) The Board of Trustees approved moving forward with building a new and improved Village website at our February meeting. Thanks to the efforts of Trustees Jamie Evans and Peggy Russo, with an invaluable assist from Stacie Nelson, our Deputy Clerk, we have retained CivicPlus to design and implement the new site. The website team looked at proposals from several vendors and reviewed websites of municipalities around the Milwaukee

Metropolitan Area and CivicPlus stood out among all others, not only in terms of the quality of the websites but the cost of the work. The new website should be up and running in the next three to four months. When it goes live, we will send around an email to Village residents through Constant Contact.

(6) Speaking of which, please take a minute to go to the Village website, <https://riverhillswi.com/>, and click on the “Sign Up” link in the upper right hand corner of the home page and provide us with your email address. This is the best way for us to communicate with Village residents on everything of importance.

(7) A Village-wide reassessment of property values will be performed in 2023. This is required by State statute any time the ratio of assessed value to fair market value is less than 90%, and we’ve been under 90% for several years. The Village Assessor, Tyler Technologies, began its work in March and new assessments will be mailed out in early June with a description of your appeal rights if you disagree with the Assessor’s valuation.

(8) Finally, let me address the headaches with I-43 construction. I know how disruptive the DOT’s work on expanding the Interstate from two lanes to three lanes from Silver Spring Drive to Grafton has been and it is having an impact on many of our residents on Green Tree Road and along Pheasant Lane. The Village is trying to do what it can and working with our State Representative, Deb Andraca, to minimize the impact, but all of what is happening is out of our hands. I guess it’s the price to pay for progress...I’m old enough to remember visits to my Grandmother when you could drive west on Bradley Road from Lake Drive to the Milwaukee River, crossing what was then US Highway 141.

(9) At our March meeting, the Village Board approved the adoption of an ordinance to address the problem of dead and decaying ash trees. These ‘nuisance trees,’ as you have

probably observed, are falling all over the Village and are threatening our communications and electrical lines. The ordinance authorizes Tammy and Craig to identify these types of trees and to notify the homeowner to remove the tree. If it is not done by the homeowner, the ordinance authorizes DPW to take down the tree and charge the cost of the removal to the homeowner.

As always, feel free to reach out to me or any of the other Village Trustees if you have any questions or concerns about what is going on in the Village.

Best,

Chris Noyes

Enclosure