



Sheboygan County ***Planning & Conservation Department***

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Director

Aaron C. Brault

February 28, 2018

The Honorable County Board of Supervisors and
County Administrator Adam Payne
508 New York Avenue
Sheboygan, WI 53081

Dear Sheboygan County Leadership,

The year 2017 was successful for the Planning & Conservation Department as it was involved in a number of projects and programs that benefited the County's entire population. The Department also ended the year with a positive budget variance of approximately \$33,000.

Conservation staff, with our partner, the Elkhart Lake Improvement Association, successfully garnered support from area landowners to install a phosphorus reduction project on a large tile line system in 2017. This project was the first of its kind in Wisconsin, and one of only a few in the United States. Though we were only able to secure two samples prior to the winter months, results look promising thus far. We were able to secure 3 years' worth of funding to complete monthly sampling so we will have a good dataset to measure success long-term. In addition, staff helped protect the County's water resources even further by designing and installing one manure storage structure, 1.1 acres of grassed waterway, 6.08 acres of buffer, two heavy-use cattle lanes, and one wildlife wetland scrape.

The Department continued to help facilitate economic growth in the community. In 2017, the Department completed a \$400,000 brownfield assessment grant that ultimately helped spur approximately \$30 million in redevelopment projects. In addition, the Department was successful in obtaining an additional \$300,000 grant to continue environmental assessments on potential redevelopment opportunities. Though only two months into the new grant cycle, the Department has lined up eight properties, all actively being considered for redevelopment, for assessment work.

Lastly, the Department began to work with the City of Plymouth, Plymouth Generations, the Sheboygan County Fair, and a local landowner on a potential multi-segment trail system to utilize funding now available from a portion of a project in the City of Sheboygan that will no longer move forward per a decision by the Common Council.

As with every year, we have no doubt faced many challenges and opportunities in the Planning & Conservation Department. Your support and continued dedication to the County's natural resources helps make all of our successes possible.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'A. Brault'.

Aaron Brault, Director

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Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities

The Planning & Conservation Department is committed to providing sound information and knowledge on environmental issues that affect our community, protecting our County's natural resources, and, first and foremost, working with the public which we serve in a straightforward, honest approach.

Planning Division Responsibilities

- Administer and enforce the *Sheboygan County Sanitary Ordinance*.
- Administer and enforce the *Sheboygan County Shoreland and Floodplain Ordinances*.
- Administer and enforce the *Sheboygan County Subdivision Ordinance*.
- Administer and enforce the *Sheboygan County Parks & Recreation Facilities Ordinance*.
- Administer and enforce the County's Sanitary Maintenance program.
- Administer the County's Household Hazardous Waste program.
- Administer the County's Waste Pharmaceutical Collection program.
- Coordinate the implementation of the Federal Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot program that provides up to \$25 million for the development of a nonmotorized transportation network throughout the County.
- Administer State recreation grant-in-aid funds including the Snowmobile Funds, Fish-And-Game Aids, Stewardship, and other grant programs for which we qualify as they become available.
- Administer programs to comply with the State Farmland Preservation Program.
- Develop and maintain emergency response mapping for emergency responders in the County.
- Administer *Uniform Rural Numbering System Ordinance*, and maintain accurate address mapping throughout the County.
- Maintain, coordinate, and oversee the daily operation and management of County recreational facilities including the Old Plank Road Trail, Interurban Trail, Shoreland 400 Rail Trail, Broughton Sheboygan Marsh Park, Gerber Lake Wildlife Area, Amsterdam Dunes, and boat access sites at Gerber Lake, Jetzer's Lake, Crystal Lake, Little Elkhart Lake, and Elkhart Lake.
- Maintain Geographic Information System data for the County including parcels, roads, navigability, hydrology, shoreland and floodplain jurisdictional boundaries, voting wards, school and other administrative districts, and zoning.
- Administer the recreational fee program.
- Provide planning and mapping assistance to local communities and other County departments.
- Maintain and revise components of the mandated County's comprehensive plan.
- Administer the County's Stewardship grant program.
- Assist in administering the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for the County.
- Administer the Public Snowmobile Trail Program.
- Administer the US Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Assessment Grant.
- Maintain Plat of Survey database and an index for surveys that have been filed.

Conservation Division Responsibilities

- Administer the County's *Water Quality Improvement Program*, providing contracting and installation of vegetated buffer strips and other approved conservation practices to help improve Sheboygan County's waters.
- Administer the County's *Land and Water Resource Management Program* providing survey, design, construction and cost-share assistance funds to County landowners to install conservation practices to reduce soil erosion and improve water quality.
- Coordinate the County's compliance with mandated State Administrative Code NR-216 Phase II for stormwater management.
- Administer compliance in the Farmland Preservation Program to ensure that the 291 participating landowners in Sheboygan County are in compliance with the County's soil erosion standards on approximately 50,000 acres of cropland. In the most recent tax year available, these landowners received a total of \$363,785 in income tax credits (averages \$1,250 in Sheboygan County).

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- Administer and enforce *County Chapter 75-Erosion Control & Stormwater Management Ordinance* requiring permits for erosion control and stormwater management plans for any land disturbance over one acre in the unincorporated areas of Sheboygan County.
- Administer and enforce *County Chapter 78-Nonmetallic Mining Reclamation Regulations* by reviewing, approving, and permitting reclamation plans for nonmetallic mines.
- Administer and enforce the state-mandated *County Chapter 77-Animal Waste Storage* permitting new animal waste storage facilities, feedlots, animal waste facility closures, and any modifications to these facilities to ensure applicable County, State, and Federal standards are followed.
- Coordinate the Tree and Shrub Program, encouraging tree and shrub plantings in the County. Over 64,000 trees and shrubs were sold in 2017, which is about 9,000 more than the prior year, to over 740 landowners. Over one million trees & shrubs have been sold since 1997.
- Review Subdivision Plats for compliance with Sheboygan County's Erosion Control and Stormwater Management Ordinance.
- Provide technical service and conservation planning assistance to landowners and units of government.
- Coordinate the Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program.
- Provide technical assistance to United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Environmental Quality Incentive Program, and the Local Workgroup.
- Assist in coordinating the yearly well water drinking water testing program.
- Serve as the lead investigative unit for Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) in responding to complaints regarding manure structure failures or manure/bio-solid spreading violations; also, enforce compliance with Nutrient Management Plans.
- Serve as the primary implementation agency to assure compliance with NR-151, WDNR's non-point pollution rule.

Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2017

- Installed the State's first phosphorus-reducing filter bed, meant to improve water quality of Elkhart Lake by treating agriculture drain tile flow leading to it.
- Design was completed on the utility corridor pathway, the latest – but long-sought – project underway through the Nonmotorized Program.
- Issued nine Erosion Control and Stormwater Management permits, approximately the same amount as in 2016, per Chapter 75.
- The Department, in partnership with the Nature Conservancy and with funding from the Kohler Trust for Preservation, completed the installation phase of the Sheboygan River Agricultural Project. In 2017, two streambank buffers totaling 3.8 acres were established. Additionally, the \$1.6 million partnership moved into the post-implementation monitoring phase in 2017, with USGS continuing to measure in-stream suspended solids and phosphorus levels.
- The Department continued to administer its comprehensive stormwater program in order to maintain compliance with NR 216, State statutes governing County-owned and –maintained stormwater facilities. A stormwater coalition was formally created, a partnership between the County and six other municipalities also regulated by NR 216.
- Restoration planning and implementation at Amsterdam Dunes continued to progress.
- Approved 798 acres for mining between the 17 active permits. There were 326 acres being actively mined, a slight increase over the prior year.
- Awarded \$112,705 in Stewardship funds for seven projects around the County in 2017.
- In 2017, 193 split documents, which consist of Certified Survey Maps, parcel divisions, condominiums, subdivisions, right-of-way acquisitions, and mergers, were mapped by the Department. This is a slight decrease of 13%.
- Received a \$50,000 Land Information Grant for a plat of survey geo-referencing project. The position was filled in May and again in July, and thus far, approximately 18,500 surveys have been geo-referenced to date.

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- Completed City and Villages apartment addressing project to benefit the 911 system.
- 167 sanitary permits were issued, a decrease of 1.8% from 2016. A total of 8,156 sanitary maintenance reports were filed with the Department in 2017.
- 140 citations were issued for sanitary noncompliance issues.
- Added address ranges to all the road centerlines in Sheboygan County.
- Issued two animal waste management permits; both were issued for new manure storage structures.
- Continued maintenance of the 8,175 trees, or 507 per acre, at the Abler/Schneiter airport wooded wetland mitigation site.
- Issued 91 shoreland permits, a decrease of 14%, and four conditional use permits.
- Completed implementation of changes to the County Shoreland Ordinance to reflect changes regarding setbacks along Lake Michigan.
- Updated the County Floodplain Ordinance to adopt the Marsh Dam Failure Analysis and other floodplain studies, and to be consistent with the State's model floodplain ordinance.
- The Department reviewed and approved 46 certified survey maps in 2017, a slight decrease from the prior year. Two new subdivision plats were approved. The certified survey maps and plats created 109 new lots encompassing 910 acres, an increase of 18% and a decrease of 6.5% from 2016 respectively.
- Four household hazardous waste collection events were held in 2017, with about 925 participants.
- The County's Water Quality Improvement Program provided cost-sharing on one manure storage structure, construction of phosphorus capturing iron filter near Elkhart Lake, one wildlife scrape, two heavy use protection with cattle lanes, an underground outlet project, and a waterway design.
- The Department continued to assist in implementation of the CDBG program; in 2017, one new loan for home rehabilitation was secured through the program.
- Continued oversight of the County's Nonmetallic Mining Program, performing several site visits to ensure continued compliance by operators.
- The Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) coordinator has hosted 3 Clean Boats, Clean Waters workshops as well as a Project RED (Riverine Early Detectors) Training. The coordinator also participated in statewide events within the County including Drain Your Catch Campaign, Landing Blitz, AIS Snapshot Day, and Waterfowl Hunter Outreach.
- The AIS project inspected 567 boats, contacted 1,004 people, and spent 239 hours at County boat landings as part of the Clean Boats, Clean Waters program to educate people on AIS prevention.
- In partnership with the Wisconsin DNR, a point-intercept lake survey was completed on Crooked Lake.
- An Aquatic Invasive Species Strategic Plan was developed.
- Negotiated the purchase of part of an Alliant Energy utility corridor for \$1 to construct a multi-use pathway.
- Completed 11 Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs), 8 Phase II ESAs, and 3 supplemental plans as part of the 2014-2017 US Environmental Protection Agency brownfields grant.
- Installed cleaning stations at Crystal Lake, Elkhart Lake, Little Elkhart Lake, and Sheboygan Marsh boat landings.
- Installed lake map/rules signs at five boat landings.
- Coordinated with volunteers as part of the Day of Caring to build two boardwalks for the disc golf course at the Sheboygan Marsh. Hole layout signs were added to each teebox.
- In 2017, 4,243 boat launch passes were sold, a 4% decrease totaling \$38,906 in overall revenue; of this, about 29% was collected from visitors outside of Sheboygan County. About 66% of the total passes sold in 2017 were daily passes, while the remainder was yearly passes.
- Issued 162 new addresses in 2017; this is an increase of 7% from the prior year.
- Issued 35 Certificates of Compliance and 5 Notices of Non-Compliance, and conducted 106 Status Reviews for the Farmland Preservation Program.
- Received and entered into a tracking system 139 Nutrient Management Plans encompassing 73,000 acres.

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Budget

The Planning and Conservation 2017 budget expenses, which includes adjustments, were \$2,162,203. Actual expenses for the year were \$2,254,804 or an over-budget amount of \$92,601 (4.3%). The negative variance in expenses primarily comes from complications surrounding bog removal at the Marsh. Actual revenue was \$2,134,111; budgeted revenue was \$1,964,003 which included \$1,093,374 in tax levy. The positive variance of \$170,108 (8.7%) in revenues comes from more than budgeted public and private grants that were received during the year. The department also received \$41,381 from Land Records for approved projects. **In 2017, the Planning and Conservation Department finished with a positive variance of \$33,331.**

The tax levy for 2018 is \$1,119,738, an increase of 2.4% from 2017 which is primarily due to a reallocation of IT expenses. The Planning and Conservation Department will operate within a total budget of \$2,003,554 for 2018.

Issues and Challenges Ahead

- Permit issuance continues to become increasingly difficult, with site configurations that are more challenging and project types that have not been encountered before.
- New state and federal legislation is constantly being introduced and enacted into law, which has a direct effect on ordinances administered by the Department. State-mandated changes require local ordinances to be updated and staff to implement new changes on a regular basis.
- WDNR regulated non-domestic holding tank pumping continues to be an issue. Therefore, the waste continues to go unaccounted for and violations go undetected.
- The planned drawdown of the Sheboygan Marsh is dependent upon weather conditions, which are unpredictable, and make the drawdown challenging to accomplish.
- Deteriorating septic tank components continue to be an issue within the County and are a substantial cost for homeowners.
- Increasing difficulty to have farmers participate in the Water Quality Improvement Program. Commodity prices fluctuate rapidly, meaning that farmers are more reluctant to participate.

Goals and Objectives for 2018

- Successfully implement the Community Development Block Grant program.
- Identify and continue to test concrete tank components within Sheboygan County under the supervision of UW Stevens Point to further combat and study deterioration of septic tanks.
- Encourage landowners to install riparian grass buffer strips through the Water Quality Improvement Program.
- Oversee design and construction of the south side utility corridor pathway.
- Continue the collection of hazardous wastes from households, farms, and small businesses.
- Continue to secure outside funding from various sources.
- Continue to administer the Farmland Preservation Program.
- Complete the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) for the 2020 US Census.
- Develop an app using the geo-referenced surveys for public use.
- Complete and implement the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) strategic plan.
- Continue work on the control plan of roadside invasives and monitoring with all County partners.
- Complete a drawdown at the Sheboygan Marsh.
- Continue to implement plans at Amsterdam Dunes.
- Use obtained grant funding to install a phosphorus-removing septic system at a residence on the shore of Elkhart Lake.
- Continue to work on fundraising and planning activities for a new educational multi-purpose building at the Sheboygan Marsh.
- Implement the Environmental Protection Agency's \$300,000 brownfields assessment grant.
- Facilitate the responsibilities for education and outreach on stormwater-related activities on behalf of the Sheboygan County Stormwater Coalition.