



# **Sheboygan County**

## **Planning & Conservation Department**

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Director

**Aaron C. Brault**

February 28, 2017

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

Dear Supervisors and Mr. Payne:

The year 2016 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 which was within 1.3%, or \$2,446,488, of budgeted expenses after factoring in carryovers and non-lapsing accounts. In addition, the Department's budgeted versus actual revenue saw only a difference of \$810, or 0.03%.

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 in 2017. This project will be the first of its kind in Wisconsin, and one of only a few in the United States. In addition, staff helped protect the County's water resources even further by closing 3 old manure pits and installing over 4.2 acres of buffers, two barnyard treatment projects, and 5.6 acres of grassed waterways.

The federally-funded Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program witnessed implementation of all projects planned in 2016. Nearly \$7 million was invested in the City of Sheboygan through the Taylor Drive Trail project.

The Department continued to help facilitate economic growth in the community. The Department helped implement the availability of Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing throughout the County. Also, the \$400,000 brownfield assessment grant helped complete environmental due diligence at a number of redevelopment projects throughout the County. Thus far, the assessment grant has helped in spurring approximately \$30 million in redevelopment projects. The Department was successful in purchasing and demolishing three dilapidated homes that will lead to a redevelopment project. As of drafting this, the County is in serious conversations with a developer looking at building an \$8 million project which would increase the County's tax-base by roughly \$45,000 alone.

Lastly, Sheboygan County partnered with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point on a proposal to study the causes of premature septic system failure. The proposal was successful in having beaten out the Universities of Minnesota, Texas, and Florida for the grant award. Starting in spring of 2017, the Department will begin the two-year project.

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,

Aaron Brault, Director

## Sheboygan County Planning and Conservation Department Annual Report 2016

### 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 & 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 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 437 participating landowners in Sheboygan County are in compliance with the County's soil erosion standards on approximately 71,000 acres of cropland. In the most recent tax year available, these landowners received a total of \$507,260 in income tax credits (averages \$1,100 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 Program/Ordinance* by reviewing, approving, and permitting reclamation plans for nonmetallic mines.
- Administer and enforce the state-mandated *County Chapter 77-Animal Waste Management Regulations/Permitting Program* 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 55,000 trees and shrubs were sold in 2016, which is about the same amount as 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 2016

- The \$7 million Taylor Drive pathway, the largest of all the NMTTP projects, was completed in 2016.
- Finalized a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Grant, which funded an erosion control measure.
- Issued ten erosion control/stormwater management permits (6 more than in 2015) and 2 additions to an existing permit 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 2016, a grassed waterway and two streambank buffers were installed. The \$1.6 million partnership is moving into the post-implementation monitoring phase in 2017.
- The Department developed a comprehensive stormwater program in order to maintain compliance with NR 216, State statutes governing County-owned and -maintained stormwater facilities. The Stormwater Management and Erosion Control Ordinance was also updated to align with current State standards and administrative code.
- Restoration planning and implementation at Amsterdam Dunes began.
- Approved 798 acres for mining, a 5% increase, between the 17 active permits, an increase of two permits. There were 306 acres being actively mined, an increase of 42%. 17 acres were successfully reclaimed in 2016.
- Awarded \$90,195 in Stewardship funds for five projects around the County in 2016.
- In 2016, 222 split documents, which consist of Certified Survey Maps, parcel divisions, condominiums, right-of-way acquisitions, and mergers, were mapped by the Department. This is an increase of 36%.
- Implemented 2 additional geographical information system apps on the County website for public use.
- 170 sanitary permits were issued, a decrease of 5.5% from 2015. A total of 8,151 sanitary maintenance reports were filed with the Department in 2016.
- Issued 4 animal waste management permits; 3 were issued for manure storage facility closures and 1 for a modification that added a sand separation facility.

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- Planted 465 trees at the Abler/Schneiter airport wooded wetland mitigation site, bringing the total live tree count to 8,175, or 507 per acre.
- Issued 106 shoreland permits, an increase of 11%, and three conditional use permits.
- As was observed in previous years, the complexity of the permit issuance process and type and size of the projects continues to grow, increasing the time spent per permit especially considering recent changes to statute at the State.
- Completed implementation of changes to the County Shoreland Ordinance to comply with further state-mandated revisions to NR115.
- The Department reviewed and approved 48 certified survey maps in 2016, a slight increase from the prior year. One new subdivision plat, the first in nine years, and one County plat were approved. The certified survey maps and plats created 92 new lots encompassing 975 acres, increases of 6% and a decrease of 18% over 2016 respectively.
- Three household hazardous waste collection events were held in 2016, with about 875 participants.
- The County's Water Quality Improvement Program provided cost-sharing on 2 manure storage closures, the securing of 0.5 acre of land for a phosphorus capturing iron filter near Elkhart Lake, and 2 barnyard projects.
- The Department continued to assist in implementation of the Community Development Block Grant program; in 2016, three new loans for home rehabilitation were secured through the program.
- Continued oversight of the County's Nonmetallic Mining Program, performing several site visits to ensure continued compliance by operators.
- A nine hole foot golf course, which is a rapidly-growing recreational activity around the country, was installed at the Sheboygan Marsh, the first of its kind in the County.
- Bogs were removed from the Sheboygan Marsh a number of times in 2016, totaling over 700 truckloads of bogs, a 600% increase.
- An eighteen hole disc golf course was installed at the Sheboygan Marsh.
- In an attempt to bring attention to the spreading of invasive aquatics, stenciling was performed at each the Elkhart Lake, Crystal Lake, Little Elkhart Lake, and Jetzer's Lake boat landings to remind boaters to remove all vegetation and drain any water before leaving the area.
- In 2016, 4,438 boat launch passes were sold, an 18% increase totaling \$39,836 in overall revenue; of this, about 33% was collected from visitors outside of Sheboygan County. About 68% of the total passes sold in 2016 were daily passes, while the remainder was yearly passes.
- Issued 151 new addresses in 2016; this is an increase of 56% from the prior year.
- Through periodic water sampling, continued to analyze the effect on phosphorus & nitrate/nitrite concentration in drainage tile water resulting from the installation of the State's first bioreactor. Results revealed a 60-80% range of removal for nitrates. The Nature Conservancy has published a fact sheet detailing the success of this system, and continued monitoring will be overseen by the United State Geological Survey through 2019.
- Issued 245 Certificates of Compliance, 30 Notices of Non-Compliance, 3 Schedules of Compliance, and conducted 278 Farmstead Inspections/Status Reviews for the Farmland Preservation Program.
- Received and entered into a tracking system 126 Nutrient Management Plans encompassing 66,000 acres.
- In continued partnership with TNC, coordinated with a landowner in the Mullet River watershed to install four streambank buffers totaling three acres.

### Budget

In **actual** revenues and expenses the Planning & Conservation Department shows a positive variance of approximately \$32,022 for 2016 once carryovers and non-lapsing accounts are calculated. The positive variance is within 1.38% of **actual** expenses (\$2,315,243) and within 1.3% of **budgeted** expenses (\$2,446,488). **Actual** revenue was \$2,429,887; **budgeted** revenue was \$2,429,077, a difference of only \$810 or 0.03%. The Department's budgeted 2016 tax levy was \$1,039,088 which was 3.9% below the 2015 levy.

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The 2017 budgeted expenses are \$1,952,649. The budgeted 2017 levy is \$1,093,374, an increase of \$54,286 or 6.11% though this is primarily due to how every departments IT allocation was reconfigured for 2017

### **Issues and Challenges Ahead**

- Increasing complications related to Ordinance regulation. Permit issuance continues to become increasingly difficult, with site configurations that are more challenging, new confusing and inconsistent state statutes and project types that have not been encountered before.
- Increased internal training for new sanitary-related products that are approved for installation. The Department continues to look for ways to become more efficient with sanitary inspections conducted for replacement septic systems and components.
- Deteriorating septic tank components continue to be an issue within the County and are a substantial cost for homeowners. Outreach efforts to educate installers and homeowners may help limit premature component failure in the future.
- 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 2017**

- Revise the Sheboygan County Floodplain Ordinance to reflect changes resulting from Dam Failure Analysis.
- Successfully implement the Community Development Block Grant program.
- Begin a two year collaborative study with UW-Stevens Point regarding Microbial Induced Corrosion.
- Create a Sanitary map app on the Sheboygan County website.
- Encourage landowners to install riparian grass buffer strips through the Water Quality Improvement Program.
- Continue to partner with the Elkhart Lake Improvement Association to plan, design, and seek funding for a small watershed project adjacent to the Lake. Solicit funding for the on-the-ground construction.
- Develop an app for performing inspections and inventories on-site using ESRI Collector technology.
- Oversee design of the south side utility corridor pathway, likely the Nonmotorized Program's final infrastructure project, in 2017.
- 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 to ensure landowners are in compliance with the County's soil erosion standards.
- Coordinate with a landowner in the Mullet River watershed, in continued partnership with TNC, to repair a cattle lane and move a cattle water source farther from the nearby stream.
- Provide cleaning stations at three County-owned boat landings to allow users to clean and remove invasive species from their watercraft.
- Install a hand pump water station to replace the electric pumphouse at the Greenbush trailhead.
- Install a new boat launch pier at Gerber Lake.
- Convert the existing POWTS tracking system to a web-based version.
- Continue to work on fundraising and planning activities for a new educational multi-purpose building at the Sheboygan Marsh.
- Facilitate successful invasive species removal and restoration work on portions of Amsterdam Dunes by administering grants including County Stewardship, Fund for Lake Michigan, and the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.
- Continue to implement the County's \$400,000 brownfields assessment grant.
- Facilitate the responsibilities identified in the Sheboygan County Stormwater Coalition agreement, providing education and outreach on stormwater-related activities.
- Continue to facilitate the goals of the Abler/Schneiter wetland mitigation site through maintenance, monitoring, and the planting of necessary trees.
- Continue implementing the Amsterdam Dunes wetland mitigation bank project.