VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB
E. Main Street
Mount Horeb, WI 53572
Phone: (608) 437-6884 Fax: (608) 437-3190
Email: mhinfo@mounthorebwi.info Web: mounthorebwi.info

**PLAN COMMISSION AGENDA**
**Wednesday, August 27, 2025 at 7:00 PM**

Municipal Building Board Room
138 E. Main Street
Mount Horeb, WI

1) Call to order
2) Roll call
3) Public Comments
4) Agenda Items
   a. Consideration of July 23, 2025 Meeting Minutes
   b. Public Hearing on rezone reqeust for 208 Meadow View Rd from R-1 single-family residential to R-2 two-family residential for Kelly Tichenor
   c. Recommendation on Rezone Request for 208 Meadow View Rd from R-1 to R-2
5) Committee Reports:
   a. Plan Commission Chair Report
   b. Village Planner Report
   c. Building Inspector Report
6) Meeting adjournment.

UPON REASONABLE NOTICE, EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF DISABLED INDIVIDUALS THROUGH APPROPRIATE AIDS AND SERVICES. FOR INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST THIS SERVICE, CONTACT ALYSSA GAFFNEY, CLERK, AT 138 E MAIN STREET, MOUNT HOREB, WI (608) 437-9404.

**PLAN COMMISSION AGENDA**
**Wednesday, July 23, 2025 at 7:00 PM**

**DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

1) **Call to order**

Chair Ryan Czyzewski called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Board Room of the Municipal Building, 138 East Main Street, Mount Horeb, WI.

2) **Roll call**

Members Present: Sarah Best, Andrew Kidd, Jill Remmert-Willis, Destinee Udelhoven, Ben Vondra, Peggy Zalucha
Others Present: Village Administrator Nic Owen, Village Planner Ben Rohr, Assistant Clerk Jean Culberson

3) **Public Comments**

The following spoke or registered in opposition of the 214-220 E Main St Apartment:
Jan Ekenberg 9404 Old JG, Jackie Sale 411 N Fourth St, Brian Ladow 4036 Twin Ct Ridgeway, Michelle Kelley 109 S Fourth St, Ellen Myers 203 N Second St, Ken Lowe 105 N Third St, Amanda DeSonia 104 N Third St, Sharman Moen 201 N Ninth St, Becky Kleppe 404 S Fourth St, Janna Hanson 513 Michelle St

The following spoke in support of the 214-220 E Main St Apartment: Stephanie Gauthier-Phillips 200 N Second St, Joe Gallina 101 E Main St, Karen Johnson 100 E Front St, Jaclyn Gullick 101 E Main St

4) **Agenda Items**

a. **Consideration of June 25, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Zalucha Motioned and Best seconded to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2025 meeting. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

b. **Consideration of Special Plan Commission Meeting Minutes June 30, 2025**

Vondra Motioned and Kidd seconded to approve the minutes of the June 30, 2025 special meeting. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

c. **Rezone for 303-305-307 Tvedt Drive from R-2 Two-Family Residential to R-1 Single Family Residential**

Owen gave an overview on the rezoning to R-1 and confirmed Rohr's questioning on the combining of the lots previously.

1. **Public Hearing on Rezone application for 303-305-307 Tvedt Drive from R-2 Two-Family Residential to R-1 Single Family Residential**

   Hearing opened at 7:43pm Hearing closed at 7:44pm No one spoke.

2. **Recommendation of Ordinance 2025-10 Rezoning 303-305-307 Tvedt Drive from R-2 Two-Family Residential to R-1 Single Family Residential**

   Udelhoven Motioned and Zalucha seconded to approve the rezoning of 303-305-307 Tvedt Dr. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

d. **Rezone and Certified Survey Map for Multi-Family Project at 101 Perimeter Rd, JT Klein Company Inc**

JT Klein representatives Danny Afable and Jacob Klein gave a revised concept plan of the two apartment buildings. Building 1 is 49 units market rate and Building 2 is 40 units for 55+ affordable senior.

1. **Public hearing on rezone application for 101 Perimeter Rd, JT Klein Company from PB Planned Business to PD Planned Development**

   Hearing opened at 7:54pm

   Cathy Scott 302 Perimeter spoke on current exterior maintenance needed. Brian Durtschi 515 Reid Dr (and owner of the property across the street) questioned sewer capacity and the past funded project.

   Registered in opposition: Leah Potter 1404 E Lincoln St concerns on noise, traffic, and size of buildings.

   Hearing closed at 7:57pm

   Afable informed mowing will be completed and funding was not available on the past project. Owen spoke on a current working plan for the sewer capacity upgrade. Rohr summarized the project. The Commission discussed the rezone and density in length and requested a housing study. Afable summarized the financing and stated Klein management would monitor parking including tenants parking in the library lot. Wade Wyser from Wyser Engineering spoke on the traffic study.

2. **Recommendation of Ordinance 2025-11 rezone 101 Perimeter Rd from PB Planned Business to PD Planned Development**

   Zalucha Motioned and Remment-Willis seconded to approve the rezone for 101 Perimeter to include the Village Planner's recommendations in the July 23, 2025 Memorandum in the agenda packet. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote with exception to Udelhoven who opposed the rezone.

3. **Recommendation of Certified Survey Map for 101 Perimeter Rd**
   Owen and Wade Wyser summarized the need for a two-lot CSM.
   Best Motioned and Zalucha seconded to approve the Certified Survey Map for 101 Perimeter Rd. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

e. **Concept Presentation for Mount Horeb School District Primary Center Addition**

Ryan Sands and Mark Miller with Bray Architects summarized the Proposed Primary Center addition and the Early Learning Center (ELC) demolition. Bray will address: bike and scooter racks, historic documenting including the ELC prior to destruction, playground landscaping, the traffic loops, and pedestrian safety.

f. **214-220 E Main Street Redevelopment Concept Presentation**

Developer Jeff Grundahl, Steve Shulfer from Sketchworks Architecture, and Wade Wyser from Wyser Engineering gave an overview on the revised four-story mixed-use apartment building development. Wyser reported that there were no utility issues with sewer, water or storm, and they have engaged a traffic engineer for technical feedback on the traffic flow. Rohr stated the developer addressed the past topics with exception to the parking concern from the last meeting. The Commission gave feedback with the main concerns being density, height and parking. The feedback was appreciated.

**ETJ Certified Survey Map, Helen Witte, 801 Hamilton Street**
Owen gave review of the Town of Blue Mounds CSM and the easement necessary for future Village development. Zalucha Motioned and Best seconded to approve the CSM. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

g. **Consideration of Design Review Makers Market, 100 S First Street, Tyler Marks, Window Awnings**

Signart informed on the proposed bent mental awnings that will be flat and not projecting. Zalucha Motioned and Vondra seconded to Consideration Design Review for the Window Awnings. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

5) **Committee Reports:**

a. **Plan Commission Chair Report**

Czyzewski advise members to continue doing their due diligence in reviewing items.

b. **Village Planner Report**

Rohr informed of delay in the recodification.

c. **Building Inspector Report**

No report in packet. Culberson updated on current permits.

6) **Meeting adjournment.**

Kidd Motioned and Best seconded to the adjournment at 10:36pm. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB

# AGENDA ITEM REPORT

| MEETING DATE | PREPARED BY |
| --- | --- |
| August 27, 2025 | Nicholas Owen, Administrator |

## AGENDA ITEM # 4.b

Public Hearing on rezone reqeust for 208 Meadow View Rd from R-1 single-family residential to R-2 two-family residential for Kelly Tichenor

## BACKGROUND

The Plan Commission will hold a public hearing and consider the application for a rezone of 208 Meadow View from R-1 single-family residential to R-2 two-family residential. A few months ago, the owner, Ms. Tichenor attended the Plan Commission meeting to present her idea of rezoning the property to R-2 and, if approved, constructing a separate living unit onto her existing home and preparing a certified survey map (CSM) to create a zero lot line. Based on the feedback received at the meeting, she has followed up with the rezoning application for the first step of the process. If the Plan Commission is favorable to this application, we will also need to set a public hearing and public participation process for a comprehensive plan amendment to amend the future land use plan for this property from single-family to two-family, prior to recommending the rezoning of this lot. We did receive one letter from a neighbor in opposition to the rezoning request; the letter is included in the packet. He stated he is not specifically opposed to what Ms. Tichenor is trying to do, but rather that this could create a precedence for the other similar lots in the neighborhood.

## RECOMMENDATION

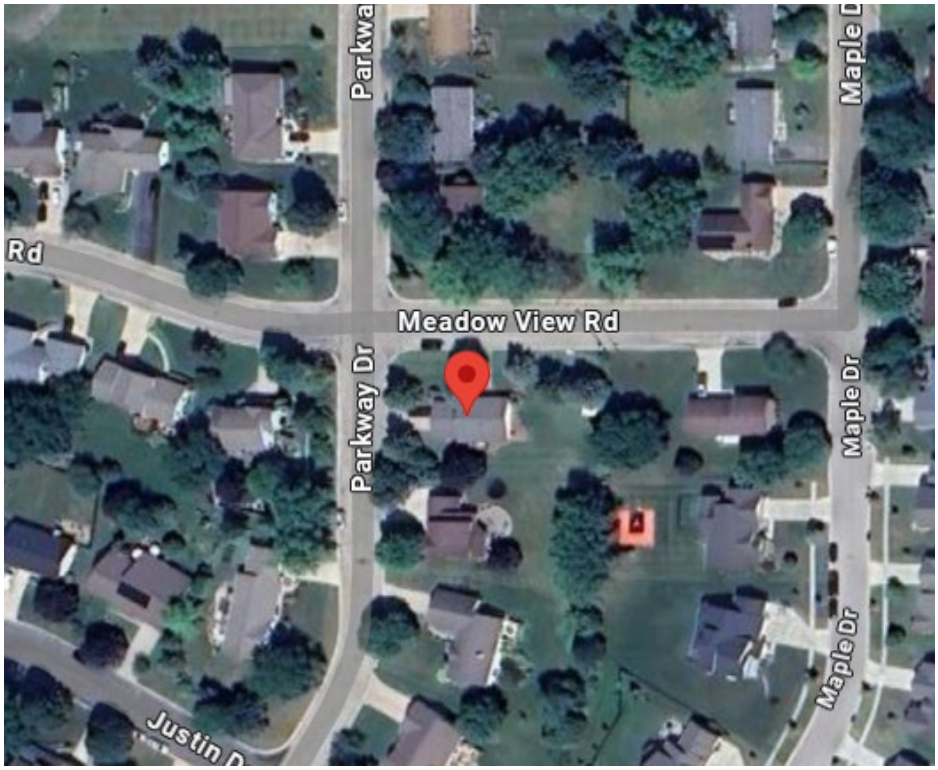
## ATTACHMENTS

1. 208 Meadow View 300 Letter
2. Narrative wColor Photos
3. Tichenor Rezone Submittal 20250730
4. Zoning Map
5. Testomony Against Rezoning_082725

VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB
PUBLIC HEARING
August 27, 2025

The Plan Commission of the Village of Mount Horeb will hold a public hearing on the above date at 7:00pm in the Board Room of the Municipal Building, 138 E Main Street, Mount Horeb, WI. The purpose of the hearing is to consider an application from Kelly Tichenor to rezone 208 Meadow View Rd, parcel 0606-141-0143-4, further described as Pleasant Meadows Lot 13, from R-1 Single family Residential to R-2 Two Family Residential.

The Village Board, by its Plan Commission, will hear all persons concerning all matters and/or objections written or verbal at that time.




PUBLISH: Mount Horeb Mail August 7, 20025
Mount Horeb Mail August 14, 2025

**PROPERTY OWNERS: You are receiving this notice as you own property that is within 300 feet of the proposed rezone. Please contact Village Administrator Nic Owen at 608 437-6884 ext 2109 or email nic.owen@mounthorebwi.info with any questions.**

**Lot 13 Pleasant Meadows Rezoning Request from R-1 to R-2**

**Owner:**
Kelly J. Tichenor
208 Meadow View Road
Mt. Horeb, WI 53572
608-577-2307
kjtichenor@yahoo.com

**Objective:**
Rezoning from R-1 Residential to R-2 Residential
Plan A: Zero lot line ranch duplex w/garage
Plan B: Zero lot line 1½-2 story residential addition duplex w/garage
Plan C: Remodel existing home with lower-level rental unit

**Surveyor:** Walker Surveying **Builder:** TBD

**Lot Info:** 14,850 square feet – corner of Meadow View Road and Parkway Drive
165' (Meadow View) x 90' (Parkway Drive)
Existing ±1,000 ft² home fronting on Meadow View Road + attached 2 car garage and driveway fronting on Parkway Drive

Dear Plan Commission Members:

I purchased my home in 2006 with a future dream of building an owner-occupied duplex as an income producing property with an added benefit of reduced lawn mowing and the potential need for an in-home caregiver.

I previously notified 12-15 of my neighbors of my intent and received positive feedback from the majority and attended a Plan Commission meeting for a preliminary concept and received favorable opinions.

Ideally, I desire to build and live in a modified floor plan of my existing home and wish to pursue a zero-lot line duplex (Plan A or B) with a gabled roof and offset front elevation from existing. The purpose of the future zero lot line request is due to having a mixed family. The equity in my existing residence will eventually be deeded to my adult children and the new build will be with my unrelated significant other and we will have different ownership percentages.

I have chronic health conditions and recently lost a long-time job resulting in an annual loss of $20K in 2025. As a result, it is necessary for me to pursue this process in stages.

Step 1 – Obtain R2 Zoning
Step 2 – Obtain site survey and confirm existing structure location as related to frontage and setback; determine available future building envelope in accordance with zoning ordinances
Step 3 – Consult with a builder for cost estimates

If building an addition/zero-lot line duplex is cost prohibitive, rezoning to R-2 would be necessary for (Plan C), remodeling of my current home to allow for a first-floor laundry and a lower-level rental unit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kelly J. Tichenor

Existing residence (proposed building to the left behind the large spruce tree)

Possible Plan A with reversed image (garage on the right; adjacent to existing residence)

Possible Plan B would be a smaller footprint and 1½-2 stories (no image available)

Proposed building area behind the trees if possible; depending on setback location – trees may need to be removed

Southeast corner of lot with proposed addition adjacent to existing residence (shed to be removed upon build)

View of proposed building area from existing residence to the east; building will also address the failing retaining wall and the rodent damaged styrofoam (not depicted)

Plan C – existing residence; remodeled entrance for lower level rental unit

VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB

**VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB**
**Zoning Administrator 608-437-9409**
**138 East Main Street**
**Mount Horeb, WI 53572**

# PLAN COMMISSION APPLICATION

**PROJECT NAME:** Lot 13 Pleasant Meadows Rezoning

**Project Address** 208 Meadow View Road **Parcel Number:** 157/0606-141-0143-4
*Access Dane Link*

**Zoning Map**

**Current Zoning** R-1, Single Family **Future Land Use Zoning:** R-2, Single Family
*(select **zoning layer** in map)* *(select **future land use layer** in map)*

| | |
|---|---|
| APPLICANT: Kelly J. Tichenor | |
| ADDRESS: 208 Meadow View Road | |
| PHONE: 608-577-2307 | EMAIL: kjtichenor@yahoo.com |

| | |
|---|---|
| OWNER: Kelly J. Tichenor | |
| ADDRESS: 208 Meadow View Road | |
| PHONE: 608-577-2307 | EMAIL: kjtichenor@yahoo.com |

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** R2 Zoning to allow for 2 family residential; Plan A: Zero lot line ranch duplex w/garage
Plan B: Zero lot line 1½-2 story residential addition/duplex with garage (depending on available building footprint)
Plan C: Remodel existing home with lower level rental unit

**OWNER/APPLICANT SIGNATURE:** Kelly J Tichenor **DATE:** 7/30/2025

**FEES & DEPOSITS: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)**

| | | Application | Fee | Public Hearing- |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Certificate of Appropriateness (for Central Business Zoning) | No Fee | |
| | | Certified Survey Map (CSM) *scroll to Section 18.61 in schedule* | Schedule | |
| | | Certified Survey Map Extraterritorial *scroll to Section 18.61 in schedule* | Schedule | |
| | | Comprehensive Plan Amendment | $150.00 | Class One |
| | | Conditional Use Permit (changes in USE of property) | $150.00 | Class Two |
| | | Conditional Use Permit (planned development district) | $200.00 | Class Two |
| | | Design Review | $100.00 | |
| | | General Development Plan (GDP) | $200.00 | |
| | | Specific Improvement Plan (SIP) | $300.00 | |
| | ✓ | Zoning Amendment (changes in zoning) | $150.00 | Class Two |
| | | Zoning Amendment (planned development district) | $200.00 | Class Two |

**Developer Deposit:**

An escrow deposit is required in accordance with the Development Application Agreement.

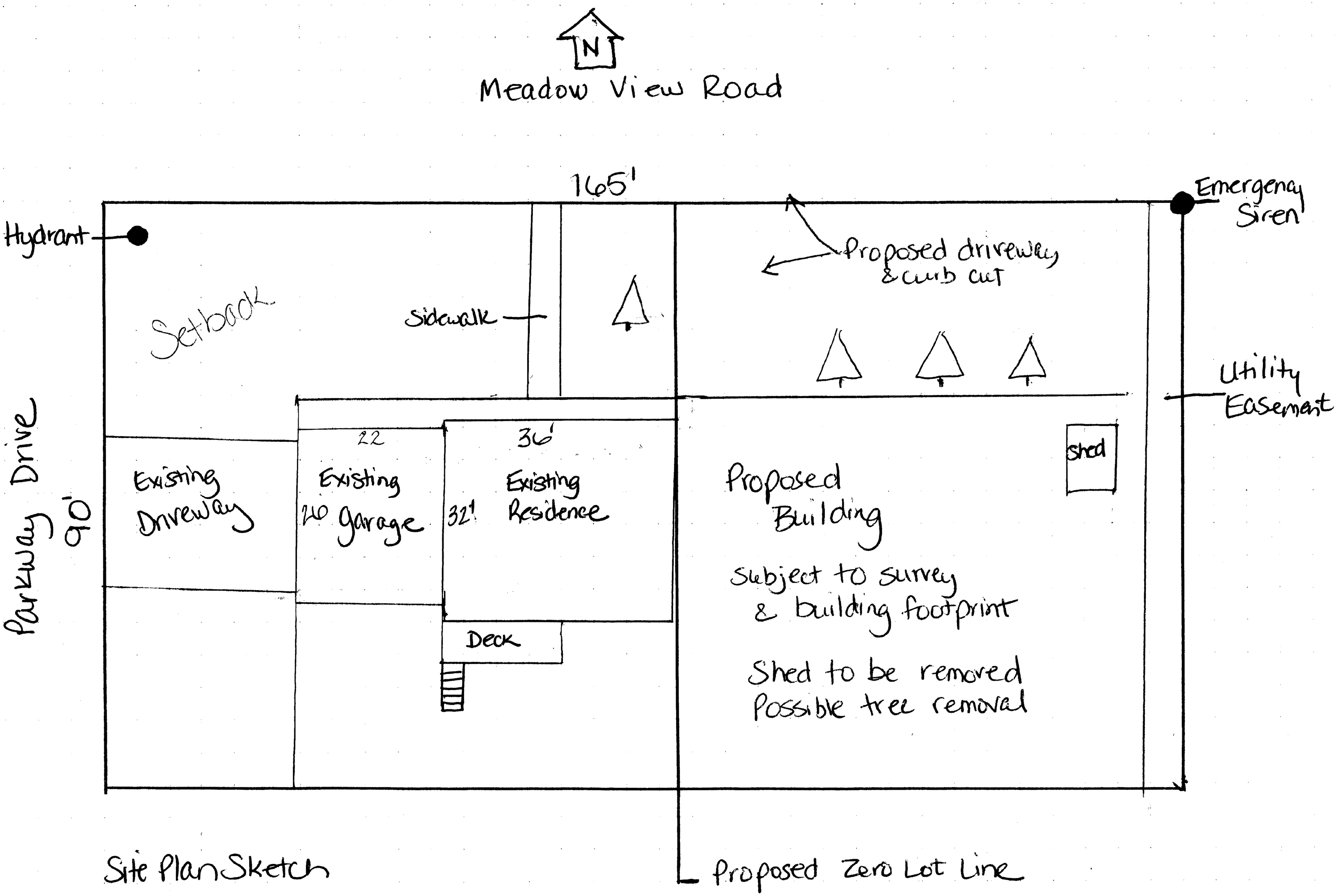
**Total Fee Paid:**

_____

**Date:** _____

**Fee Waived By:**

_____




Site Plan Sketch

**Lot 13 Pleasant Meadows Rezoning Request from R-1 to R-2**

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Mt. Horeb, WI 53572
608-577-2307
kjtichenor@yahoo.com

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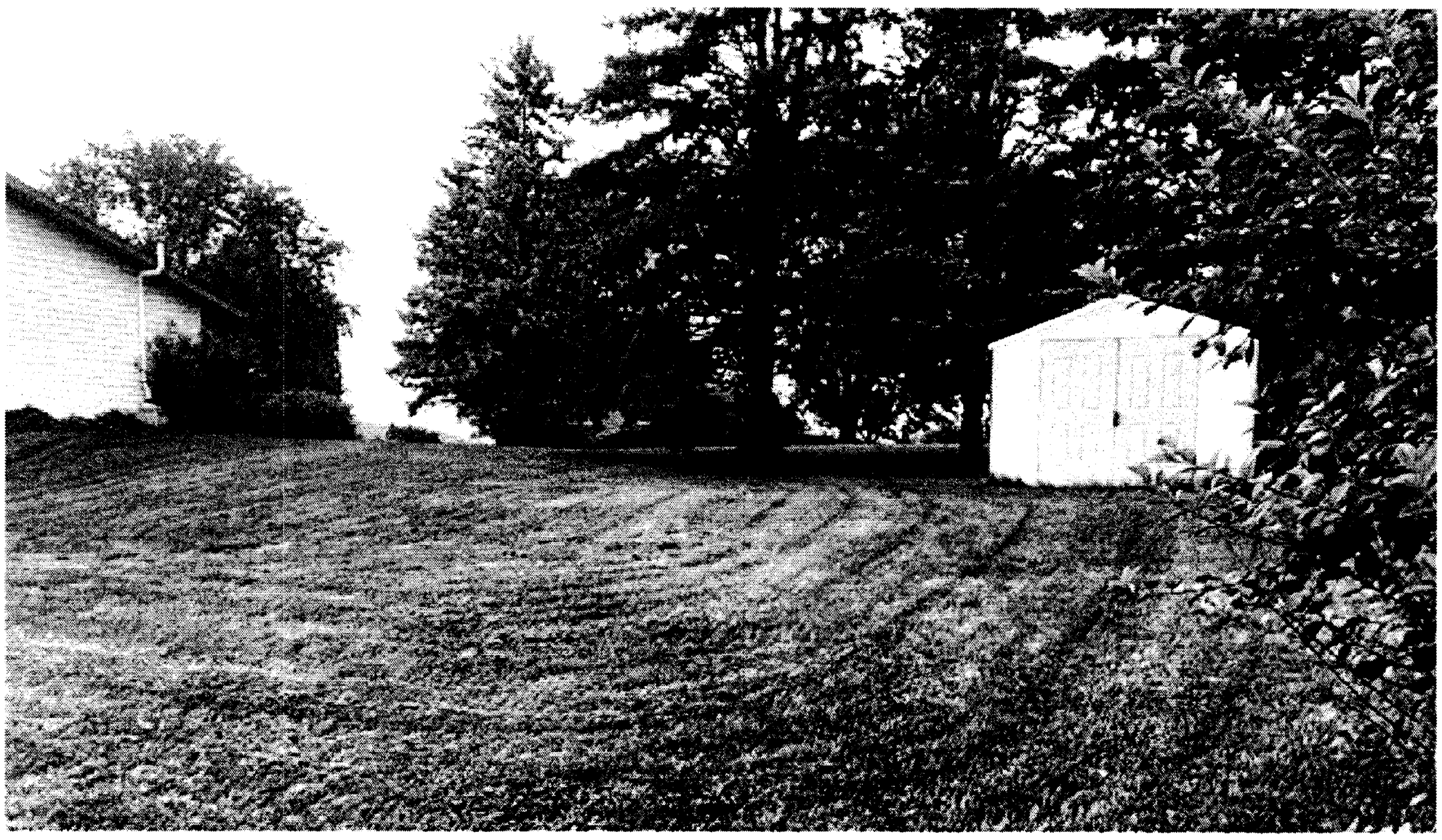

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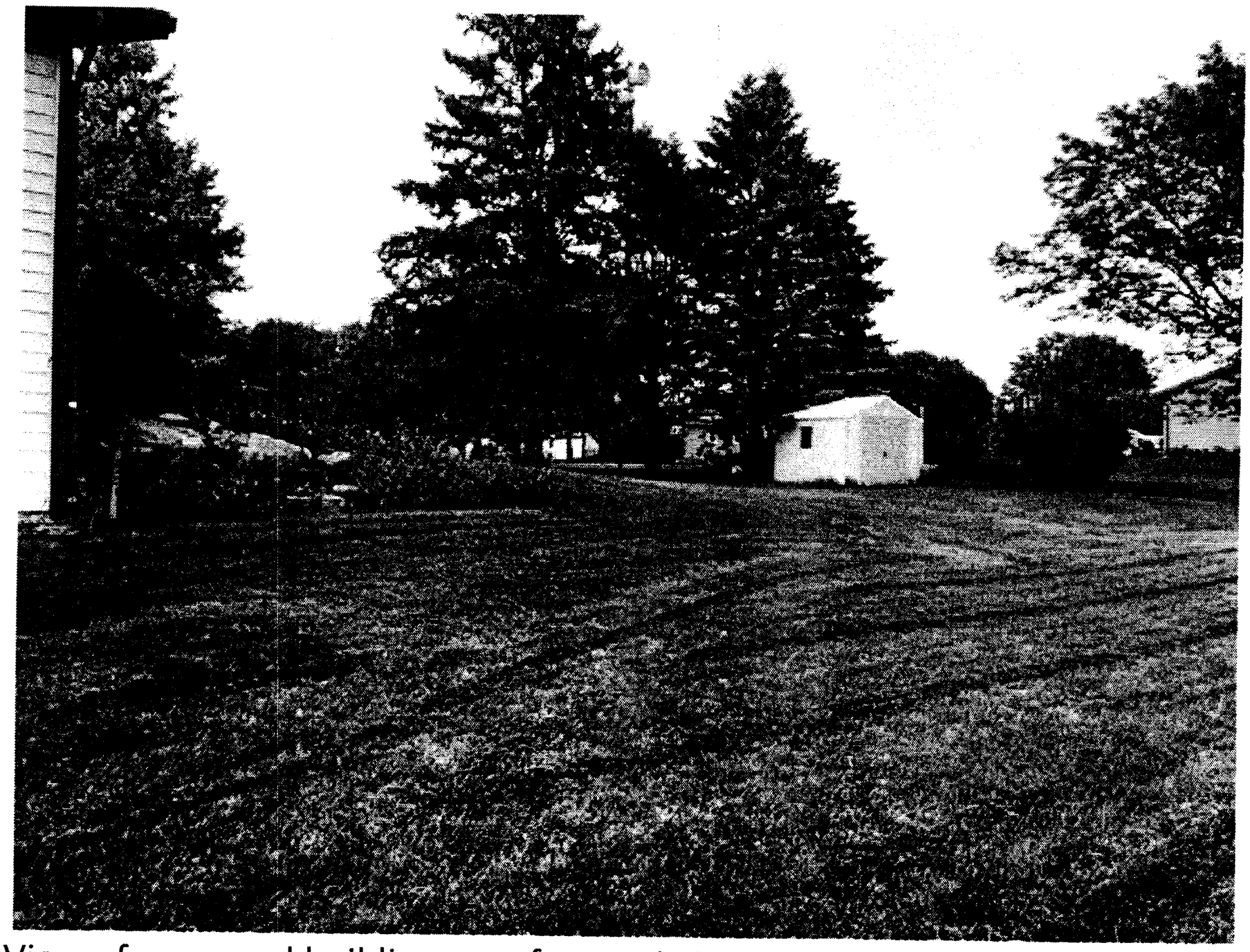

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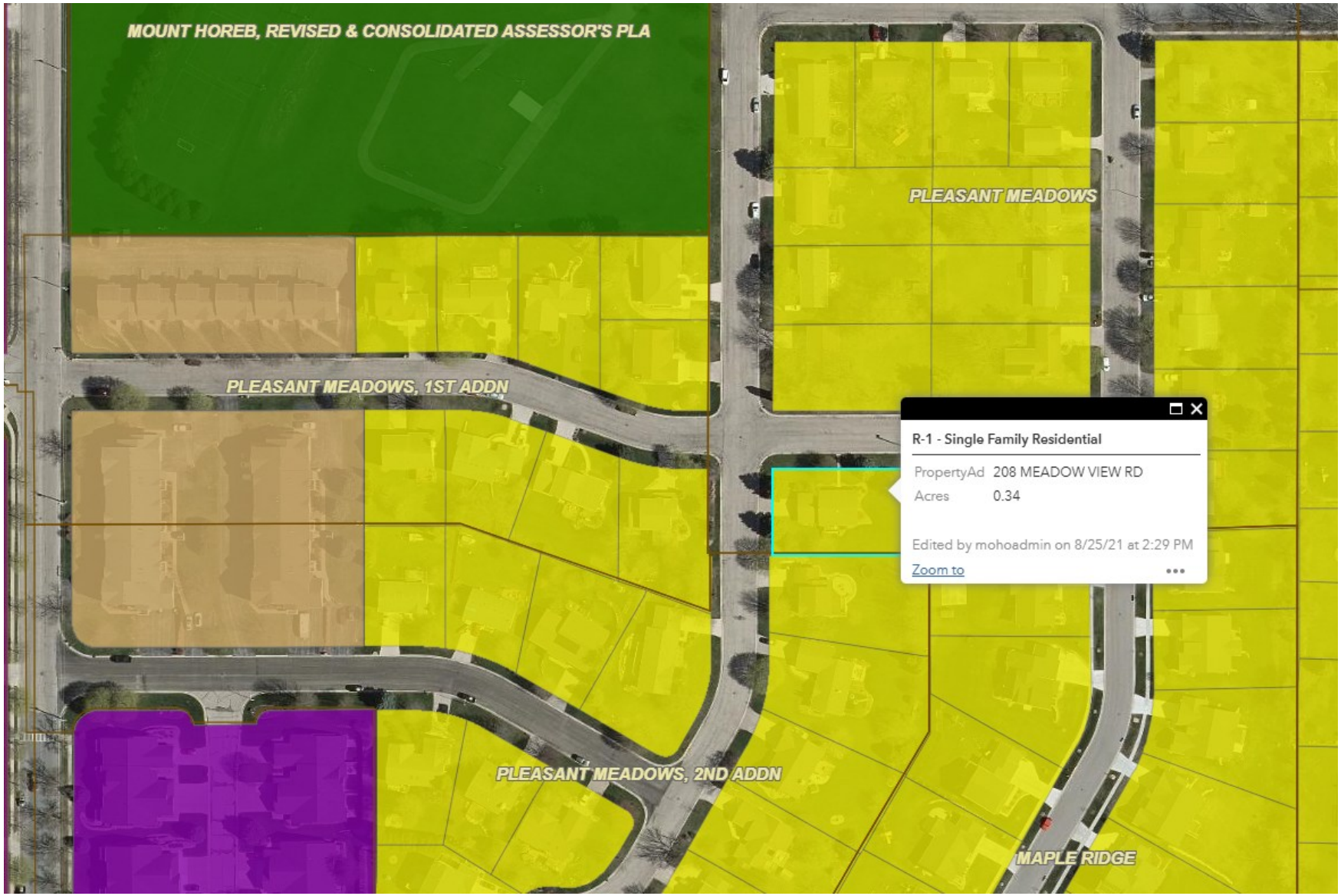
MOUNT HOREB, REVISED & CONSOLIDATED ASSESSOR'S PLA
PLEASANT MEADOWS
PLEASANT MEADOWS, 1ST ADDN
R-1 - Single Family Residential
PropertyAd 208 MEADOW VIEW RD
Acres 0.34
Edited by mohoadmin on 8/25/21 at 2:29 PM
Zoom to
PLEASANT MEADOWS, 2ND ADDN
MAPLE RIDGE

**Testimony of Larry Hartzke, 617 Maple Drive, Mount Horeb; Submitted for the August 27, 2025 Public Hearing on proposed Rezoning of Parcel 0606-141-0143-4, further described as Pleasant Meadows Lot 13, from R-1 Single Family Residential to R-2 Two Family Residential**

My initial thinking on the proposed change was favorable insofar as one additional household several hundred feet from me would not noticeably affect me. After further consideration, I oppose the rezoning request for these reasons:

1. The parcel in question appears to be the same size as many other parcels in the neighborhood. If the Village approves the request to rezone, it would set a precedent for the approval of other property owners in the neighborhood requesting similar rezoning for their properties. If the Village does not intend such precedence, there seems to be no logical reason to approve this rezoning request.

2. To the extent my neighborhood becomes more densely populated, my property's market value as a quiet residence amidst other single family residences diminishes. When I moved into my house 10 years ago, I chose its location because of it quietness, due in large part to Maple Drive being a dead end. With the construction of over a dozen single-family homes on recently-opened Maple Drive, my neighborhood is already busier than I'd expected it to be.

3. Even though the owner of the parcel indicates the intent to be one of the two households, owner-occupation, and the modicum of tenant oversight that suggests, may end at any time.

In my opinion, the retrospective approval of additional housing density among other uniformly-zoned single-family residences is a bad idea and sets a bad precedent for every property owner in the neighborhood.

I've often referenced different resources I've used to help educate myself on the big picture of local government issues (Planning, decision making, legal requirements, and communication (including article I mentioned in last month's report)). In this month's report, I'm including it for the public as requested, plus additional resources I've found helpful over the past several years as both a Trustee and Plan Comm member. With fundamental shifts in social and economic changes (aging demographics, low unemployment, normalization of inflation and interest rates, and housing appreciation in the last 5 years) these have shown to be all great resources to understand how things have changed and provide ideas to help the Village sustain success. As always, I encourage Plan Comm members to review.

**Strong Towns** – https://www.strongtowns.org. The way municipalities are designed over the past several generations creates a broken system of financial instability, social disconnects, and transportation safety issues.

- It's Time To Rethink How We Measure Cities. We Can't Afford Not To.: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syP8g8HBcy4 https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2024/2/14/6-rules-for-actually-changing-peoples-minds
- The Suburban Experiment vs. Traditional Development: 7 Key Differences: https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2020/9/4/seven-key-differences
- Why You Can't Afford to Live Where You Grew Up (and how we can fix it): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1h--3Jky91A
- Are Parking Lots Ruining Your City?: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUhOFUQDLQk
- It's Time To Rethink How We Measure Cities. We Can't Afford Not To.: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syP8g8HBcy4
- https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2024/2/14/6-rules-for-actually-changing-peoples-minds
-

**League of Wisconsin Municipalities** – https://www.lwm-info.org - provides information and education to WI municipal government elected officials and staff. Numerous monthly webinars, lunch chats, and round tables, but many of resources available on website and

available to anyone

- Great info for zoning code rewrite: https://www.lwm-info.org/1706/More-Housing-Wisconsin

**Dane County's Regional Housing Strategy** - http://danecountyplanning.com/RHS
The Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) is a five-year strategic action plan to help local governments, employers, non-profit agencies, residents and the private sector, better address the housing crisis in Dane County. A lot of the same participants and ideas that went into the Village's Housing Task Force and analysis can be seen here. The RHS's success comes from the participation of municipalities in the County facing the same issues and consists of achievable ways our area can address affordable housing crisis and provides the background for why it's important.

**Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation** - WEDC.org – statewide resource for planning for economic development that helps identify more macro economic issues that affect us locally. Great resource for generating ideas from other community success.

**Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP**) https://madisonregion.org/ – Regional (8 counties) resource for economic development. Have worked with staff in the past to help identify data and ideas towards strategies that went into the Comp Plan, Downtown Redevelopment Plan, and identify the synergy of local partnership and interdependencies for a stronger workforce in the Village

**American Planning Association** https://www.planning.org. - APA exists to elevate and unite a diverse planning profession as it helps communities, their leaders, and residents anticipate and meet the needs of a changing world. This is a great resource to understand Planning, zoning, best practices, and get ideas. Membership is required, but I've been able to get some free information over the years

**Parking Reform Network** - https://parkingreform.org/ - Supports activists and professionals working in any discipline or policy area impacted by car parking. Newsletters, articles, case studies, and data.

**International Downtown Association** - https://downtown.org/ Check out their Knowledge Center and Webinars

Don’t forget your greatest resource: **Village Staff** – reach out to Village Planner and Village Administrator for questions or resources!!! They want you to be the best Plan Commissioners you can be, and love to get you the info you need.

Brooks Williams, MPA, City Manager | Doctoral Candidate | Author

Local government has spent years bending over backward to get more public engagement. We've expanded meetings, flooded social media with updates, hosted town halls, and created endless platforms for feedback. And yet, after all of that effort, participation is still abysmal, misinformation is still rampant, and the loudest voices still drive the conversation while the majority remains disengaged.

I am going to say what no one wants to say out loud: public engagement is broken.

We pretend that more meetings, more outreach, and more "listening sessions" will magically create a well-informed, engaged public. But that's not what's happening. Instead, we're empowering the same small group of activists, political opportunists, and professional complainers while failing to reach the people who actually make up the majority of our communities.

The people who show up to meetings aren't always representative of the people who live in the city. They're just the ones with the time, the loudest opinions, or the strongest personal agendas. Yet, cities still make decisions based on whoever shows up, terrified of bad press or public outrage, even if that outrage comes from the same ten people every week.

At some point, we have to ask, "Are we actually engaging the public, or are we just giving a megaphone to the loudest and most extreme voices?"

The problem isn't that people don't care about their communities. The problem is that public engagement has been hijacked by a process that rewards outrage, ignores expertise, and creates the illusion of representation while sidelining the silent majority.

We cannot run cities based on whoever yells the loudest. We cannot let misinformation dominate policy. We cannot keep acting as if every opinion is equally informed when some are based on reality and others are fueled by nonsense they saw on Facebook.

Engagement should be about educating as much as listening. It should be about ensuring that facts carry more weight than feelings. It should be about making space for real participation, not just creating a stage for those who thrive on outrage.

If local government doesn't fix this, we will continue to be held hostage by a vocal minority while the people who actually need us, the working families, the business owners, the residents who trust us to do our jobs, are left behind.

The goal of public engagement isn't to validate the loudest voices. It's to govern effectively.

hashtag#LocalGovernmentLeadership hashtag#PublicEngagementFail hashtag#LeadWithCourage hashtag#StopTheNoise hashtag#PublicAdministration hashtag#CityManagement hashtag#FactsOverFeelimgs hashtag#GovernanceOverGrandstanding hashtag#PublicServiceMatters hashtag#NoMoreEchoChambers hashtag#TruthOverOutrage hashtag#LocalGovernment

MORE HOUSING
WISCONSIN

HELPING COMMUNITIES DEVELOP HOUSING SOLUTIONS.

WHITEPAPER SERIES
Briefing Paper 7

SEPTEMBER 2024

# Municipal Housing *Solutions*

LEAGUE OF WISCONSIN MUNICIPALITIES

WISCONSIN BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

WRA Wisconsin REALTORS® Association

# More Housing Wisconsin

Wisconsin is experiencing a significant housing shortage. A recent study estimates Wisconsin will need to build over 200,000 housing units by 2030 to accommodate all the people who want to live and work here.[i] More Housing Wisconsin, a collaboration between the League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin REALTORS® Association, and the Wisconsin Builders Association, seeks to educate and inform Wisconsin city and village leaders and staff about zoning changes and other strategies communities can use to help address this state's housing shortage. Our goal is to bring tools, resources, and best practices to municipalities to help communities initiate housing solutions that meet their unique needs and strengthen our economy.

# THIS MONTH'S TOPIC
## SEPTEMBER 2024

# Why is the cost of a single-family home lot so expensive? Understanding the costs of developing a buildable lot.

Developing a new housing subdivision is complex and costly. Many of the costs are beyond the control of both developers and local governments. However, allowable density, locally imposed engineering standards, and municipal fees can combine to make an already risky business venture unfeasible. A better understanding of the actual costs of developing a subdivision can serve as an important guide for creating local policies that encourage, rather than discourage, new home construction.

LEAGUE OF WISCONSIN MUNICIPALITIES

WISCONSIN BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

WRA Wisconsin REALTORS® Association

According to a recent Harvard University report, there are several reasons builders and developers are unable to provide enough homes at affordable prices, including:

- high interest rates and rising inflation
- cost and availability of labor
- price of building materials
- cost and availability of developed lots
- difficulties obtaining zoning or permit approvals[ii]

This briefing paper focuses on the low availability and subsequent high cost of developed lots. As the Harvard University report explains, nationwide, "the availability of developed land remains a key impediment to increasing the supply of housing."[iii] The trend over the last ten years is that substantially less buildable lots are being created. "Though lot availability was down just 1 percent year over year in the first quarter of 2024, it was down 11 percent from the first quarter of 2020 and 42 percent relative to the same quarter in 2015."[iv] According to a recent article in the New York Times, this has been the case since "the Great Recession broke the U.S. housing market."[v] The number of vacant developed lots remains 40 percent below its pre-Great Recession level.[vi]

In Wisconsin the situation is much the same as it is nationally. According to a recent report published by the Wisconsin Policy Forum, there has been a significant long-term decline in the number of new lots being developed. The number of newly recorded lots in Wisconsin remains 72.5% below the pace of new lot recordings seen during the housing construction boom during the years of 2002-2004.[vii]

## ARE THERE ACTIONS LOCAL POLICYMAKERS CAN TAKE TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE BUILDABLE SINGLE FAMILY HOME LOTS?

To help answer this question let's look at three proposed housing developments from three different Wisconsin cities and compare the impacts that municipal policies and fees have on the cost of the lots.

The following cost comparisons reflect actual proposed developments and were prepared by Steve DeCleene, President, Neumann Companies, a residential development company headquartered in Pewaukee, and Robert Procter, a real estate lawyer with Axley Brynelson. The data have been normalized for ease of comparison by, for example, setting the size of the land at 80 acres in all 3 markets.

When comparing the costs of the three developments, three major differences stand out and help explain why the cost of the lots differ so greatly – allowable density, costs of engineering companies hired by the municipality to inspect infrastructure, and infrastructure costs.

**1. Density.** The allowable density (i.e., number of lots per acre) is an important cost factor that differs between the three developments.

- In the Waukesha County community large mandatory minimum lot sizes per single family home results in 97 buildable lots out of 80 acres. The average cost would be $168,737 per lot. To make a 20% margin, a developer would need to charge $210,922 per lot.
- In the Dane County example zoning standards allow for more density, resulting in 151 lots on the same 80 acres. The added density results in an average cost of $118,899 per lot. To make a 20% margin, a developer would need to charge $148,624 for the lot.
- In Dodge County the community's zoning standards allow for even more density, resulting in 171 lots (all single family) at a cost of $54,707. To earn a 20% margin, the developer would need to sell the lots for $68,383.

Note also that the total cost of grading and storm ponds is not significantly different between the three developments, but the per lot cost varies considerably because of the allowable density. More lots allow for less cost of grading per lot. The cost per lot for grading and storm ponds in the least dense development, Waukesha County, is $23,259. The cost per lot in the denser development in Dane County is $16,296 and the cost per lot in the densest development in Dodge County is $9,717.

**2. Inspection fees.** Municipally imposed inspection fees are another key cost difference between the three developments. State law allows communities to recover the cost from developers that the community sustains in hiring private engineering firms to inspect

the water, sewer, street, and other infrastructure items the developer is required to construct as a condition of subdivision approval to ensure that the construction meets municipal standards.[viii] However, not all communities incur such expenses and for those that do the costs can vary considerably. In the three developments before us, the Waukesha County development was charged $8,000 per lot for inspection fees. The Dane County development was charged $1,382 per lot, and in Beaver Dam the inspection fee amount was $1,500 per lot.

**3. Infrastructure costs.** Another cost that differs considerably between the three developments is the cost of infrastructure the municipalities require the developer to construct, such as water, sewer, and stormwater facilities. The difference in cost often, as here, reflects the amount and capacity of the piping, backfill requirements (i.e., gravel versus soil under the piping), and other engineering standards a community imposes. For example, the storm water costs differ significantly between the three developments. The total cost of storm water in the Waukesha County development was $950,956. In Dane County, the storm water cost exceeded $2 million. While in the Dodge County development the amount was substantially less at $485,714.

Storm water costs per development rise or fall depending on the engineering standards a community imposes. For example, the number and location of stormwater inlet structures and subsequent piping and pipe sizes that municipalities require can add substantially to the developer's costs. While some communities will allow storm water to flow in swales and curb lines for long distances, others prohibit water from flowing in front of or behind more than two lots without needing it to be captured into a storm water structure and piping. Also, some municipalities require storm pipe to be installed on both sides of the road. In addition, some municipalities require drain tile be installed along the bottom of every curb.

Other infrastructure costs can vary significantly as well. Notice, for example, that in the Waukesha County development the developer was required to construct a sewer lift station at a cost of $556,221 despite the community also imposing a sewer system impact fee that will be collected when building permits are pulled. Similarly, the developer in the Dane County development was required to build a booster station for water distribution at a cost of $653,000. The Dodge County community imposed no such requirements on the developer.

**Conclusion:** Many cost factors influencing developer decision-making lie outside the control of local policymakers, but some are within the power of elected officials, planning professionals, and municipal engineers to control and therefore have implications for public policy. Minimum lot sizes and other zoning standards relating to the density of a particular development, inspection fees charged against the development, and various infrastructure requirements all add cost to a potential development and could be changed through policy.

A University of California Berkley study on the costs of building new housing explains it well:

> "In many cases, the level at which [local] policies are set can make or break the financial feasibility of new housing development. While there may be reasonable motivations to put such policies in place, many policymakers are not aware of the tradeoffs. Without knowledge of how policy decisions affect development feasibility, policymakers run the risk of implementing requirements that are not well-calibrated to the broader real estate market. This can curtail the creation of badly-needed new housing supply, exacerbating the housing shortage."[ix]

## WAUKESHA COUNTY EXAMPLE

| DEVELOPMENT LINE ITEM BUDGET | TOTAL | PER LOT |
|---|---|---|
| Total Acreage: | 80 | |
| Number of Lots: | 97 | 1.21 |
| Land Cost: | 4,000,000 | 41,367 |
| Dev. Loan Interest | 1,147,826 | 11,871 |
| Closing Cost, Property Tax, Loan Fees, LOC | 241,391 | 2,496 |
| Land Planning, Due Diligence, and Legal | 154,087 | 1,594 |
| Land, Closing Cost, and Financing | 5,543,304 | 57,327 |
| Engineering Paid to Developer Engineer | 285,009 | 2,947 |
| Inspection Fees charged by Municipality | 773,565 | 8,000 |
| Engineering and Inspections | 1,058,574 | 10,947 |
| Grading and Erosion Control | 2,249,043 | 23,259 |
| Sanitary Distribution | 1,648,522 | 17,049 |
| Sanitary Laterals | 386,783 | 4,000 |
| Water Distribution | 985,739 | 10,194 |
| Water Laterals | 280,417 | 2,900 |
| Storm Sewer | 950,957 | 9,835 |
| Sidewalks | - | - |
| Cost of Curbs and Roads | 1,067,922 | 11,044 |
| On Site Infrastructure | 7,569,383 | 78,280 |
| Booster Station | 556,522 | 5,755 |
| Offsite Water Distribution | 566,202 | 5,856 |
| Highway Improvements | 83,478 | 863 |
| Off Site Infrastructure | 1,206,202 | 12,474 |
| Landscaping and Amenities | 208,696 | 2,158 |
| Electric, net of reimbursement | 120,870 | 1,250 |
| Gas, net of reimbursement | - | - |
| Sales Commissions at 3% | 609,183 | 6,300 |
| Other Costs | 938,748 | 9,708 |
| Total Costs | 16,316,211 | 168,738 |
| Retail Value at 20% Margin | | 210,922 |

## DANE COUNTY EXAMPLE

| DEVELOPMENT LINE ITEM BUDGET | TOTAL | PER LOT |
|---|---|---|
| Total Acreage: | 80 | |
| Number of Lots: | 151 | 1.89 |
| Land Cost: | 4,000,000 | 26,471 |
| Dev. Loan Interest | 1,311,111 | 8,676 |
| Closing Cost, Property Tax, Loan Fees, LOC | 570,844 | 3,778 |
| Land Planning, Due Diligence, and Legal | 227,778 | 1,507 |
| Land, Closing Cost, and Financing | 6,109,733 | 40,432 |
| Engineering Paid to Developer Engineer | 375,556 | 2,485 |
| Inspection Fees charged by Municipality | 208,889 | 1,382 |
| Engineering and Inspections | 584,445 | 3,868 |
| Grading and Erosion Control | 2,557,778 | 16,926 |
| Sanitary Distribution | 1,622,222 | 10,735 |
| Sanitary Laterals | 577,778 | 3,824 |
| Water Distribution | 1,657,778 | 10,971 |
| Water Laterals | 133,333 | 882 |
| Storm Sewer | 2,082,222 | 13,779 |
| Sidewalks | 354,699 | 2,347 |
| Cost of Curbs and Roads | 1,982,634 | 13,120 |
| On Site Infrastructure | 8,631,111 | 57,118 |
| Booster Station | 653,333 | 4,324 |
| Offsite Water Distribution | - | - |
| Highway Improvements | 584,444 | 3,868 |
| Off Site Infrastructure | 1,237,778 | 8,191 |
| Landscaping and Amenities | 509,000 | 3,368 |
| Electric, net of reimbursement | 187,693 | 1,242 |
| Gas, net of reimbursement | - | - |
| Sales Commissions at 3% | 707,200 | 4,680 |
| Other Costs | 1,403,893 | 9,290 |
| Total Costs | 17,966,960 | 118,899 |
| Retail Value at 20% Margin | | 148,624 |

## DODGE COUNTY EXAMPLE

| DEVELOPMENT LINE ITEM BUDGET | TOTAL | PER LOT |
|---|---|---|
| Total Acreage: | 80 | |
| Number of Lots: | 171 | 2.14 |
| Land Cost: | 1,600,000 | 9,333 |
| Dev. Loan Interest | 571,429 | 3,333 |
| Closing Cost, Property Tax, Loan Fees, LOC | 208,571 | 1,217 |
| Land Planning, Due Diligence, and Legal | 208,571 | 1,217 |
| Land, Closing Cost, and Financing | 2,588,571 | 15,100 |
| Engineering Paid to Developer Engineer | 400,000 | 2,333 |
| Inspection Fees charged by Municipality | 257,143 | 1,500 |
| Engineering and Inspections | 657,143 | 3,833 |
| Grading and Erosion Control | 1,665,714 | 9,717 |
| Sanitary Distribution | 1,268,571 | 7,400 |
| Sanitary Laterals | 457,143 | 2,667 |
| Water Distribution | 1,197,143 | 6,983 |
| Water Laterals | 214,286 | 1,250 |
| Storm Sewer | 485,714 | 2,833 |
| Sidewalks | - | - |
| Cost of Curbs and Roads | 1,322,857 | 7,717 |
| On Site Infrastructure | 5,288,571 | 30,850 |
| Booster Station | - | - |
| Offsite Water Distribution | - | - |
| Highway Improvements | 171,429 | 1,000 |
| Off Site Infrastructure | 171,429 | 1,000 |
| Landscaping and Amenities | 114,286 | 667 |
| Electric, net of reimbursement | 208,571 | 1,217 |
| Gas, net of reimbursement | - | - |
| Sales Commissions at 3% | 349,714 | 2,040 |
| Other Costs | 672,571 | 3,923 |
| Total Costs | 9,378,286 | 54,707 |
| Retail Value at 20% Margin | | 68,383 |

[i]Forward Analytics, *A Housing Hurdle: Demographics Drive Need for More Homes*; January 2023.

[ii]*The State of the Nation's Housing 2024*, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University.

[iii]Ibid.

[iv]Ibid.

[v]New York Times, *"Why Too Few Homes get Built in the U.S."*, August 22, 2024.

[vi]Ibid.

[vii]*Housing Permitting Slows, Adding to Affordability Concerns*, Wisconsin Policy Forum, July 2024.

[viii]Under Wis. Stat. § 66.0628(3), the rate charged to the developer for engineering inspection services may not exceed "the rate customarily paid for similar services by the political subdivision."

[ix]A TERNER CENTER for Housing Innovation REPORT, UC-Berkley - DECEMBER 2023 *Making It Pencil: The Math Behind Housing Development (2023 Update)*

VILLAGE OF MOUNT HOREB

# AGENDA ITEM REPORT

| MEETING DATE | PREPARED BY |
| --- | --- |
| August 27, 2025 | |

## AGENDA ITEM # 5.c

Building Inspector Report

## BACKGROUND

## RECOMMENDATION

## ATTACHMENTS

None