VILLAGE BOARD ANNOUNCES PLANS TO REVITALIZE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN & LIBRARY

Poynette, Wisconsin - The Village of Poynette’s Board of Trustees announced today their previously closed session actions to purchase three buildings on the northeastern side of the 100 block of north Main Street in Poynette. The purpose of these purchases is to enable the Board to, most effectively, move forward with plans to expand the Poynette Public Library, in addition to revitalizing a portion of the community’s historic downtown area with a new building development project.

“I was directed by the Board of Trustees, during a closed session meeting, in summer of 2010 to begin negotiations with the property owners at 130/132 N Main Street, 126 N Main Street, and 124 N Main Street to acquire their buildings,” said Daniel Guild, Poynette Village Administrator. “After lengthy discussion amongst the Trustees, it was felt that given the economic environment of the real estate market that opportunities existed to acquire these properties at a reasonable price,” continued Guild.

“I believe these new purchases and the development planned will be just what this community needs to grow and be successful.” said recently elected Trustee Henry DeBoer. The evolution of ideas behind this activity began even earlier, back in the spring of 2010, after the Poynette Public Library Board came before the Poynette Village Board of Trustees and presented them with a revised 5 Year Strategic Plan. This strategic plan, which included an assessment of usage and readership, showed that the programs and public participation of services offered by the Library had grown significantly under the leadership of Library Director Kris Daugherty and her library staff since her hire back in 2009.

“Our children’s programming has increased from 1 weekly program to 5. We have had a circulation increase of 33% in the last two years alone. We have offered more adult program opportunities as well as have more demand for our computers here in the Library,” said Director Kris Daugherty. “We are finding it more and more difficult to accommodate the large number of participants given our space limitations. It has been necessary to limit participation, which is unfortunate,” Daugherty continued. “In order for the Library to continue to meet the increased informational, educational and recreational needs of the Poynette area, it is necessary for us to have more space,” said Daugherty.

The Library’s strategic plan clearly identified the Library’s desire to grow and expand their offerings in the community, and remain in their current downtown location, central within the Village. The Board of Trustees considered the Library’s goals alongside their concerns for being able to provide modern commercial business space in the downtown, especially considering the number of vacant and foreclosed properties within the block. “It is our hope that this project can be a catalyst for improving our Village,” said Trustee Diana Kaschinske. Kaschinske, a former small-business owner in Poynette continued, “This is an exciting project.”

The Board is currently reviewing proposals to partner with a consultant to help provide an even more detailed implementation plan for the concept that has already been developed over the past year. “We are looking forward to building a broad group of local stakeholders, including business, citizens, and other economic development agencies to accomplish these goals,” said Village President Doug Avery.
“I know that it is the Board’s intention to pursue plans to create a public-private partnership, where private investment dollars can be used to rebuild this portion of the block at a future date, thereby accomplishing the dual goals of additional Library space and expanded commercial opportunities here in the community,” said Guild. “With the right plan and partnerships, it is their belief that we will be able to move forward with these ambitious goals with minor additional expense to the taxpayers.”

Previous concern has been raised in recent weeks about the closed session purchase of one of the three main street properties located at 126 N Main Street. “I think that most people will see that value in what we’re trying to do,” commented Village Trustee Jerry Burke. “Trustees never want to work behind closed doors, and I, for one, am glad to be able to start talking with the citizens about these plans, now that the purchases have been completed,” he concluded.

“It has been asked whether it was appropriate for the members of a governmental body to make decisions on this project in closed session. It is my opinion that the answer is yes it was appropriate,” said Village Attorney Chris Hughes. “A governmental body may vote in closed session under Wis. Stat. 19.85(1), if the vote is an integral part of the deliberations authorized to be conducted in closed session. Stated another way, a governmental body may vote in closed session if voting in open session would compromise the need for a closed session,” Hughes explained.

“In the past the Village has taken steps to improve both the appearance and vitality of the downtown business area. It has done this through the purchasing and selling of property; the improving of sidewalks and street lighting; and grants to businesses if they wanted to do improvements. I view this as a continuation of those efforts. With the economy showing signs of growth, now is the time to be proactive and do what we can to move our entire community ahead to a brighter future. By improving the downtown block we not only will make room for future merchants to offer their services to us, we also help those who are already there by increasing the number of people who will have a reason to come downtown to shop.”

"This bold venture is tremendously good news for the Library,” continued Library Director Kris Daugherty. “It is a wonderful opportunity to capitalize on the momentum of increased Library use by having a plan for the future, which will provide a Library facility that will be able to better accommodate our many activities and allow us to further expand our programs,” Daugherty said.

“This announcement shows that the Village of Poynette values the dissemination of knowledge. This project will result in a sense of pride that, I hope, can be a catalyst to future growth. Nothing succeeds like success and I am thankful to Poynette’s Trustees, past and current, on acting for the needs of the Library and insuring that our Village continues to grow into a place that families and businesses are proud to call ‘home’,” concluded Daugherty.

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