

**Village of Cambridge
Economic Development Committee
Amundson Community Center-Community Room
200 Spring St. Cambridge, WI 53523
Monday July 18, 2022 5:30 p.m.**

Agenda

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Proof of Posting
3. Invited Guest Speaker- Deb Reinbold- Thrive ED
4. Public Appearances/Citizen Input
5. Approval of Minutes from January 26,2022 & June 20, 2022
6. Old Business: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding:
 - a. Update on Welcome to Cambridge Signs
 - b. Review of Kayla Sipples email regarding broader discussion topics
 - c. Smart Growth-sent in email 6.22.2022 large file
 - d. Article - The State of Historic Preservation Today
7. Setting of next meeting date
8. Questions, Referrals to Staff or Future Agenda Items
9. Adjournment

NOTE:

1. Persons needing special accommodations should call 423-3712 at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
2. A quorum of the Village Board may attend this meeting for the purpose of gathering information relevant to their responsibilities as Village Trustees. No matters shall be considered by said Village Board members nor shall any action be taken by said Village Board members at this meeting.
3. More specific information about agenda items may be obtained by calling 423-3712.

Chrissie Brynwood, Treasurer

Village of Cambridge
Economic Development Committee
Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 5:30 p.m.

Due to the increase in COVID 19 cases in Dane County, we are returning to Virtual Meetings. You will be able to join the meeting any time after 5:20 p.m. Members of the Village Board and the public may attend by:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/96268080573?pwd=OXY1YWpEcW1kRC96WDVxcVF2d2ZYdz09>

Meeting ID: 962 6808 0573

Passcode: 707924

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Passcode: 707924

Find your local number: <https://zoom.us/u/ag021E9Hu>

Minutes

1. Call to Order/Roll Call Chairperson Galler called the meeting to order at 5:32pm. Members present: Chris Krueger, Christianne Laing, Kevin Mehringer. Absent Dave Kratovil. Others present: Lisa Moen, Administrator/Clerk/Deputy Treasurer, Chrissie Brynwood, Treasurer; Mark McNally, Kayla Sipple, South Central Landscape, Beau Bunce, Dancing Goat Distillery; Dean Lund; Karyn Saemann, Cambridge News, Richard Nelson.
2. Proof of Posting-The Agenda was posted in the upper and lower levels of the Amundson Community Center, Hometown Bank, Cambridge Post Office, and the Village Web Site.
3. Public Appearances/Citizen Input-

- a. Beau Bunce, Marketing Director for the Dancing Goat Distillery spoke in regards to the last appearance by Carol Sapienza with Jefferson County Tourism and their partnership with Discover Wisconsin. Discover Wisconsin has chosen their Distillery to air a show about them in the Spring. He stated Wisconsin is home to 30 distilleries and they were one of four chosen. There is also a half hour segment that will air about the Dancing Goat Distillery for Building Wisconsin which will reach 350 thousand viewers. Trustee Galler also mentioned to Mr. Bunce that he should reach out to Wisconsin Foodie another television show.
- b. Kayla Sipple- South Central Landscape- Appreciative that the Welcome to Cambridge signs discussion is on the agenda tonight. She also mentioned the need to be transparent about meeting dates. Administrator Moen explained the difficulty is scheduling meetings due to conflicts of other meetings that have already been set. Ms. Sipple also mentioned the need of committee members to regularly attend these meetings because no attendance slows down the progress. Ms. Sipple also mentioned that she would be interested in being on this committee. And made it clear that she does not want to take anyone off, but just would like to be involved.

4. Approval of Minutes from November 30, 2021

Trustee Galler made a motion to approve the Minutes from November 30, 2021 meeting, seconded by Christianne Laing. Motion carried.

5. Old Business: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding:

- a. Welcome to Cambridge Signs- Administrator Moen explained that she had set up an account at the Government level but has not heard anything back yet. She also mentioned the need for parcel agreements with the property owners of where the signs will be placed. Trustee Galler has been calling the sign company and hasn't heard from them yet.
- b. Public Works Sign-Administrator Moen stated that Director Breunig had this sign designed by the sign company for the Public Works building. Trustee Galler questioned where this sign would be placed? Administrator Moen did not know. Trustee Galler asked for this be tabled until further information can be given. Trustee Galler also mentioned that this would not be good to have this sign created before the Welcome to Cambridge signs.
- c. Kris and Nadine Breunig Offer to Purchase Land-Administrator Moen mentioned that Ben Becker, real estate agent, set the price of \$10,000 for the two parcel of land that are behind his home.

Trustee Galler made a motion to approve the sale of the land to Kris and Nadine Breunig in the amount of \$10,000, seconded by Chris Kreuger. Motion carried.

- d. Possible Sale of Slivers of Land-Trustee Galler questioned the committee if selling these slivers of land would be feasible for the Village of Cambridge to do at this time. The committee agreed to revisit this topic later.
 - e. Former Melster Site- Administrator Moen stated when Amigo Construction made mention to possibly rent the site to store his construction equipment, it sparked a conversation in regard to the Developers agreement. Administrator Moen stated she was meeting with At Home Again next week. She also mentioned that there are issues that need to be addressed per the agreement.
- 6. Setting of next meeting date- February 24, 2022 5:30 p.m.
 - 7. Questions, Referrals to Staff or Future Agenda Items
 - 8. Adjournment

Trustee Galler adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

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Chrissie Brynwood Treouser

**Village of Cambridge
Economic Development Committee
Amundson Community Center-Community Room
200 Spring St. Cambridge, WI 53523
Monday June 20, 2022 6:00 p.m.**

Minutes

1. Call to Order/Roll Call Chairperson Hollenbeck, Chris Krueger, Christianne Laing, Kevin Mehringer & Kayla Sipple present.
2. Proof of Posting-The Agenda was posted in the upper and lower levels of the Amundson Community Center, Hometown Bank, Badger Bank, Cambridge Post Office.
3. Public Appearances/Citizen Input-None
4. Approval of Minutes from January 26, 2022-Treasurer Brynwood did not include them in the packet, she will include them in the next meetings packet.
5. Old Business: Discussion and Possible Action Regarding:
 - a. Welcome to Cambridge Signs-Treasurer Brynwood told the committee that she, as well as Administrator Moen have left messages and have not heard back from Busch Signs. Ms. Sipple said she would take on the task of getting in touch with them. McNally suggests contacting company to get deposit back and go to a different sign company.
 - b. Review of Kayla Sipples email regarding broader discussion topics – committee discussed several different key points from the email. Commissioner Hollenbeck questioned what some key points from Kayla's email are. Ms. Laing stated the topic of what the village could look like in 10-15 years would be something the committee could address going forward. Two business' in the outskirts of Cambridge are wanting to expand but have no areas to expand. Ongoing discussions to continue going forward.
 - c. Smart Growth-MD Roffers sample from Village of Marshall-Gave an updated Smart Growth plan from MD Roffers that village can choose what exactly they want in the plan. Committee asked for Treasurer Brynwood to provide them with the current Smart Growth plan.
6. Setting of next meeting date-July 18th 5:30

7. Questions, Referrals to Staff or Future Agenda Items
Would like a sign placed on the end of the Cam Rock bike path directing people to use restrooms at Westside Park.

8. Adjournment Commissioner Laing made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Sipple, Chairperson Hollenbeck adjourned the meeting at 7:24 p.m.

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Chrissie Brynwood, Treasurer

Christin Brynwood

From: Paula Hollenbeck
Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2022 2:26 PM
To: Christin Brynwood; Lisa Moen
Subject: Re: Agenda item suggestions for economic development mtg

Hello Christin, As we put an agenda together for the Economic development committee meeting, I would like to include a review of this email from Kayla. She brings up a lot of good points and I would like the committee to determine what our next action items should be.

Thank you,
Paula

From: Kayla Sipple <kayla@sclandscapeswi.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 11, 2022 7:33 PM
To: Paula Hollenbeck <PaulaHollenbeck@ci.cambridge.wi.us>
Subject: Agenda item suggestions for economic development mtg
Hi Paula,

It was nice chatting with you yesterday, and I look forward to working with you in advancing growth initiatives in the Village. I have a few ideas that could be worthwhile to discuss at an upcoming meeting. Some of these are actionable items and some are just broader discussion topics. As the Chair, you can determine what topics, if any, are of interest.

Broader discussion topics:

- **What issues are important to committee members?** Aside from the general topic of encouraging economic development in the Village, I'm interested to know what *specific ideas* committee members have to further this goal.
 - I think this point relates to the "what are we?" question that had been discussed at length in previous months, but is perhaps a bit more of a pointed question. Rather than a broad, existential question, I'm interested in what individual committee members bring to the table. While I don't necessarily expect committee members to bring new ideas to the table every month, I think bringing some specific ideas and possible solutions to the table occasionally keeps members accountable and demonstrates that members are genuinely interested in contributing to the committee.
 - Related questions:
 - What do committee members envision Cambridge looking like in 10-20 years?
 - Alternatively, what do committee members *want* Cambridge to look like in 10-20 years?
- **What issues are important to existing businesses in the community?** I think getting a pulse on what kind of partnership our businesses are interested in fostering with the Village is important. While economic development requires growth, retaining our existing businesses is just as important.
- **Neighborhood density:** Dense neighborhoods with built-in amenities are attractive to both current and future residents. Is the Village open to higher density neighborhoods containing both single family and multi-family housing *alongside* retail, etc.? (In my mind perhaps this looks something like a multi-family building with first

floor retail similar to Main Street.) I'm not advocating for Cambridge to morph into something like downtown Madison, but more walkable neighborhoods with direct access to goods and services is smart city planning.

- Based on historical context I would expect a project like this to garner pushback from existing residents, especially those with existing homes that would be within close proximity to a neighborhood development like this. Is there a suitable location anywhere in Cambridge for something like this? (Perhaps the Westgate Development lot behind Kwik Trip, or redevelopment of the motel/laundry building, Melster's site, etc?)
 - Not sure if this topic is more suited to the Plan Commission or perhaps both committees.
- **Land annexation:** Has the committee ever provided any serious consideration to this topic? Economic development planning seems unproductive if no available land exists to develop. Based on the Koshkonog Solar plans, it seems that option may be limited on some sides of town, but not impossible. I understand that annexation is complicated and costs taxpayer money that the Village doesn't necessarily have, but still think it could be worthwhile to at least discuss.
 - **What are other municipalities of similar sizes outlining in their economic development plans?** Just another "jumping off" point to consider. (The economic development plans for many of our neighboring municipalities are publicly available within the PSC filings for Koshkonog Solar.)
 - **What can the Village do to actively attract and/or recruit businesses and development?** Is this something the Village is interested in doing?
 - Is there room for a professional economic development coordinator position like what had been held previously by Linda Korth? Not proactively recruiting new businesses and/or development seems like a missed opportunity.

Action items:

- **Welcome to Cambridge signs:** Various entities have been working on this initiative for apparently nearly two decades?? I genuinely cannot conceptualize why this process has taken so long. Prior to Carla Galler's departure, she was leading the effort on this. I believe we are very close to the finish line, and I think materializing the installation of these signs is low hanging fruit and a great "feel good" story to show that the committee is making tangible accomplishments.
- **Long range plans for the Village:** I would encourage the committee to ask the Village to reupload the Smart Growth 2025 and economic development plans to the Village website. Both pages currently pull up a 404 error message. I am personally interested in reviewing both documents and have requested both documents on multiple occasions.
 - Has the committee reviewed either document in recent history? While perhaps both of these documents are somewhat dated, I assume they contain relevant information that could be useful in encouraging economic growth. I understand that the Village plans to revisit the Smart Growth plan in the next few years.
 - Has the development of Cambridge followed the outline of either plan? Why or why not? I'd be interested in learning more about what factors have contributed to the "compliance" or deviation from the plans. I think the answers to these questions could help guide the committee.
 - Question: I know that Linda Korth played a big role in economic development in Cambridge in the past. Did her vacancy play any sort of significant role in compliance or deviation from the plans?
- **Map of Village limits:** Where can the public find a map of the municipal limits? This sounds like a simple question but I have struggled to find an accurate, comprehensive map that is easy to digest and read.

- While I am interested in this personally as a tool to assist with planning for my company's expansion, I also think this information would be useful to the committee in determining where development is even possible within the Village limits.
- Note: There is a map of the Village that is listed on the Village website (pulled from Google Maps). I question if this is 100% accurate. Is the current Kwik Trip location really in the Town of Christiana?
- **Identifying "vacant" parcels within Village limits:** This is related to the map suggestion as well as the land "slivers" that had been discussed. I understand that there are very few Village-owned parcels that are open/vacant and have development potential. However, I think it could be useful to identify vacant parcels that are privately owned. From there, potential developers could take the initiative to contact landowners to discuss a sale if desired.
 - In an ideal scenario I'd envision this looking like a list of plots or addresses essentially. I don't necessarily expect the Village to gather and maintain contact information of private landowners.
 - In full transparency, I have personal interest in this point. I am actively seeking a ~5 acre parcel to purchase this year for my company. I intend to build a new warehouse and office facility within the next 2-3 years. I hope to have the opportunity to keep my business rooted in Cambridge but am facing extremely limited land availability.
- **Utility costs:** Where can potential developers find information related to expected utility costs within the Village? For example, some municipalities have a "calculator" of sorts that provides general projections of what utility costs might look like for a building by entering different variables.
- **Permitting process:** I think it would be useful to develop a fact sheet or informational guide for developers on how to navigate the Village's permit process.
 - 1. Assuming a proposed development fits within current zoning regulations, how does a potential developer gauge the Village's interest in approving a project prior to the developer purchasing land and submitting a building permit application?
 - For example: It is not in the interest of a potential builder to wait until the building permit process for a project to be outright denied. At that point, the land may already be purchased (or purchase contingent) and thousands of dollars have likely been spent on development planning (architect, etc.). Is there some kind of "soft approval" process a builder can use to approach the Village to determine if this is something the Village is even interested in considering? Obviously a detailed plan would need to be submitted to the Village for *final* approval or denial. I'm more so wondering about the very premature planning stages for a potential builder.
 - 2. At an Economic Development meeting last year, [Victoria Pratt of Thrive Economic Development](#) spoke to the committee and mentioned something about a fast track permit process, where developers would be able to receive an approval or rejection within a 30 day timeframe. She mentioned this was a popular selling point for municipalities to pitch to attract new development.
- **Sourcing and applying for funding and grants:** It is my understanding that various grant funding programs are available to municipalities via the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation. I think the committee should explore what options might be available to provide targeted financial assistance in furthering growth and/or retention efforts.

I've outlined quite a few topics and I certainly don't expect the committee to take up all (or any) of these ideas. Just some things I've been considering in recent months. If you'd ever like to discuss any of these topics in more detail, I'm happy to chat over a phone call or coffee.

Finally, I want to sincerely thank you for offering my name as a candidate for the open committee position. I grew up in Cambridge, moved away for some time, and then returned to base my business here. We have an incredible, vibrant and

caring community here. I am so proud that my business is based here and connected to this community. I am eager to work with you and the committee to ensure we have a thriving Village for years to come.

Thank you,
Kayla

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The State of Historic Preservation Today

June 27, 2022|Places

By: Joe Lawniczak, Wisconsin Main Street
June, 2022

We've come a long way – do we remember the struggle? Are there lessons learned?



Triangle Market in downtown Madison.

The other day, I was watching the classic movie “Scarface.” There’s one part of the movie where Al Pacino goes to a run-down hotel room in South Beach, Miami. When “Scarface” was filmed in 1983, the entire district was deteriorated and in desperate need of preservation. Today, South Beach is a glamorous mecca, known for its iconic, historic, art deco hotels, its glitzy nightlife, and its high-end restaurants and boutiques. The run-down hotel in the movie is one of those now-famous art deco hotels. It struck me that “Scarface” wasn’t filmed back in the 1950s or ‘60s. This was during my teen years, just 39 years ago.

I’ve seen recent photos of CBGB, the legendary New York night club where nearly every punk musician across the globe has played at least once. It was a run-down dive with filthy bathrooms in a rough

part of town, but it was iconic. Today, it's a high-end fashion store and is next-door to an upscale franchise retailer. Many of the old musicians and patrons wouldn't recognize it if they walked by.

Last month, I was in Staunton, VA, for a tour of this stunningly preserved and vibrant historic gem. This city has been on my bucket list for decades because of its amazing downtown, nestled in the mountains. It looks today like an area that no one would ever have questioned saving. So, I was surprised to learn of the almost-constant struggles that advocates had, from the 1950s through the 1990s, trying to convince local leaders not to demolish entire swaths of downtown. It reminded me of similar stories in Savannah, GA; Providence, RI; St. Augustine, FL; South Beach and countless other historic cities that are now world-famous tourist destinations—only because citizen groups, decades ago, rallied and fought to save them from the wrecking ball.



Broadway District in Green Bay in 1995 (top) and after revitalization efforts began (bottom)

Closer to home, I vividly remember the Broadway District in Green Bay, as recently as the mid-1990s. This area had suffered for decades from massive lack of investment, deterioration, crime, poverty and neglect. It was known for its pawn shops, adult bookstores and dive bars. No events were held on Broadway. Few parents let their kids go

there alone. But in the mid-1990s, a group of Broadway businesses banded together to create On Broadway, Inc., and the area became a designated Main Street district. Slowly, they worked to build confidence in the area from the private sector, the city began investing in streetscape improvements, and building by building, the area eventually became one of Green Bay's top downtown destinations. It is now home to breweries, boutiques, public art, restaurants, housing, events and one of the state's most successful farmers markets. This would have been unthinkable in 1995.

Today, across Wisconsin, we see tiny rural villages, quaint small towns, and larger cities all with thriving downtowns. Even the smallest of our communities have murals, public art, farmers markets, outdoor concerts, breweries, wineries, boutiques, B&Bs and more. Old factories, warehouses, gas stations and schools are being converted into downtown housing, retail, commercial or entertainment spaces. No longer do we need to preach about the importance of downtowns or historic buildings. People seem to get it—finally. It truly seems to be a heyday for our communities.

But with all of this success comes challenges. And several key challenges need to be addressed now, before it's too late. First and foremost: We need to remind people of the tremendous amount of work it took to get to this point. Even those of us who lived through the struggles are prone to forget how hard it was. We get so used to the way things are now, we rarely stop to think back.

It is also my opinion that we need to reign in much of the overbuilding occurring in many cities today. I am extremely proud of the 35 years that Wisconsin Main Street has worked in historic commercial districts, and of the millions of hours invested by dedicated local staff and volunteers. Together, we've transformed downtowns into places where people want to be instead of places only for the less fortunate. But with that, we've also made many of them unaffordable to a large segment of the population. And while I will always believe that places like Broadway in Green Bay desperately needed to be revitalized, I still have friends from the area who long for its grittier days.

Admittedly, we've lost a lot of the dents and dings and rust that made downtowns unique even as we have helped them thrive in communities, both large and small, throughout Wisconsin. But in some aspects, a lot of them are beginning to look the same. Many downtown areas seem as safe and tidy as a suburban shopping center, as we've cleaned away most of the patina and character. While some of that cleaning was needed, have we gone too far in that effort?

The effects of housing in our districts

The pandemic has forced us to learn to function remotely. This means many people can live almost anywhere and are not tied down to an office or a specific location. Our downtowns are reaping the benefits of that, because they have so many of the attributes people are looking for today, such as culture, convenience and recreation. But at the same time, some negative side effects are resulting.

In many communities, there is an enormous lack of housing, especially affordable workforce housing. And as cities race to add new single-family suburban or large-scale multifamily developments, they often forget about the vacant or underutilized upper floors of downtown buildings that are prime for this type of development.

In many larger cities, even though huge numbers of new housing units are being built to meet the demand, it's important to realize that living downtown is hip and trendy now. While this new development boom may satisfy current demand, I fear that once this trend subsides, many of our cities are going to be stuck with a glut of empty residential buildings littering downtown. Renovating existing upper floor spaces is far more sustainable because it doesn't require new construction or new land, and those spaces already are served by utilities.



Large scale housing developments like this may be filling the current need for downtown residential, but many of them are replacing the Main Street-scale buildings that made downtown desirable in the first place. And if this current market for downtown housing wanes, will our downtowns be filled with vacant condo and apartment towers?

In addition, far too many of these newly constructed housing developments require the demolition of smaller Main Street-scale buildings. But it is these smaller buildings that give downtowns their pedestrian scale and friendliness. They are what make downtowns desirable in the first place. And ground floor spaces in these existing buildings are often more affordable to local businesses than similar spaces in new developments. They also tend to have more character.

Both the lack of housing and the overbuilding of new upscale developments are driving housing prices skyward, forcing many of the people who work in the downtown restaurants and retail businesses to look outside of the downtown area just to find affordable housing. This then taxes our public transit or transportation infrastructure, and the extra commute times—and additional gas—needed by workers can negate any other green or sustainability efforts a community might undertake.

And for those who decide to live downtown, especially in upscale apartments or condos, the convenience of living downtown can be offset by the additional noise from events, concert venues, outdoor dining, etc. These are all things that make our downtowns desirable and some even give them a bit of that positive urban character, but

many new residents begin to complain about the noise, which creates friction.

Trends are not forever

Another trend that is having an impact on downtowns is the popularity of home improvement television shows. As a design specialist working with property owners on their façade renovation designs, I see the influence of these shows regularly. On the surface, that's a good thing because it gets people thinking about design, and most renovations they feature are vast improvements over what was there. But in some cases, they show things that would be inappropriate from a preservation aspect—such as demolition of original windows or painting exterior brick—or they do things that are trendy at the moment, such as using ship lap or bold colors.

I am both a designer and a preservationist, so I don't shy away from introducing bold or modern elements when they are appropriate. In most cases, I consider the character of the building, the business and the district when determining what is right or wrong for a particular renovation. But I've noticed that a lot of property owners are now asking for the same or similar features over and over again, regardless of the building, because they saw them on television.

It's important to realize that by nature, trends change, and things that are in style now may look outdated in a few years. A perfect example is happening in a community that I won't name. This city is doing a lot of great things downtown, and a lot of property owners are making building improvements. But many of them have asked me to design their renovation using black paint on the brick. In many cases, they want this on previously unpainted brick, which, in this climate, is not appropriate. The ironic thing is in this same community, back in the 1970s, almost an entire block of buildings was painted black and it was an eyesore for decades until the paint was finally stripped off less than 10 years ago. Just 10 years ago, yet no one seems to remember it. That reinforces my earlier point that we need to continually remind people of what our downtowns were like before this most recent revitalization boom. That way we can appreciate how far the effort has come, and we can avoid making the same mistakes twice.



An entire block of black paint, applied during the 1970's when it was trendy, is being removed after decades of it looking dated and deteriorated. We need to resist the urge to follow similar current trends that will also be outdated soon.

Embracing technology while preserving the past

Energy efficiency initiatives have also had an impact on preservation recently. Energy efficiency and sustainability are vitally important for countless reasons, but often, initiatives can have unintended consequences. For example, I recently read about a new federal grant that will help to fund replacement of windows in low-income households if the windows are five years old or more. Five years. That is the threshold for replacement. All that is doing is contributing to the throwaway mentality of our society. And the fact is: Throwing five-year-old windows into a landfill and replacing them with new ones that require all new materials and energy to manufacture is likely worse for the environment than any air infiltration that might occur in the existing windows. Chances are the existing windows, especially the older, wood-framed type, can be repaired and/or have storm windows added, which can create just as much energy efficiency as most replacement windows. The International Energy Conservation Code also rewards owners for replacement over and above window repair or restoration. This needs to change. [The Environmental Protection Agency addresses this contradiction here.](#)

In many cases, it might actually be the lack of insulation that is causing energy efficiency issues, not the windows. The problem is: Installing insulation improperly can harm historic buildings. Many energy codes also go too far, in my opinion, in making buildings too airtight. Buildings need to be able to breathe. If they're too airtight or

too insulated, not only do they require more artificial ventilation through the HVAC system—which requires more energy to run—but the lack of any natural airflow in our walls can aid in the formation of mold and mildew in damp areas.

In some cases, it is the preservation advocates themselves who create problems for preservation. While it is absolutely important for a local design review board to protect the historic integrity of structures, the boards can often become overzealous and unwilling to compromise. Solar panels are a good example. In many cities, local ordinances allow them as long as they are not visible from the primary façades, and as long as they don't damage or obstruct important architectural elements. But some review boards don't allow them on historic structures at all. Compromises need to be reached in cases such as these, because items such as solar panels can have a positive impact on our reliance on nonrenewable resources. If it can be done in a less visible way, then by all means, they should be allowed. If preservationists lose the support of energy-conscious citizens, they will be losing a natural ally, which will make preservation advocacy that much harder. Plus, most historic buildings have had to embrace other new technologies in the past, such as electricity and plumbing. Things like solar panels should be no different.

Building codes and the code officials who review them have an enormous impact on historic buildings and preservation, especially in mixed-use commercial buildings. Despite the fact that there are hundreds of existing buildings for every new one built, most training for code officials focuses solely on new construction. Even many architects are unaware of all the options and code paths that exist for renovations to existing buildings. Because of that, far too many local building inspectors and state code reviewers force new building standards on building renovations. This can make projects with already-tight budgets become financially infeasible and result in vacant buildings, storefronts or upper floors. Such vacancies are not only detrimental to the vibrancy of downtown, they also pose a safety concern for fire and police departments.

For this reason, the Association for Preservation Technology has created a technical codes committee and a specific task force focused on codes related to Main Street districts. Among other things, this task force has developed a three-day virtual code workshop for existing Main Street buildings. It will be held August 2-4, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. CDT, each day. The three days will include a series of 45-minute sessions and one two-and-a-half-hour deep dive segment. The sessions are open to anyone, including code officials, architects, contractors, property owners, developers and Main Street practitioners across the country. More information and registration for the workshop can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/58fybxzt>

In conclusion



A 1930s gas station in Gordon, Wisconsin was simply repainted to show locals its potential for reuse. Images by Brian Finstad

In spite of all the challenges, I'll be the first to admit that sometimes we can overthink historic preservation. When faced with a threat to historic buildings, we tend to panic or make it far too complicated. But consider the example set in tiny Gordon, WI—population 600—where a 1930s catalogue-order gas station that was the last of its kind was deteriorating. The only solution from local citizens and leaders seemed to be demolition. Then, a small group of citizens banded together and decided, simply, to repaint the exterior. The

roof, structure, site and interior still needed a lot of work, but the fresh coat of paint allowed people to see the building's potential. Immediately, people began to talk about how to save it rather than how long before it would have to be demolished.

These are the key issues facing historic preservation today, as I see it. Hopefully, this column has been thought-provoking and provided some ideas that you can take away as a village or city leader, preservationist, property owner, planner, code official or advocate. Ideally, the downtown revitalization trend we've seen over the past few decades will continue for the foreseeable future, and some of the unintended or less-favorable consequences will be addressed at all levels to make the results more sustainable and accessible for all.