



WEXFORD WATCH



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Editor

David Tolmie,
7434 Sawmill Rd.

Submissions in writing by the fifteenth of each odd month to wexfordwatch@yahoo.com

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Wexford Board News by Don Michalski

The Wexford Village Annual Meeting was held on Wednesday, November 30th at the Dean West Clinic. Guest speakers included Mayor Dave Cieslewicz, Alderperson Paul Skidmore, and state representative Sondy Pope-Roberts.

Mayor Cieslewicz presented some comments about new programs offered by the City of Madison, reorganization of various departments, and presented some insights into the 2006 budget. He also answered questions from the audience. Concerns addressed included police patrols and coverage, traffic control, ambulance coverage, and overall tax burdens.

Paul Skidmore and Sondy Pope-Roberts offered comments about the issues that affected the Madison City Council and the State of Wisconsin Legislature, respectively.

A gift of \$250 was presented to the Madison Capital Canines as a gift of appreciation for the role of the Madison Police Department on the apprehension of the individuals involved in the April vandalism incident.

A summary of events during 2005 within Wexford Village include the following:

1. The April, 2005 vandalism incident to the greenway lights has been resolved. Full reparations were made by the offending youths and their families.
2. Other major light repairs were required in the Saukdale and Harvest Hill area. That area was damaged during construction this summer. We are sorry for the inconvenience to the residents around Apple Hill and Highgate Circle. That area will be unlit this winter due to an uncorrectable problem that developed before the frost set in for the winter.
3. Covenant issues have been at a minimum this past year. There is one unresolved covenant issue that will go to court in May 2006.
4. Greenway care is a major expense of our association, we have new contracts for the grass mowing, and also for snow plowing. We will need to address the concerns by many residents about the future maintenance of the 36 circle islands that are the responsibility of our association.
5. There were several projects that included the care of Wexford Park and the Wexford sign areas at two of our major entrances. We continue to need volunteers for these projects.
6. The new Wexford Directory is scheduled to be published during April 2006.

The dues for residents of Wexford Village will remain at \$75 for 2006. Notices will be mailed to all homeowners during January 2006.

Alder News from Paul Skidmore

Fall has departed and winter has settled onto Madison. We have a beautiful cover of snow and drivers are getting used to snowy roads once again. Please remember to drive safely and defensively, as speeding and traffic management continue to be the number one complaint that I receive from 9th District residents. We have had several bad traffic accidents and one near fatality on our neighborhood streets this past year, all of which occurred during good driving conditions. Also, please remember to be careful with fireplaces, holiday lighting, space heaters, candles, and smoking materials. Recently, we had a fatality due to a fire in an apartment in the 9th district. Please make sure that your smoke detectors are in good working order and that you not place yourself or your family at risk due to fires.

This year's City budget discussion has been as interesting and intense as any that we have had in the recent past. The State legislature and Governor, as a part of the State budget process, approved a cap on the increase in the local property tax levy of about 4.1%. However, due to technicality, the City of Madison could have been able to increase the property tax levy by more than 7%. Many of my colleagues, and the mayor felt that this was a bad idea, since raising taxes would send a bad message to taxpayers as well as State Government. The mayor's proposed executive budget included an increase in the tax levy of about 3.95%, well below the State mandated limit. The mayor challenged the Council to approve a budget that kept the increase in the tax levy below 4.1%. Ten members of the Common Council (including myself) accepted his challenge and pledged not to vote to approve a budget above 4.1%. Furthermore, we pledged not to vote for amendments that would increase the budget if we did not vote for amendments that would decrease the budget and maintain the 4.1% tax levy increase. After debating and voting on almost 50 proposed amendments to the operational budget, I was disappointed in the final budget that we were asked to approve. I, along with 6 of my colleagues voted against the budget. The City budget passed on a 13 - 7 roll call vote, and the Mayor signed it the following day. Here are some of my assessments of the 2006 City of Madison approved budget, and reasons for me voting against it.

1. The budget included total spending of about \$203,000,000.00
2. Total spending increased by about 5.9%
3. The property tax levy increased by about 4.35%
4. Fees (which do not show up on your property tax bill) increased by about 17%
5. We transferred about \$500,000.00 from our rainy day fund to the budget.
6. We increased funding for Madison Metro by about \$500,000.00 more than requested in the Mayor's executive budget, even though there was no attempt to identify or solve the problems associated with the transit system.
7. There were several other proposed amendments that were defeated that could have increased the city budget and raised the tax levy even higher. I voted against these amendments.

On the positive side, there were a several items in the Mayor's executive budget and amendments by the Common Council that are very positive:

1. We increased the commissioned strength of the Madison Police Department by 10 officers.
2. We will be opening 5 new neighborhood parks in the City (one of which on the far west side of the 9th District).
3. We will be opening Fire Station #11 in 2006. This is the first new fire station in Madison in about 25 years.
4. We will begin planning for construction of a new Fire Station #12 in 2006. This station will be located in or near the new University Research Park west of CTY M and south of Mineral Point Road in the 9th District.

Finally, there are a couple of significant items that the Common Council will be debating in the coming months:

1. A local sick leave ordinance that would require business owners who have employees who work within the City limits to provide paid sick leave.
2. A keg registration ordinance that would regulate the number of kegs of beer that could be possessed in residential districts (I have sponsored this ordinance). The purpose of this ordinance is to regulate the amount of alcohol available at unsanctioned house parties and reduce the number of problems associated with over-consumption and underage consumption.
3. I expect a serious debate on the Madison Metro system and mass transit in general in the coming months. Mass transit, and transit systems in general are an important part of our community, and we need to manage them effectively. Traffic management continues to be the number one complaint that I receive from 9th District residents.

Thanks to all of you who have called or e-mailed me with your comments or questions. Please feel free to contact me with questions, and concerns at:

E-Mail: district9@cityofmadison.com Phone: 829-3425

NOTE from Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk

I am writing this article during the first snow of the season. The outdoor farmers markets will not return until spring, and we are about to enter the winter holiday season. I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight a couple of recent activities and accomplishments as 2005 draws to a close.

In my fall newsletter contribution I mentioned that I was finalizing the 2006 county budget. That process is now complete. The Dane County Board of Supervisors approved the budget on November 9. I signed it, with no vetoes, on November 10. The \$427 million budget includes an operating budget of \$403 million and a capital budget of \$23 million. Working together with the County Board, we have increased public safety, preserved human services programs and protected our natural resources for Dane County citizens.

The second activity that I would like to share with you is related to gangs. We all know that Dane County is a unique and wonderful community to live in. And there are ways in which we are not so unique. We are not immune to the kinds of challenges that confront other communities of comparable size across the country. Dane County is affected by the presence and allure of gangs for some of our young people, and we must respond in an effective and coordinated manner.

The Dane County Neighborhood Intervention Program (NIP) has worked with gang involved youth and those who were susceptible for gang involvement for many years. NIP does this critically important work with the many partners who have joined together to participate on the Dane County Gang Prevention Task Force, the wonderful and committed body of people that has representatives from schools, the juvenile court system, law enforcement and other interested and dedicated agencies and individuals.

We know that gangs change over time. For example, the face of gangs is literally changing. There are increasing numbers of females involved in gangs, and rising violence among girls and young women is a cause for community concern. And gangs don't look the way they used to. Some gangs are incredibly diverse, with members of several racial, ethnic and economic groups belonging to the same gang. One challenge we face is how to extract the positive (for example, an interest in diversity) from the negative which manifests in violence and other behaviors that threaten to dilute the assets of this community.

To add to the work we are already doing in the gang prevention area, the 2006 county budget adds two full time gang squad positions to the Neighborhood Intervention Program. These efforts coordinated with the broad range of community partnerships represented by the Dane County Youth Gang Prevention Task Force will provide Dane County with positive approaches to tough and persistent challenges.

Thank you for all you do to make this an even better community. I hope that you have a wonderful winter, and I look forward to writing you again in the spring.

Library News

Some highlights of events at the Alicia Ashman Branch:

- ★ Saturday, December 17 --10:00 a.m. Gingerbread Cookie Fun. Run run as fast as you can, you can't catch me I'm the Gingerbread Man! Catch stories, games and more at this fast-paced family program. Each child will get to decorate and take home a gingerbread cookie. Children ages 6 and under need to be accompanied by an adult. Registration is required. Call 824-1780 to register two weeks in advance.
- ★ Saturday, December 24 - Monday, December 26 and Saturday, December 31 - Monday, January 2nd. **All Madison Public Libraries closed for Holiday.** We're closed for the holiday, but you can still use the library! Return items via our book drops at each location, place holds or renew items via LINKcat, renew or check on your items with the TeleCirc system, or ask us a question anytime.

Open Monday through Friday: 9:00 - 9:00 and Saturday: 9:00 - 5:00

See the website for full details: <http://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/about/ashman.html>



LOST / FOUND

If you left a couple of lawn chairs at the last Wexford Junior Soccer League practice, Randy is holding them in storage for you! Please call Randy Ruplinger at 836-9170 to help him make room for more toys for his precious children.

Wexford Park News:

- ★ I want to thank everyone that volunteered in the park this year to help make it a great park for all to enjoy. At the Earth Day Spring clean up, a lot of trash was collected and brush was trimmed. Then in May the flower gardens were prepared and planted. The trails through the woods were cleaned out and over 50 cubic yards of bark mulch was spread on them this summer. Throughout the summer the trees in the park were watered. Thanks to a special group of people, new playground equipment was added this fall. At the Fall Park Neighborhood Day, 15 new trees were planted in the park. All these things were made possible by the help from all the great volunteers. Thanks again everyone.

Now that winter is here it is time to think about **Ice-Skating** in the park. We want to flood the ice skating rinks in the park again this year, but we need your help. Many volunteers are needed to put a fresh coat of water on the rink every night/day and to clear any snow off the rink (The Parks Dept. will plow it for us if the snowfall is 2 or more inches). This is a great opportunity to get a little exercise this winter, meet your neighbors and enjoy the fresh clean air. Students are also encouraged to sign up with your friends to help keep the ice in shape and enjoy skating. Please call or email me for more info. or to sign up. Even if you haven't signed up feel free to stop over to the rink and help at anytime. Thanks
Ken Schmidt 831-3089 kschdt@charter.net

- ★ The Wexford Park Family Work Day was a complete success. On October 15th, fifteen families worked together to plant trees, spread mulch on the trails, weed the flower beds, and clean-up the area where the ice rink will be this winter. We would like to offer a special thank you to Thrivent Financial for Lutherans for donating \$1,600 to purchase the trees, a hose to water the trees, and food for the work day; Atlanta Bread Company for donating lunches for the kids; and McDonalds for donating orange drink. Thank you for all who volunteered. (Jean Duffy)



Randy, Trevor & Kayla Ruplinger

Other Info

- ★ Dave Tolmie is looking to form a Polar Plunge team that will represent the Wexford community. He has formed a team that is tentatively called "The Wexford Ice Breakers." This event supports Special Olympics Wisconsin. Please consider joining the team, and help put a smile on the face of a child that puts meaning behind good sportsmanship. Let's show our neighborhood spirit and caring and take the plunge with Dave. The event is scheduled for February 17th, 2006. Please contact Dave at 836-8784 or dtolmie@charter.net for more information about the event.
- ★ Let's keep our children and neighbors safe by keeping snow and ice off our sidewalks. Please remember that it is a City of Madison Ordinance to keep your sidewalks, curb cuts (if you have one), and fire hydrants free from snow and ice. If the snow plow covers up the curb cut, then you are still responsible for clearing the snow. It would be nice for the children if you were to clear a small path for them to get on and off their busses. If you have further questions about the ordinance please see the following website and bring up City Ordinance 10.28 (SNOW AND ICE TO BE REMOVED FROM SIDEWALKS):
http://library10.municode.com/gateway.dll/1?f=templates&fn=default.htm&vid=nextpage:500000&npusername=50000&nppassword=MCC&npc_credentialspresent=true
- If you have concerns about snow plowing of the streets, or problems with slippery sidewalks, go to the following website and click on "snow removal". <http://webapp.cityofmadison.com/webprojects/reporting/reportingSystem.html>
- ★ If you and your family enjoy the outdoors, consider visiting the UW Arboretum. They have many fun and fulfilling free events to enjoy by all. Check out their website for full details: <http://www.uwarboretum.org>
- ★ Be sure to check out the Wexford website for events, information, and pictures from neighborhood festivities. You can find this site at: <http://www.wexfordvillage.org>