

ASTOR

OUTLOOK



526 S. Monroe Avenue
Green Bay, WI 54301

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A Letter from the Astor Neighborhood Association President

Winter greetings to all Astor neighbors as the days are growing longer, and the holidays are behind us. As I narrowed down what I wanted to discuss in this winter letter, I went back to review what my predecessors had discussed historically and how many of those issues are still pressing and which are not so much.

For example, in each of the last few winter letters, past presidents have asked for volunteers to help with projects, and the range of benefits associated with being a volunteer. There have also been calls for those with special skills to consider joining our board to help facilitate change, present new ideas, or perhaps explore and celebrate our past as a neighborhood. This remains a challenge and we are still looking for any neighbor who meets any of these categories and would like to become a board member.

Another issue from just last year which was detailed so well by former ANA President Molly Martzke, is the status of Green Bay and whether or not it will push for Certified Local Government status. Many of us attended a meeting last January where we watched a detailed history of just exactly what that would mean to all of us. As it was proposed, it would make Green Bay's proposed CLG one of the strictest in the state. Be assured that someone will address this at our annual meeting in March as it is an idea that directly affects so many of us.

Finally, and once again, if any of you have projects you would like to see take place in our neighborhood, or you have concerns you would like to see addressed, please join us at one of our monthly meetings on the third Monday of the month at First Evangelical Lutheran Church at 6:00pm.

Best Regards,

Ron Dehn
President
Astor Neighborhood Association

Mounted Patrol Unit

2016 brought some new and exciting initiatives to policing. There was the start of our new **Mounted Patrol Unit (MPU)**. What a great way it was to finish the year. The MPU completed its fall training, took part in over 20 events in the city and brought a whole new way of community engagement.

As I look back I find it hard to believe that it was just about 5 months ago that 10 of us were in hot humid weather training with horses. Getting our patrol horses ready to work in the city took commitment from all of us. But it was well worth it to make this happen. For me, there was a passion for horse riding for quite some time.

I have taken my own horse "Sonny" on some extensive trail riding and even just simple daily rides. So it was a surprise back in August when I got done riding, stored tack and went to work. I went through some emails and then one from Lt. Dave Wesely stood out. It basically said "Organizational meeting for a Mounted Patrol Unit". I couldn't believe that this might actually happen. As time went on the Mounted Patrol members tapped into each other's knowledge and experience. Every member had their own unique background that helped make the team stronger.

As the unit started attending events in the city, it was so apparent what a draw the horses were. People came from down the streets, out of



Green Bay Police Department Mounted Patrol Unit from left to right – Paul Van Handel, Andrew Lentz, David Steffens, Luke Lansbach, Sean Hamill, Taylor Clark, Gabe Lind, Mallory Meves. Not pictured: Valerie Schupbach, Lt David Wesely

their houses and pulled their cars over to take pictures. With so much negativity in policing being reported lately, it seemed that Green Bay had found something special and positive.

If you missed us in 2016 don't worry. I plan to have horses show up this summer in St. James Park for Wednesday City Band nights, as well as patrol the Fox River Trail and downtown.

Paul Van Handel

Community Police, GBPD

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Thank You to
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Brown County District 4

Happy New Year from Brown County and the Board of Supervisors! One change which you will notice this year is that the Fox River Trail will be plowed, open, and available for year-round walking, jogging, and biking. Though this topic had been mentioned in previous sessions of the board, it was the voices of the general public which most helped convince the members of the legislature that this was something worthwhile to pursue. This originated as an idea that was mentioned to a Supervisor by a constituent. You, the public, can be an incredible and important resource for ideas – particularly when you think about the ways in your daily life the county can improve the lives of neighbors, families, and friends.

Recently a constituent mentioned that there were hardly any facilities within the county park system which allowed for tethered dogs – as a result, I will be approaching parks director and the Education and Recreation committee to determine our policies and see if a reasonable change is possible. So when you think about the important services provided by the county, raise your voice and contact me with your ideas and concerns – email Hoyer_EW@brown.co.wi.us or ewhoyer@hotmail.com or text me at **920-366-1396** to discuss your ideas. Together we can make Brown County a more livable, wonderful place.

Erik Hoyer

District 4 County Supervisor

A Letter from Your Alderman

Today I want to explain why I voted to raise the tax on an average home by \$26 for the 2017 budget. The measure was defeated and the Council and Mayor voted to keep taxes at the rate they were at last year. What the Council voted to do – to not raise taxes at all this year – was to take a one time windfall (stadium tax money) and apply it to the budget to a tune of 1 million dollars. Looking forward to next year, if the budget increases – due to inflation for example – but our tax revenue does not increase, we will be in a bind having to fund the increase from the 2017 budget (no more stadium tax money) and fund a budget increase for 2018 due to inflation.

The reason we cannot make up revenue from the year before is due to a state law enacted in the 1990s, which attempts to regulate how much every municipality raises its taxes. The city budget has to take this into consideration every year. Using a formula, the state determines how much a municipality can raise its taxes each year; if a municipality raises its taxes more than the formula allows, the state will significantly reduce the amount of shared revenue it would have given. This year, the state set the limit for Green Bay at \$1.1 million. If Green Bay had raised taxes \$1.1 million, plus one dollar, the state would have withheld 1.7 million dollars. This law is helpful in that a municipality is told by the state to be careful of how much it is spending every year, and if it spends too much, there are consequences. The downside is that you can never make up not raising those taxes from the year before.

After looking at the budget and the process, I believe there is really no more fat in our city budget to make cuts. The only way to save real money is to make some serious changes to staffing or processes that we have. For example, when the city bought the new garbage trucks, it allowed the trucks to be manned by only one person. The Department of Public Works was able to eliminate some positions. Every city position (wages and benefits) costs taxpayers roughly between \$75,000 and 100,000 dollars each year. That was a real savings to the taxpayers when those DPW positions were eliminated. If a new way was developed to resurface roads that cost a lot less or allowed us double the time between resurfacing the roads, that would be a real savings for taxpayers. Or if the Police Department eliminated a specialty group of officers such as the Community Police or Drug Task Force officers, that would save hundreds of thousands of dollars for the city.

As far as city staffing goes, we have many positions that go unfilled every year to save on the budget. This year, the city has \$1.1 million worth of positions that are unfilled, and there is no money to fill them. The police department, as another example, has a table of organization set at 194. In 2017, we will only have 189 officers. The department met its budget goals by not filling 5 positions. Due to positions not being filled in Parks and Forestry, tree trimming is estimated to be 9 years behind schedule. The only way we can fund those vacant positions is to plan and hope that we attract new development and increase property values to increase tax revenue.

I do not believe in raising taxes just to fill our various department positions or to make repairs or additions to the various city departments just because they ask for the positions or projects. I believe all the allocated positions in all city departments are necessary to run this community at a level to provide the services the citizens expect. In addition, I have heard and continue to hear about the problems with our roads and storm sewer system. We cannot solve those problems without proper planning and tough decisions that will include a mix of borrowing and raising taxes; the decision to use the stadium tax money this year just puts off those problems we face for another year. I believe that in order just to keep up we needed to increase the taxes, and I am worried that next year, unless there are some significant changes, we may have to make some cuts to staff or programs.

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Green Bay Community Leadership Institute

NeighborWorks Green Bay, in collaboration with the Green Bay Neighborhood Leadership Council, will be offering its “Green Bay Community Leadership Institute” for a second year. The GBCLI will take place on Saturday, March 4 at Southwest High School. The goal of the one-day training event is to strengthen the voices and leadership skills of community residents and volunteer leaders. This an outstanding opportunity for current and prospective leaders and volunteers of our neighborhood associations, residents, area non-profit organizations and other local service groups, while also including interested individuals of all ages who wish to share their skills, ideas, and energy towards building a better community.

Sessions tentatively to be presented within the Green Bay Community Leadership Institute include:

- Communication/Facilitating a Meeting
- Community Advocacy
- Fundraising
- Planning Special Events
- Personal and Community Asset Mapping
- Art as a Community Building Tool – Kent Hutchinson
- Volunteer Management/Recruiting and Engaging Volunteers
- Best of Neighborhood Associations



Please consider attending this event with others in your community. The event is available to residents throughout the Green Bay area, and the cost is only \$10 in advance, \$20 at the door. Registration information can be found on NeighborWorks Green Bay’s website: www.nwgreenbay.org.

ANA Partners with Historical Society to Create Walking Tour of Astor Neighborhood

by Deby Dehn



“If Homes Could Talk” will be an ongoing project in partnership with the Astor Neighborhood Association and the Brown County Historical Society to document the social history of the Astor Neighborhood. The Astor

District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and includes some of Green Bay’s most elegant high-style homes and interesting historic sites. The project will include walking tours throughout the twenty-five-block Astor Historic District bordered by Mason, Van Buren, and Grignon Streets and the east bank of the Fox River.

The concept is to collect and present local history and historical anecdotes, through a collaborative activity in which several neighborhood residents will be able to volunteer their homes to be a part of the tour. They will then provide a location for written signs and graphics to be placed in front of their homes, telling stories and offering

information from the recent or not-so-recent past. These descriptive signs will be on open display for passers-by to read and learn from as they walk along the tour route. Workshops on how to research the history of homes will be provided for interested residents. In the future, the ANA hopes to develop a downloadable app for your phone that will include the stories and maps for an on-demand experience for visitors to our district. Look for additional information as it is available on our Facebook page.

Profits from this year’s ANA wine tasting will be used to develop these tours and fulfill our mission:

The mission of the Astor Neighborhood Association is to maintain the integrity, vitality, and diversity of the Astor community through the protection and preservation of its history, neighborhoods, and architecture.

Upcoming Events in Astor

The Women of Early Green Bay: Afternoon Tea takes place **Saturday, March 25th 1p-3p** at Historic Hazelwood, 1008 South Monroe Ave. Enjoy a tea buffet with savory sandwiches and sweet desserts. Following tea, adjourn to Hazelwood's parlor where the lively stories of Mrs. Elizabeth Baird, Elizabeth Arndt, Caroline Tank, and Deborah Martin will showcase women's lives in 19th century Green Bay. **\$20.00 per person**. Reservations are required. Please call **920-437-1840** to reserve your spot today!

Join us for our annual **Easter Egg Hunt** on **Saturday, April 15th!** We will have the event at 9:30 am, with different activities for the kids to participate in, and the hunt will begin at 10:00 am. As in years past, there will be a special area for children under age 3. If you're interested in helping put the event together, or if you'd like to assist the Easter Bunny in the hiding of the eggs, please contact Jennifer Lenz at jennifermlenz@gmail.com.

Mark your calendar for the **Astor Neighborhood's annual rummage sale**. It always happens the Saturday before Memorial Day weekend, which puts it on **May 20th** this year. Though we do not do an official rummage sale map, as other neighborhoods may do, it doesn't mean we can't! If you're interested in taking on a leadership role in helping to make our neighborhood rummage sale better advertised, including a map or a listing of all houses participating in the event, please contact Katie Houle at katiehoule@gmail.com. We've talked about doing this for the last few years, and maybe 2017 is the year we make it happen!

St. James Park Plays an Instrumental Role in the Neighborhood

by Patrick Walker, Jr.

Originally known as Webster Square, St. James Park was founded in 1835. The park was largely donated by John Jacob Astor. Later known as Concert Park for many decades, a bandshell was constructed. Every summer concerts would be held by numerous musical groups, and to this day the main attraction is the City Band.

Annually the City Band performances take place starting the second week of June and lasts through the second week of August, totaling 10 concerts. The concerts start at 7:30 p.m. and last one hour. Refreshments are available to enjoy before and during the concert. In the event of inclement weather, the concert is made up the following evening. The Green Bay City Band takes great pride in that it is the longest running city band in the United States. Celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2002, the Green Bay City Band received a donation to replace the aging

stage. The decision was made to construct an entirely new band shell in time for the 2002 concert season. It provided a "New Home" for the band and was designed by local Architect, David Van Lanen. When the stage is not in use, it is available to rent for \$100.00 which includes electricity.



In addition to the bandshell, St. James Park also offers an open shelter, along with several picnic tables available throughout the park. Children can enjoy playground equipment and a half basketball court. It's safe to say St. James Park offers a place where families can enjoy themselves not only for the beauty and nature of the park, but also to enjoy live music.

Stay Connected With Astor

Head over to our website, www.astorneighborhood.org and read up on what's been going on in our neighborhood!

Make sure you check out Nextdoor, as well. Join the 271 neighbors already using Nextdoor Astor by visiting https://astor.nextdoor.com/choose_address/ to sign up. It's a great way to get news and information out to the neighborhood.

We are also on Facebook: www.facebook.com/AstorNeighborhood



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