

Middleton Review

Middleton's free community newspaper

Editorial: A rerun and an update

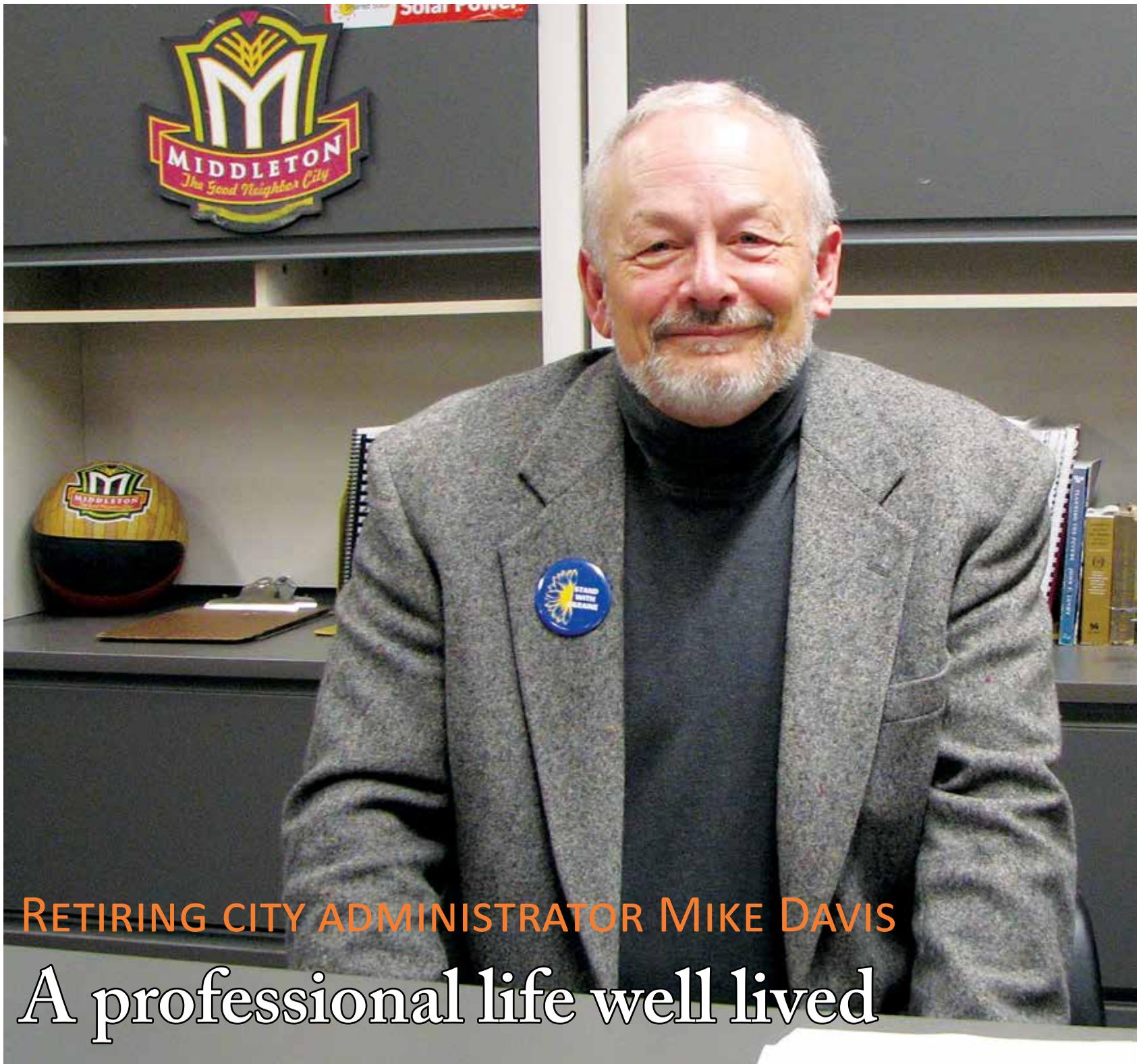
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Issue 123/May 2022



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The Middleton Review is published once a month, and available for free at many fine businesses in the Middleton area.	
Middleton Review online:	
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Middleton Book Fair

Saturday, August 13, 2022

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

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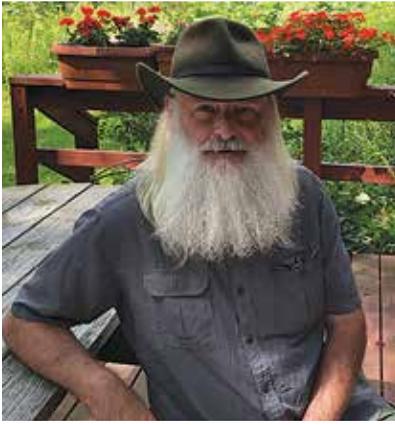
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Registration deadline: July 31, 2022





ZENSIBLE OBSERVATIONS

A rerun and an update

by GEORGE ZENS

Almost a year ago, in issue 112 (June 2021) of the *Middleton Review*, I wrote this:

Middleton is, with all due respect, not the most dynamic city in the world when it comes to hosting events that attract visitors from out of town. And since I am not the most dynamic person in Middleton, I am hardly going to change that.

But to contradict my first sentence, Middleton does in fact have three large yearly events that are unique, and that attract many people: Good Neighbor Fest, International Mustard Day, and Bockfest. Middleton of course also has a fair number of smaller events throughout the year, many of them walking or running fundraisers for one medical cause or another, as well as live music events, among others. (And let's not forget the Middleton Area Historical Society's 'Pie & Ice Cream Social' fundraising event on June 16 this year.)

A recent discussion at a community development authority (CDA) meeting about organizing more downtown events made me think. One thought was that it is not the CDA's mission to be an event organizer. But another thought was that they had a point. Middleton could use another event to 'put it on the map', so to speak, even if it is only a small local map, at least to begin with.

It should be an event that offers something new, not just for Middleton, but the whole Madison area and beyond, and that doesn't compete with existing Middleton businesses. It should attract new people to Middleton, who can then also spend some of their money in Middleton bars, restaurants and retail shops. It should also have potential for growth. Oh, and it should be about something I am interested in (which instantly eliminated almost everything).

And then it occurred to me: a book fair.

The Madison area's population is well educated and well read, and yet, there is a depressingly small number of book stores in our region, and none in Middleton. The last remaining book-store-like institution, the Friends of the Middleton Public Library's sales point, is probably going to be closed down for good.

As far as I could tell from my research, there are also no book fairs within at least 200 miles of our fair city (I'm not counting library or school book sales).

So, the first Middleton Book Fair will take place on Saturday, August 14, 2021, from noon until 5:00 PM at the Terrace Avenue pavilion (in front of Capital Brewery), rain or shine.

It will be free for anyone to sell, buy or trade, from private sellers to clubs, non-profits and commercial vendors.

There is no participation fee, but sellers will have to bring their own booths, tables, chairs, and whatever else they need.

One strict rule: Only the written word will be for sale - it is a book fair, not a flea market! (See announcement on the facing page for more details.)

Registration by July 31 is required for sellers; email me at: middletonreview@gmail.com (email only).

The Capital Brewery Bier Garten will be open during the event, and Middleton businesses, downtown and elsewhere, will of course gladly relieve you of whatever money you'll have left after buying books (or took in selling them).

Middleton might not immediately become an official 'book town' like Hay-on-Wye in Wales, Wigton in Scotland or Redu in Belgium, but I think it's a nice goal to aspire to, and maybe the Middleton Book Fair will be a first step in that direction.

Well, last year's event was an encouraging success. So encouraging, in fact, that we are going for a second edition this year, which will make it the Second Annual Middleton Book Fair, and thus a tradition!

A few updates are in order: It will again take place at the Terrace Avenue Pavilion at Capital Brewery, the format remains essentially the same (free event, anyone can participate, reading-materials only, no participation fee, bring-your-own-everything, pre-registration required, ...), it will again be the second Saturday in August (August 13), but the time changes slightly - it will be from 11:00 AM until 4:00 PM (last year was noon until 5:00). Also new, we will set up a dedicated Middleton Book Fair Facebook page (it will go live this month yet), and - perhaps most important - we will have a plan B in place in case of inclement weather. In other words, the Book Fair will take place rain or shine.

Vendor-registration is open as of now (email only, please; no messaging, no phone calls), and I hope that we can make it an even bigger and better event than last year.

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THE MONTH IN REVIEW

Airport, referendum, chicken ordinance, new council, ...

By GEORGE ZENS

The mayor eats his cake and has it too

On February 1 this year, the Middleton common council, with 7 votes to 1 (Kathy Olson, district 1, opposed), approved resolution 2022-08 giving 'direction for completing a master plan for Middleton Municipal Airport - Morey Field'.

The master plan, for all the controversy it has generated over the course of the last three years, is only the prelude to the airport layout plan, which is the document required by the federal government if the city wants to receive federal funding for future airport projects. In other words, in order to be considered for federal funding, a project has to be included in the airport layout plan. Or, the other way around, any project that is not included in the airport layout plan is not going to be eligible for federal funding. But it also means that not every project included in the airport layout plan will necessarily be carried out.

Through the resolution approved on February 1, 'the Common Council hereby supports incorporating the following development alternatives into a new Airport Layout Plan so that they may become eligible for federal funding assistance:

East-west runway: Adding 200 to 440 feet of pavement to runway 10/28 to improve the safety of current takeoffs and landings, which can be accomplished without expanding the airport footprint.

North-south runway: Developing a 3,280-foot paved runway with an east side parallel taxiway, with the runway protection zones fully located on airport property. The city would also be amenable to the alternative of placing the parallel taxiway on the west side of the runway. This option would entail purchasing farmland at fair market value.

Hangar development: Planning for a new hangar complex on the northeast side of the airport. This option would entail purchasing farmland at fair market value.

Turf runway: Planning for turf operations either in an east-west configuration north of the solar array or parallel to a paved runway, subject to the consent of the FAA. This could entail purchasing farmland at fair market value.'

Resolutions approved by the common council are then signed by the city clerk and the mayor.

Mayor Gurdip Brar, however, never signed resolution 2022-08, and on Thursday, April 7, he used his refusal to sign the resolution as the reason for voting against a motion at the airport commission that declared that the draft airport layout plan is so far consistent with resolution 2022-08.

Apart from the fact that his reasoning is flawed (it does not follow from the fact that he was opposed to the resolution that the layout plan is not consistent with the resolution), his (non-) actions show a remarkable talent as a political tightrope walker.

His populist instincts have always made him sympathize more with the fanatical airport opponents led by the chair of the Middleton town board than with the city of Middleton's interests in the airport. On the other hand, he also presumably knows that the airport has a role to play in the Middleton economy, and that its continued success has a positive impact on the community. Thus torn between his populist impulse that is loathe to antagonize any group of voters (even if they don't live or vote in the city) and his duty as a mayor with a responsibility towards his city, he tries to eat his political cake and have it too.

According to then-city administrator Mike Davis, the fact that the mayor did not sign resolution 2022-08 has no legal implications. The resolution was adopted by the council, and has full force as a legislative act. In other words, the mayor's refusal is purely symbolic, and does not jeopardize the airport's future in any way. Gurdip Brar thus expressed his opinion as a responsible mayor without harming his city's interests. (As mayor, he only gets to vote on the council to break a tie.) And in future debates he can still suck up to the radical airport opponents by pointing out that he did not sign resolution 2022-08.

He could have made a more powerful statement if he had vetoed the resolution. It takes the votes of six out of eight council members to override a mayoral veto, and, based on the initial vote, it is likely that a veto would not have survived. But maybe he didn't want to risk it. Maybe he is really a closet airport supporter.

Meanwhile, he is not going to be a member of the new airport commission. Last year he had caused an uproar at the council when he appointed himself to the airport commission in order to get rid of a long-time, independent-minded citizen member. In response, the council enacted an ordinance that prohibits the mayor from serving as a voting member on any committee where his presence is not mandated by law (like the plan commission, for instance), and his seat will now presumably be filled by a new citizen member. By virtue of his office, however, he is still a non-voting member of all committees

Airport layout plan

Without fanfare and without discussion, the old Middleton common council, on April 19, unanimously approved resolution 2022-25 adopting

the airport master plan report and the airport layout plan.

Among other statements, the resolution concludes that 'the common council considers its role in the preparation of the airport master plan to be complete', and promises that the common council 'will hold public hearings before making decisions to proceed with any potential airport expansion project'. It also 'recognizes that any decision to proceed with a federally- or state-funded project requires adoption of a formal petition to the Wisconsin department of transportation for airport improvement aid along with a detailed study including an environmental analysis as required by federal and state agencies'.

In other words, and notwithstanding the false opinion held by some members of the community thanks to a years-long misinformation campaign by fanatical airport opponents, adopting the airport layout plan and the airport master plan does not mean that the city has decided to expand the airport.

While the plans sensibly include options for expanding runways and hangar space ('sensibly' because it would be foolish and shortsighted, not to say negligent, to close all doors on future development and to restrict a future council's ability to react in Middleton's best interest to changing circumstances), another option is the so-called no-build option, i.e. do nothing and leave the airport as is.

That is also the option currently being implemented, if only by default.

Scenarios for a November referendum

On April 5, the finance committee and the common council discussed various 'scenarios for a November 2022 referendum to exceed property tax levy limits'. Following earlier direction given by the council (\$500,000 to be used for staffing, mostly for public safety), the city's administrative team (city administrator Mike Davis, finance director Bill Burns and human resources manager Brian Wolhaupter) submitted three options: Option 1 (\$500,000) would add two police officers, a police dispatcher, a community services officer, a communications staff member, a human resources staff member and a parks crew member (some full-time, some part-time for a full-time equivalent of 6.25). Option 2 (\$500,000) would add four police officers, a police dispatcher and a community services officer (6.0 full-time equivalent). Option 3 (\$700,000) would add two police officers, a police dispatcher, a community services officer, a communications staff member, a human resources staff member, a parks crew member, two storm water crew members, as well as an administrative assistant and an engineering intern,



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both to the public works department (9.0 full-time equivalent). Options 1 and 2 would increase the tax levy by 2.5% and add about \$16.75 in tax for every \$100,000 in property value. Option 3 would increase the levy by 4.12% and add \$23.45 in tax per \$100,000 in property value.

City staff recommended option 1, but the council members decided to get more information on all the implications, and to leave further discussions and an eventual decision to the next council.

Second try for the North Mendota Trail

The planned construction of the east segment of the Middleton North Mendota Trail has run into an unexpected obstacle: Nobody wants to build it. Or rather, it seems that no builder wants to build it.

The North Mendota Trail is a ten-foot multi-use trail that, when completed, runs along the north side of Century Avenue between Branch Street and the eastern city limits (the part between Branch Street and Amherst Road runs behind the residences on Century), with the idea of eventually connecting the Middleton trail system to the county's network in the town of Westport. The western leg between Branch Street and Highland Way west was constructed last year and has been open to the public since this winter (it includes a new bridge just east of Marina Drive, and the approaches to the bridge still need to be paved). The eastern leg would run from Highland Way east to the city limits. The segment between the two Highland Way exits cannot be built because not all property owners along that stretch agreed to sell part of their backyards to the city. To bypass the obstruction, the connection will be made by turning Cedar Ridge Road into the missing trail link, which means that trail users will pass in front of the properties instead of behind them. In other words, that part of the trail is done (minus some signs indicating the new route).

As was reported at the April 14 meeting of the city of Middleton's pedestrian, bicycle and transit committee (PBTC), the request for bids came back empty. Although several companies had shown some initial interest in the project, none of them submitted a bid. It seems that construction companies' order books are so full that they can be even choosier than usual about which projects are worth their while, not least since completing and submitting bidding documents takes a considerable amount of time.

After discussing their options and apparently getting some feedback from construction companies, the city and consulting engineers KL Engineering decided to give the bidding process another try. This second round runs until May 19 at which point the bids, if any come in, will be opened.

One way or another the project is now delayed, which could have financial implications. Most of the funding (\$1 million) is to come from a county grant that is in the county's current budget, and while it is possible that the grant will be rolled over into next

year's budget if it can't be used this year, it is by no means certain.

Also, construction costs are not going down, and any delay will most likely increase the final bill to the city. Even though the city decided to go for a second round of bidding, it is now in an even weaker position than before companies' order books were filled. According to public works specialists, the best time to put out requests for bids is as early in winter as possible, before construction companies' schedules are full.

Rethinking Century Avenue

Also on April 18, PBTC decided unanimously to pursue the idea of a so-called 'road diet' for Century Avenue between Parmenter Street and Branch Street. 'Road diet' means reducing the number of existing car lanes, and using the freed-up space for bike lanes, center lanes, bus lanes, on-street parking, or whatever else traffic engineers and other officials come up with. The city of Madison has recently introduced the concept in a number of places, including Whitney Way, Gammon Road and Odana Road.

On Century Avenue, the plan would be to reduce the number of through-lanes from four to two (one in each direction), and replace them with bike lanes, left-turn lanes and pedestrian refuge islands (see illustration). Century Avenue is a county road, and the county is favorable to the idea, although it wants the city to conduct a traffic impact study first. A request for funding of such a study could be made for the 2023 budget.

New staff positions

The council authorized back-filling a number of vacant or soon-to-be-vacant staff positions, including the tourism director, the senior center assistant director, an administrative assistant at the senior center, a police officer, the assistant greens keeper at Pleasant View Golf Course, an accountant/budget analyst, and a full-time paramedic. It also authorized two full-time paramedics, one permanent and one temporary, and appointed Mari Olson as interim tourism director until a replacement for Julie Peterman, who announced her retirement for June, is found.



Sculpture restoration

The council approved an agreement with Baraboo-based art restorer Meghan Thumm Mackey Conservation, LLC to repair the 'Self-Made Man' sculpture located at the intersection of Airport Road and Deming Way. The sculpture was damaged by gunshots in 2020 (pictured). The repair cost is estimated at \$13,160, most of which (\$10,000) is covered by insurance, and the rest by the arts budget. A previous agreement with another restorer was never executed due to illness. Meghan Thumm Mackey was a member of the Middleton arts committee for thirteen years until May 2021.

Polling station (no) change

Residents from districts 3 and 4 (wards 5 to 8 - see map on page 33) will again vote at St. Luke's church in the August 9 partisan primary elections. The council approved the corresponding resolution because construction work at St. Bernard's church (where district 4 would normally vote) is behind schedule (and don't ask why district 4 can't vote at the Lakeview Park shelter, which is located in district 4, and which is where districts 7 and 8 voted on April 5).

Chicken ordinance

With 7 votes to 1 (Emily Kuhn, district 4, opposed) the council gave final approval to the long-controversial chicken ordinance. In the final version it is a compromise that will probably not put an end to the neighbor disputes that started it all (one of the complainers has been notorious for picking fights with his neighbors for years, with or without chickens and with or without ordinances), but it will provide clarification for future chicken owners (and their neighbors) on how to proceed. Owners of



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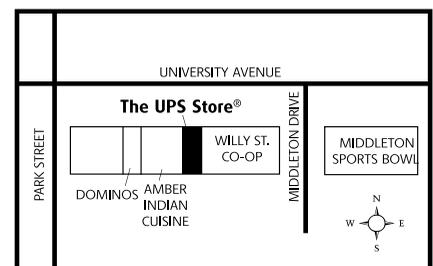
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existing chicken coops and runs have until July 31 to get into compliance with the new rules.

Five-year street improvement plan

The council unanimously approved the revised five-year street improvement plan, which most notably moves Elmwood Avenue between Parmenter Street and Bristol Avenue forward to 2024, and Elm Lane back to 2027. At the March 22 plan commission meeting, the alderman for district 7 (which includes Elm Lane), Dan Ramsey, had voted against the plan because of the postponement of Elm Lane. He did not say why he changed his mind between the plan commission and the council.

Fund balances

Out of a net total surplus of just under \$1.7 million in the 2021 general fund year-end fund balances, the council has assigned \$1 million for compensated staff absences, and increased the unassigned fund balance by just over \$690,000.

Protecting pollinators

The city council has approved a resolution that suspends the city's mowing ordinance for the merry month of May, and encourages property owners to not mow during that month in order to preserve spring flowers as food for early pollinators.

This is a reversal in attitude from previous years when every free flower adding a bit of color and bumble bee food to the uniform dead landscape of the suburban lawn had to be doused in herbicides and ruthlessly exterminated, lest the weed gestapo - usually summoned by a busybody neighbor - swoop down on the afflicted property and order the immediate eradication of the offending flora. Chances are, however, that the council (and the sustainability committee that recommended the resolution) might be ahead of some of the more traditionalist residents for whom the perfectly manicured and lifeless lawn is the apotheosis of suburban civilization.

New council and appointments

After the old council adjourned, city clerk Lorie Burns swore in the newly (re)elected council members (pictured from left to right): Kendra Wochos (district 2), Randall Crow (district 8), Lisa Janairo (district 6) and Emily Kuhn (district 4).

The new council then elected Kathy Olson (district 1) as council president, Katy Nelson (district 3) as president pro-tempore, and Dan Ramsey as council representative on the plan commission.

On May 3, the new council approved the full list of council members' appointments to the various city committees and commissions.

Because of three new members on the common council, the changes are more significant than in most previous years, and some are, to say the least,



unusual.

Chief among these is the fact that one of the new members, Lisa Janairo (district 6), has been appointed chair of the finance committee. The finance committee, which is composed of four council members, ranks at the top in the hierarchy of all city committees, and traditionally the chair goes to the member with the most experience in local government and/or finance. Lisa Janairo has neither. The other three finance committee members are council president Kathy Olson (district 1) and Dan Ramsey (district 7), both of which have served on finance before, and newly appointed Emily Kuhn (district 4).

Another oddity is that two members of the finance committee (Kathy Olson and Emily Kuhn) have also been appointed to the personnel committee, which has only three members (Luke Fuszard, district 5, is the third one). Previously, only former district 8 alderman Mark Sullivan (who for many years was finance chairman) served on both committees. Although personnel and finance often meet in joint session, these new appointments mean that a quorum of the personnel committee will also always be present at finance committee meetings. That kind of overlap could violate the open meetings law, although the city attorney apparently had no objections.

In a change that many chicken owners probably wish had happened a year earlier, Kathy Olson has lost her seat on the license and ordinance committee (L&O), which she also chaired. Her position on

the three-person, council-members-only committee has now gone to Katy Nelson (district 3), who is a returning member. She is joined by Luke Fuszard (new on L&O) and Kendra Wochos (new on the council). Besides Kathy Olson, Dan Ramsey was also not reappointed to L&O. He replaces Emily Kuhn on the ethics board, and will also serve on the Middleton Area Development Corporation board.

In another high-profile change, airport skeptic Lisa Janairo replaces former district 2 alderman (and chairman of the now-defunct airport master plan advisory committee) Robert Burck on the airport commission.

In response to criticism aimed at his handling of committee appointments in the *Middleton Review's* subscription-based email newsletter *Middleton e-View*, mayor Gurdip Brar made it a point to state that he consulted with all council members before making the appointments, that everybody got pretty much what they wanted, that he spent some sleepless nights over the whole process, that he worked very hard, and that he has done a good job. Judging by the beaming faces on the council bench, most of his colleagues seemed to agree.

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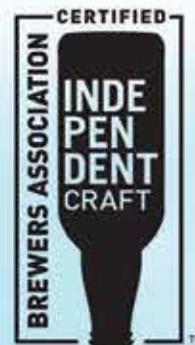
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Pictured are co-owners Gwen Bryan and Erik Christensen, and executive chef Kevin Ostrand.

Photo by GEORGE ZENS

New location for Compadres



On April 27, Compadres and representatives from the Middleton Chamber of Commerce cut the ribbon at the Mexican restaurant's new location at the corner of Elmwood Avenue and Aurora Street (formerly The Hody). After significant transformations, Compadres moved from its old location on Cayuga Court and is now open for business in the larger space.

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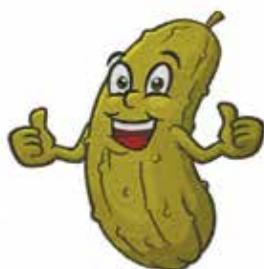
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MIKE DAVIS

A professional life well lived

By GEORGE ZENS

After almost 24 years with the city of Middleton (he started on November 1, 1998), city administrator Mike Davis has retired. His last day in his office, the physical space of which he had already ceded to his successor Bryan Gadow, but reoccupied briefly for the purpose of a Middleton Review photo shoot (see cover page), was Thursday, May 5. A few hours before leaving city hall one last time as an employee, he sat down for an interview and reflected on his education, professional career, and plans for the future.

He was born in 1958 into a blue-collar family in a small community on the industrial east side of Fort Wayne, Indiana. His mother was a homemaker and his father a security guard at an International Harvester industrial plant who was also president of his union and served on the local school board.

For Mike Davis, his blue collar background says a lot about he approaches things. He grew up around industry, and a lot of noise and pollution: “My dad did me a real favor when I was in high school and he took me into this really loud industrial plant with belching smoke and furnaces. If I ever had any doubt about getting a college degree, that pretty much sealed the deal. I was on the college track, so I don’t think he was too worried, but I think he wanted to make sure.” He was the first in his family to go to college.

He claims to have got most of his good qualities from his mother, and his bad from his father, but he credits the latter with teaching him one quality that has served him well in his career as an administrator: the ability to bite his tongue. “My dad was an in-your-face kind of guy; he was well liked in public, but a bear at home, and my mom was good at putting up with him and biting her tongue, so I learned from her how to be public servant.”

After considering and rejecting careers in journalism (wisely), being a high school principal, and getting a business degree (“I was totally bored in business classes”) he enrolled in and graduated from the school of public and environmental affairs at Indiana University in Bloomington. From 1982 to 1984 he did his graduate studies at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin, before returning to Indiana University for a law degree.

He graduated from law school in 1987, and his first intention was to use his new degree to be an attorney “representing indigent people” through the national Legal Services Corporation. Unfortunately, at that time federal funding for public legal services was drying up, and that career was cut short. He found a position as law clerk in Monroe county, Indiana, but his real break came when he became assistant city attorney for the

city of Bloomington. He decided he enjoyed local government, and eventually rose to deputy mayor (an unelected office), a hybrid position at the intersection of administration and politics. When the mayor decided not to seek reelection, he thought about running to succeed her, but, at the insistence of his then-wife, dropped the idea again, not least because it would have been a full-time job and he and his wife had a baby on the way. Instead, he became executive director of the Indiana Association of Counties. He did that for two years before moving to Wisconsin in 1996, his wife’s home state. He took a job as city administrator in Evansville, but when Middleton advertised the position as city administrator, he jumped at the chance, and the rest, as they say, is history.

At that time Middleton had about 13,000 residents, and was transitioning from “a suburb to an urban ring community, suburb meaning in my mind that you sleep in that community and you go to work elsewhere. But with the economic development work that we have done, since I have been here we have solidly become an urban ring community, so that when we got the 2010 census data we knew that we had 16,000 per day coming to work in Middleton, as opposed to 8,000 a day leaving Middleton to work elsewhere.”

From early on he saw Middleton as being on the path to sustainability (“before that was a buzzword”), and he approached his work with an environmental background, both educational and from his work at the city of Bloomington. In Middleton he found the right combination of an effort to create jobs while preserving the environment. He also points out that, contrary to a popular misconception in the current multi-family housing boom, Middleton even then had a high percentage, between 40% and 45% of multi-family housing, although he acknowledges that has risen since then.

When asked about his proudest accomplishments (and in that context it is important to note that he doesn’t consider any of these accomplishments as his personal ones, but those of the city, staff and elected officials, as a whole), he first mentions Pheasant Branch Conservancy. “We had the conservancy, but it wasn’t maintained or managed; it was just a wild green space called the conservancy. So when we hired Penni Klein in the year 2000, I had proposed to the city council that we could get both a parks director and conservancy manager in the same position.”

The council went along and created the position of public lands manager - a first in Middleton. Previously, public lands management had been within the purview of the public works department, and not a high priority. That changed with the arrival of Penni Klein who set

upon transforming the conservancy and the creek corridor. A (controversial) high point was the creation of the trail network and especially her plans to paving all trails: “The grand compromise, the one that the council could live with, was paving the trails in the creek corridor, and leaving most of the loop in the conservancy unpaved. That to me is one of the greatest accomplishments, and while I can’t take credit for it, I came up with the idea of creating and hiring for the position of public lands manager. Penni Klein deserves having a park named after her.”

And talking about parks, Mike Davis is also proud of the splash pad at Lakeview Park, not least because it is a facility that serves some of the lowest-income residents of Middleton.

The redevelopment of downtown (“twice”) also figures prominently on his list of achievements. The first one was west of Aurora Street with the Cayuga Court area, the preservation of the Pet Milk building through the Valencia Lofts and Valencia apartments, and the construction of Staybridge Suites and other buildings. Incidentally, the grand opening of the new downtown and the grand opening of Greenway Station happened at the time, in September of 2003.

The second one was the redevelopment of the Old Middleton Centre, which, while originally an idea hatched in city hall (with consultants Vandewalle & Associates), encouraged by developer and Old Middleton Centre owner Ron Gross, took a surprise turn when Ron Gross sold his property (“unbeknownst to us”) to Terrence Wall to develop. “It is never easy to get from A to Z with Terrence, but in the end he developed a good product, and it is basically what we had presented at the time to Ron Gross. Terrence took it and he followed it pretty well.”

Mike Davis is an unapologetic advocate for continued development: “I am a strong believer that you have to continuously look to redevelop, except for your historic buildings, of course.” The latter doesn’t always go according to plan, as the (accidental) collapse of the historic Middleton Antiques Mall building during renovation work shows. “That was a bad day, because we really wanted to preserve and renovate that building.”

Middleton has seen a lot of economic development in the last twenty years, but Mike Davis is particularly proud of the fact that the city managed to keep ETC in Middleton, mostly through the purchase of the 243-acre Quisling property on Airport Road for the at the time unusually high price of \$3 million. But the investment has paid off, and the land today not only includes ETC (which was looking at moving to Verona), but also Capitol Ice, Natus, Hy Cite, part of the airport,



Two dozen people, including current and former staff members and other city officials, helped read a proclamation honoring Mike Davis's service to the city of Middleton during his last common council meeting as city administrator on Tuesday, May 3. May 5, his retirement day, has been declared 'Mike Davis day' in Middleton.



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The city's finances leave him with a bittersweet impression. While he is proud of the fiscal prudence that has characterized much of the city's approach during the years, it backfired in a way when the great recession hit and the state tightened the rules on municipalities' ability to raise property taxes. "The council always took pride in not increasing taxes by as much as it could have done, whereas other communities not only went to the limit, but also introduced separate fees for garbage and recycling."

Because communities' then-taxation levels were used as the new baselines when state laws limiting increases even further by excluding adjustments for inflation took effect, Middleton having been "good fiscal stewards got penalized" with a lower baseline.

"We got hit hard, and we are still catching up," Mike Davis says. One of the consequences is the staffing referendum that the city is planning for November and whose passage is in his view essential if the city is to continue providing the level of services that residents have become accustomed to.

Which leads him to a clear regret: "I should have been more aggressive in pushing for an increase in maintenance positions for public lands and public works, not

only behind the scenes, but also publicly." Maintenance crew members do vital work, but spending tax dollars on them is politically not sexy.

He also regrets that he (although mostly the council) failed to get the fire department and EMS to share the same building. That would have made logistical and financial sense, but irreconcilable differences between the two entities made that very difficult, and "the council gave in under pressure and conceded".

He wishes Middleton had done more to encourage bicycling and walking, and to become less auto-centric, although he is hopeful that eventually Middleton will become more bike- and pedestrian-friendly. But he also wants to go on record saying that he was in favor of closing Hubbard Avenue west of Parmenter Street to car traffic, and he hopes that it will still happen.

Besides traffic, another problem that has arisen largely as a result of Middleton's success is the (affordable) housing shortage: "Middleton is a desirable community to live in, and that leads to high land prices and expensive housing. Since 2015, 20% of all multi-family units built in Middleton have been affordable, but it is not enough, and we also need to find ways to help affordable homeownership."

When asked what he liked best about his job, he

didn't hesitate: "The collaboration at staff meetings and how we broke down silos by creating a culture of teamwork." All employers, but especially small communities like Middleton, face challenges hiring and retaining good staff. In his opinion, Middleton has extraordinarily good and dedicated staff: "We have the best quality staff", and his only piece of advice to his successor is "keep good people! It is the collective effort of staff that gets things done."

In retirement he wants to spend a good deal of time traveling with his wife Julann, both inside and outside the United States. In fact, the only continent he doesn't seem to have any immediate plans for, or at least doesn't mention, is Antarctica.

Besides that, he wants to spend more time with friends and family, (maybe) drink more beer, walk (even) more, watch sports, win his fantasy baseball league for the first time in 25 years, keep winning with his trivia team 'The Brains That Wouldn't Die', continue researching his ancestry, read more books, organize historic walking tours of downtown Middleton, ... with all those activities planned, he might one day look back fondly on the peaceful and relaxing days at city hall.

Meanwhile, happy trails, Mike Davis.



One of Mike Davis's favorite photos:
With city staff members in front of city hall.

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	FRI. 24th	RED HOT HORN DAWGS
JULY	FRI. 1st	ROD ELLENBECKER
	FRI. 8th	MAMA DIGDOWN
	FRI. 15th	RETRO SPECZ
	FRI. 22nd	BEST PRACTICE
	FRI. 29th	PANCHROMATIC STEEL
AUGUST	FRI. 5th	YOUR MOM
	FRI. 12th	MADTOWN MANNISH BOYS
	FRI. 19th	FOO FOO DOLLS
	FRI. 26th	ZAC MATTHEWS BAND
SEPTEMBER	FRI. 2nd	RED HOT HORN DAWGS
	FRI. 9th	FMB AND THE NAMES
	FRI. 16th	RETRO SPECZ
	FRI. 23rd	DRIVEWAY THRIFTDWELLERS
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*Oktoberfest	SAT. 24th	MADISON COUNTY
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COMMON COUNCIL

A brief history of Middleton common council memberships

Middleton became a city 1963 (before then it had been a village). Its last village president was also its first mayor: **Arlye ‘Mac’ McDermid**, who was mayor from 1963 to 1965. He was followed by **Walter Bauman** (mayor from 1965 to 1975), **Judy Karofsky** (1975 to 1977), **Dan Ramsey** (1977 to 2003), **Doug Zwank** (2003 to 2007), **Kurt Sonnentag** (2007 to 2017) and **Gurdip Brar** (since 2017).

Since 1963, the city has also been governed by a common council with eight elected members representing the citizens of Middleton. Overall, 99 people have served on the common council since 1963.

For the first nine years, the whole city was just one electoral district, and every year half the council was up for re-election.

The first council was elected in 1963, with four members elected for a one-year term and the four members elected for a two-year term. The first eight elected members of the Middleton common council were Victor Adler, Walter Bauman, Henry Busch, George Davis, Robert Jolin, Paul Lamm, Jack Meehan and Hans Sorenson.

In 1972, Middleton was divided into four aldermanic districts, and each district was represented by two members who were elected in alternate years to two-year terms.

Since 1982, Middleton has had eight aldermanic districts, numbered 1 through 8 (see map of current districts and wards), with the voters in odd-numbered districts electing their representatives in odd-numbered years, and the voters in even-numbered districts electing theirs in even-numbered years.

Since 1982, district 1 has been represented by 10 different alderpersons, the most of any district: Richard Schwenn, Julia Sherman, Sandy Allen, Mike Duren, Maureen O’Brien, Steve Olson, Bill Hoeksema, Paul Kinne, Miriam Share and Kathy Olson. (In chronological order, with the current alderperson being listed last.)

The district with the lowest number of alderpersons is district 5; it has had four since 1982: Gordon Niesen, Don Damon, Howard Teal and Luke Fuszard.

District 2 has had eight representatives: Dennis Dorn, Bill Peterson, Jim Anderson, Doug Zwank, Rob Conhaim, Gurdip Brar, Robert Burck and Kendra Wochos.

District 3 has had nine representatives: Don Goodrich, Sam Greco, Dave Egan, Mark Opitz, Faye Schwager, Kurt Sonnentag, Jon DiPiazza, JoAnna Richard and Katy Nelson.

District 4 has had five representatives: Bill Threinen, Jim Wexler, Briana Giosta/Porter, Elizabeth Hetrick and Emily Kuhn

District 6 has had seven representatives: Tom Ullsvik, Richard Roberts, Mike Adler, Jim O’Brien, Andy Lewis, Susan West and Lisa Janairo.

District 7 has had six representatives: Bill Erpenbach, Liz Erpenbach, Paul Helgeson, Mark Horn, Hans Hilbert and Dan Ramsey II.

District 8 has had six representatives: Rene Dupuis, Julie Brunette, Ralph Zahnow, David Gibbon, Steve Leo, Mark Sullivan and Randall Crow.

The following (alphabetical) list of all the people who have served on the Middleton common council since 1963 is based on City records.

The dates indicate total years in office, from the year of their original appointment or first election to the year they left office.

Jim Wexler is the longest-serving alderperson in Middleton history (27 years; 1988-2015).

Other council members who served for 10 years or more are: Howard Teal (20 years; 1999-2019), Susan West (14 years; 2008-2022), Liz Erpenbach (13 years; 1984-1997), Don Damon (12 years; 1987-1999), George Kuepper (12 years; 1963-1975), Mark Sullivan (12 years; 2010-2022), Rene Dupuis (10 years; 1980-1990), Hans Hilbert (10 years; 2007-2017), Hans Sorenson (1963-1973) and Thomas Ullsvik (1982-1992).

The longest-serving elected official overall, however, was Dan Ramsey, who was in office for 30 years, from 1973 until 2003: he served as alderman from 1973 to 1977, and as mayor from 1977 to 2003.

Kurt Sonnentag held elected office for 14 years (alderman from 2003 to 2007, and mayor from 2007 to 2017), and Walter Bauman for 12 years (alderman from 1963 to 1965, and mayor from 1965 to 1975). Current mayor Gurdip Brar has held elected office for 14 years (alderman from 2008 to 2017, and mayor since 2017).

CITY OF MIDDLETON COUNCIL MEMBERS (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER)

Michael Adler (1994-1996)

Victor Adler (1963-1964; died in 1964; replaced by Bill Sawyer)

Sandy Allen (1991-1994; appointed in December 1991 to complete Julia Sherman’s term)

Tom Alt (1981-1983; resigned; replaced by Donald Goodrich)

Jim Anderson (1990-1998)

A.L. Arntsen (1971-1973)

Kenneth Baitinger (1965-1972)

Mary Baldwin (1979-1980; elected to complete Gary Hagar’s term)

Walter Bauman (1963-1965; mayor 1965-1975)

Bradley Bjork (1977-1979; resigned in January 1979; replaced by Chester Howard)

Gurdip Brar** (2008-2017; defeated Robert Conhaim; replaced by Robert Burck; mayor since 2017; defeated Hans Hilbert for mayor in 2017, and Kurt Paulsen and Dan Ramsey II for mayor in 2020)

Julie Brunette (1990-1998; replaced Rene Dupuis who had resigned)

Robert Burck (2017-2022; appointed in May 2017 to complete Gurdip Brar’s term; did not run for reelection)

Henry Busch (1963-1968)

Thomas Cantwell (1971-1975)

Dorothy Collins (1976-1978)

Robert Conhaim (2003-2008; appointed to complete Doug Zwank’s term; defeated by Gurdip Brar)

Randall Crow* (since 2022; elected as a write-in candidate)

Donald Damon (1987-1999)

George Davis (1963-1965)

Michael DesParte (1969-1971)

Jon DiPiazza (2007-2011)

Maggie Dohm (1980-1982)

Dennis Dorn (1980-1986; resigned January 1986)

Rene Dupuis (1980-1990; resigned)

Mike Duren (1993-1997)

Dave Egan (1993-1995; resigned in February 1995)

Gordon Ellis (1975-1978; resigned in July 1978; replaced by Dennis Olson)

Liz Erpenbach (1984-1997; appointed in November 1984 to complete William Erpenbach’s term)

William Erpenbach (1978-1984; appointed in April 1978 to complete Roger Rowin’s term; resigned in October 1984; replaced by Liz Erpenbach)

William Feist (1978-1981; appointed in August 1978 to complete Michael Guess’s term)

Michael Finley (1978-1980)

Gregory Foss (1972-1976)

Jonathan Friedberg (1973-1977; appointed in August 1973 to complete A.L. Arntsen’s term)

Luke Fuszard* (since 2019; defeated incumbent Howard Teal)

David Gibbon (2002-2004; elected as write-in candidate)

Jay Gile (1968-1969; appointed in 1968 to complete Thorwald Solverson’s term)

Briana Giosta/Porter (2015-2017; originally elected as write-in candidate in special election to replace appointee Jim Wexler; resigned in March 2017; replaced by Elizabeth Hetrick)

Donald Goodrich (1983-1991; replaced Tom Alt who had resigned in 1983; resigned himself in 1991; replaced by Sam Greco)

Sam Greco (1991-1993; replaced Donald Goodrich who had resigned)

Wilson Groth (1968-1970)

Michael Guess (1977-1978; resigned in June 1978; replaced by William Feist)

Gary Hagar (1978-1978; resigned in December 1978; replaced by Mary Baldwin)

Larry Hanson (1965-1969)

Paul Helgeson (1997-2005)

Thomas Henning (1968-1973)

Elizabeth Hetrick (2017-2018; appointed to complete Briana Porter’s term; dropped out of her reelection race)

Hans Hilbert (2007-2017; originally elected as a write-in candidate; did not run for reelection in 2017; defeated by Gurdip Brar for mayor in 2017)

Bill Hoeksema (2005-2009)

Mark Horn (2005-2007)

Chester Howard (1979-1981; appointed in February 1979 to complete Bradley Bjork’s term)

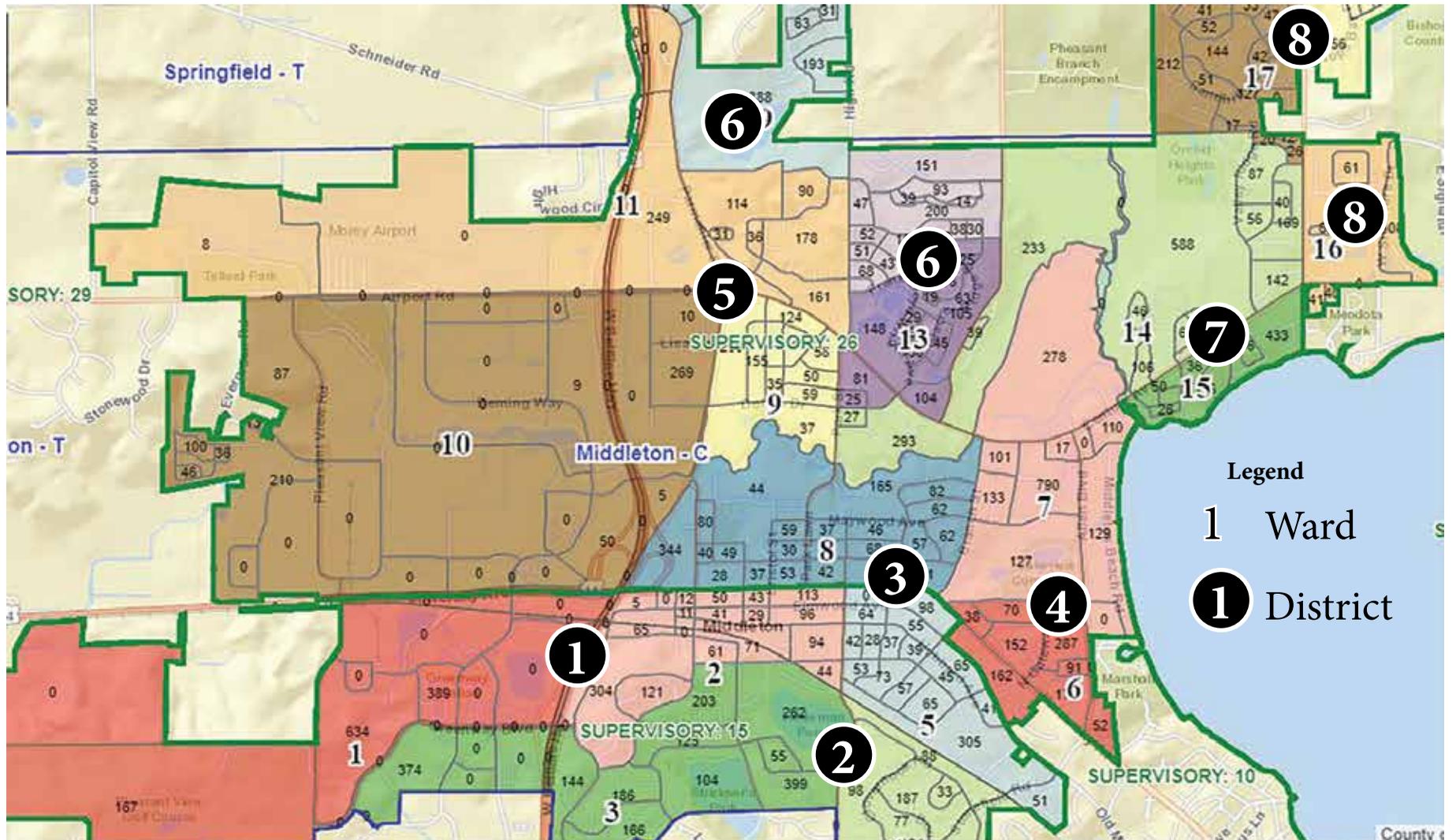
Lisa Janairo* (since 2022; defeated incumbent Susan West)

Jean Jolin (1968-1972)

Robert Jolin (1963-1968)
Judith Karofsky (1972-1975; appointed in September 1972 to complete Jean Jolin's term; mayor 1975-1977)
Paul Kinne (2009-2013)
George Kuepper (1963-1975; appointed in October 1963 to replace Jack Meehan)
Emily Kuhn* (since 2018)
Paul Lamm (1963-1969; appointed in 1968 to complete Henry Busch's term)
Stephen Leo (2004-2010)
Patricia Ann Levin (1975-1976; appointed to complete Judith Karofsky's term)
Andy Lewis (2004-2008; only write-in candidate in city of Middleton history to defeat an incumbent - James O'Brien)
Gerald Lindsa (1969-1971)
Jack Meehan (1963-1963; died in 1963; replaced by George Kuepper)
Katy Nelson* (since 2019)
Gordon Niesen (1981-1986; resigned December 1986)
James O'Brien (1996-2004; lost to write-in candidate Andy Lewis)
Maureen O'Brien (1997-1999)
Dennis Olson (1978-1981; appointed in August 1978 to complete Gordon Ellis's term)
Kathy Olson* (since 2015)
Steve Olson (1999-2005; elected as write-in candidate in 1999)
Mark Opitz (1995-1999; resigned in June 1999; replaced by Faye Schwager)
Robert Paul (1976-1979; resigned in February 1979; replaced by Bradley Riesch)
William Peterson (1986-1990)
Dan Ramsey (1973-1977; mayor 1977-2003)
Dan Ramsey II* (since 2017)
JoAnna Richard (2011-2019)
Bradley Riesch (1979-1981; appointed in February 1979 to complete Robert Paul's term)
Richard Roberts (1992-1994)

Roger Rowin (1973-1978; resigned in April 1978; replaced by William Erpenbach)
Bill Sawyer (1964-1964; appointed in September 1964 to complete Victor Adler's term)
Mary Schlimgen (1975-1978; elected in 1975 to complete George Kuepper's term)
Dorothy Schmitz (1978-1980)
Arthur Schneider (1970-1972)
Faye Schwager (1999-2003; appointed to complete Mark Opitz's term)
Richard Schwenn (1981-1984; resigned in December 1984; replaced by Julia Sherman)
Miriam Share (2013-2015)
Julia Sherman (1984-1993; appointed January 1984 to complete Rich Schwenn's term; resigned herself in November 1993; replaced by Sandy Allen)
Thorwald Solverson (1965-1968)
Kurt Sonnentag (2003-2007; mayor 2007-2017)
Hans Sorenson (1963-1973)
Keith Stewart (1972-1978)
Mark Sullivan (2010-2022; did not run for reelection)
Howard Teal (1999-2019; defeated by Luke Fuszard)
C. William Threinen (1980-1988)
Thomas Ullsvik (1982-1992; appointed in April 1982)
Susan West (2008-2022; defeated by Lisa Janairo)
James Wexler (1988-2015; did not run for re-election in 2014; appointed in April 2014 after elected candidate Chad Gehin did not accept his mandate; replaced by Briana Giosta; longest-serving alderman in city of Middleton history)
Kendra Wochos* (since 2022; only candidate for Robert Burck's open seat)
Ralph Zahnow (1998-2002)
Douglas Zwank (1998-2003; mayor 2003-2007; replaced by Robert Conhaim)

* Current alderpersons on the Council
 ** Current mayor on the Council



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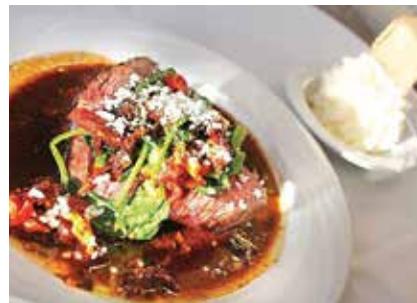
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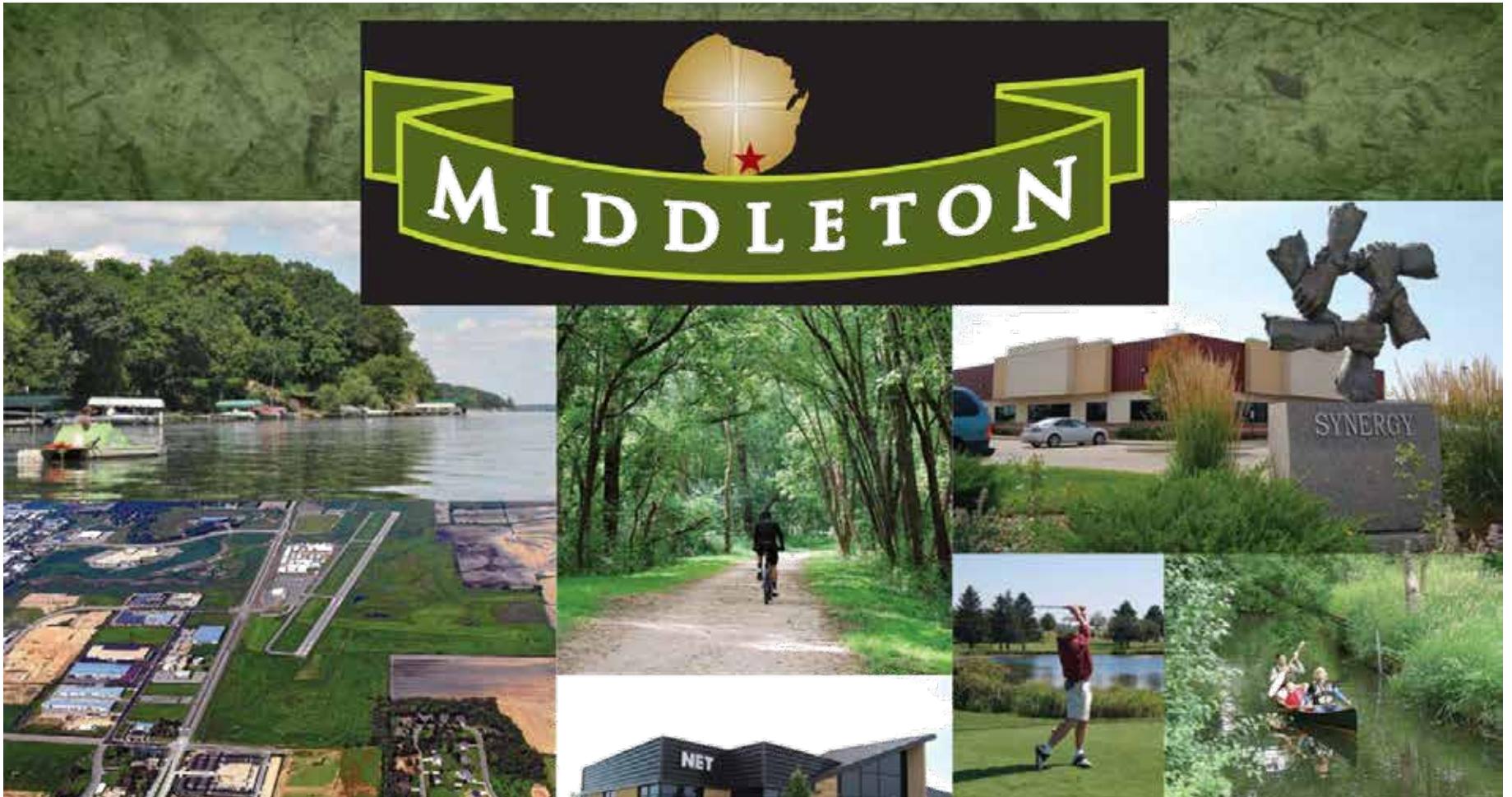
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DEVELOPMENT

An overview of public projects

During a recent bus tour, city officials provided participants with an overview of city infrastructure projects.

By GEORGE ZENS

Middleton had an estimated population of just under 22,000 in 2021, an increase of 21% since 2013, and a total equalized property valuation of more than \$4.26 billion, an annual increase of 6.3% since 2016 when it was just over \$3 billion. In 2019, Middleton's median household income was \$76,000, or 120.9% of the national median income.

According to city data, Middleton is home to over 2,000 businesses, including some large employers like Thermofisher/PPD (1,800 employees), Electronic Theatre Controls (830) and the UW Medical Foundation (650). More than 18,000 people commute into Middleton every day for work (about 8,700 commute out of Middleton every day for the same reason).

The city government's finances are sound, not least thanks to the growing and diverse tax base, and the city's prudent borrowing policy. In 2021, the city's general obligation debt stood at \$39.2 million, down more than a

quarter since 2015 (\$53.4 million), and with only 18.4% of its debt capacity used, it stays well below the state-imposed legal limit (in 2015 it was using 36.7% of the legal limit).

The city's two active tax increment financing (TIF) districts have seen, and are seeing, positive growth. TIF district 3, which was created in 1993 and will close in 2030, had a base (property) value (before TIF essentially) of about \$55.9 million in 2021, and a value increment (generated by TIF projects) of \$545.5 million, while TIF district 5, created in 2009 and scheduled to close in 2036, had a base value in 2021 of \$89.7 million and a value increment of \$125.1 million.

Last year, TIF district 5 was amended by subtracting properties with low redevelopment prospects and replacing them with higher-potential properties, including for the first time some located on University Avenue east of Park Street.

Among major public projects currently underway are the

construction of the so-called Stone Horse Green downtown plaza (it is off to a slow start due to the weather and the official completion date of August 31 will most likely be missed, but city officials are optimistic that a grand opening event can take place on September 9 and 10), the long-awaited reconstruction of Middleton Beach Road, the North Mendota Trail, and the CXC-Erdman Cross Country Ski Park, a private/public partnership near Pleasant View Golf Course (it is accessible via Schwartz Road, which, together with other lands formerly in the town of Middleton, was annexed into the city to short-circuit an obstruction attempt by a vengeful Middleton town board angry about the airport master plan).

Public projects that are ready or getting ready to be executed are the reconstruction of the Pheasant Branch creek corridor after the 2018 floods, including stream banks, trail and bridges, the reconstruction and widening of Pleasant View Road, and the reconstruction of Parmenter Street

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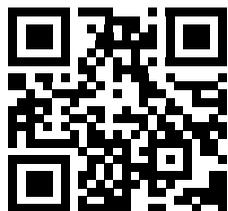
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north of Century Avenue.

The creek corridor project was delayed by an unexpected last-minute demand last year by FEMA that a full environmental assessment be done. That study, paid for by FEMA and conducted by a consultant of its choosing, is scheduled to be completed by the end of June, and city staff are optimistic that actual work could still begin this fall. Cooperating with FEMA (and submitting to its whims) is essential if it is to help pay for the reconstruction (it will most likely reimburse the city for up to 75% of the cost, or about \$1.75 million).

The reconstruction of Pleasant View Road is the largest, most expensive road project in the history of Middleton, and, according to city staff, the last four-lane road the city will ever build. It is an inter-governmental project that, among others, involves the cities of Middleton and Madison, the state and the federal government. Which explains why it is years behind schedule, and way more expensive than it should be.

Middleton's share of the cost is \$4 million for the acquisition of property and utility easements, and \$11 million for actual construction (from TIF 3 fund); the federal government will contribute another \$11 million or so, and Madison \$3 million. When all is said and done, it will be a

four-lane road with sidewalks and trails, roundabouts, and a trail bridge connecting the South Fork Trail to the golf course. Construction may or may not start in 2023.

In view of continued development along the northern portion of Parmenter Street, including Cardinal View Senior Living, 38Ten apartment building at Tribeca and, especially, the large (44 acres) Belle Farm mixed-use development proposal, the reconstruction of that street has become unavoidable. It is planned as two car lanes with a median, bike lanes, sidewalk and multi-use trail. Construction is expected to start next year, funded in part by a \$1 million state grant.

On an uncertain timeline is the construction of the so-called Pheasant Branch Conservancy trail head on Century Avenue near the Branch Street entrance to the conservancy.

The trail head itself is a parking lot with restrooms (an early idea for a grandiose and - in typical Middleton fashion - most likely ludicrously expensive park shelter with event and activity space was abandoned when it met with resistance from several committees and elected officials) that would be connected to the conservancy trail via a bridge across Pheasant Branch creek. The complicating factor is the on the whole quite sensible idea to reroute the

trail under the Century Avenue bridge, thus eliminating the need for trail users to cross Century Avenue at Branch Street. This, however, needs the cooperation of the county (Century Avenue is a county highway), and would ideally be done in conjunction with the planned reconstruction of the bridge.

Although it is a matter of some urgency (the bridge is heavily used and in bad shape), the county stepped back from its earlier plans to rebuild the bridge this year without announcing a definite new schedule.

The redevelopment of the city's downtown properties - city hall, senior center, public library and the three parking lots between Terrace and Elmwood avenues - into a community campus with new public facilities, a parking ramp and housing is back on the agenda.

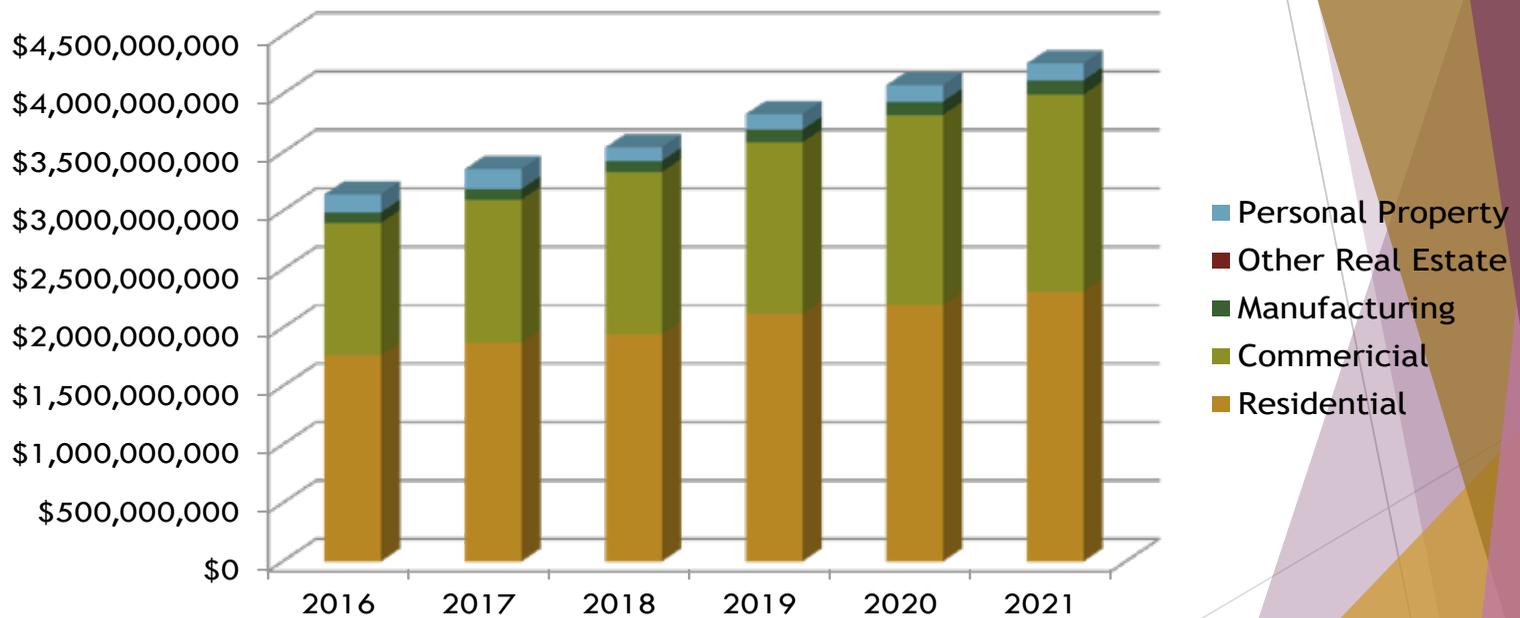
Mothballed during the pandemic, it is now going to start moving forward again, with, among others, the inevitable quest for public input.

Since the city plans to use TIF funds for at least part of the project, and the expenditure period for TIF district 3 ending in 2025, time is now of the essence. Current cost estimates range from \$60 to \$84 million.

See illustrations here and on pages 44 and 45.

Tax Base Growth & Diversity

Equalized Value by Class



Average annual increase of 6.3% from 2016 through 2021

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue





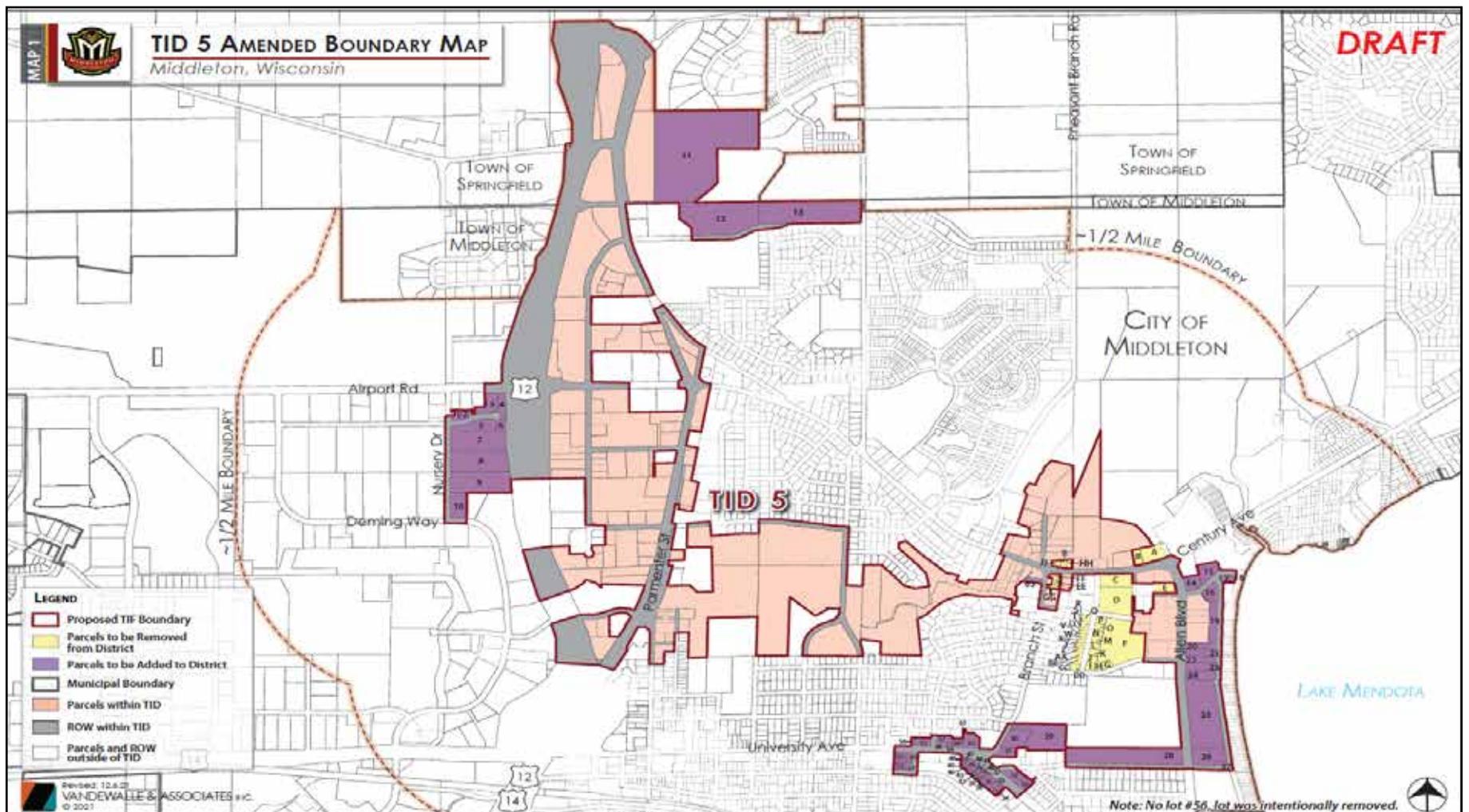
Tax Increment Financing Districts

Active TIF Districts

TID	Creation Year	Expenditure Period	Legal Termination	2021 Total Value	2021 Base Value	2021 Value Increment
3	1993	2025	2030	\$601,291,600	\$55,868,200	\$545,423,400
5	2009	2031	2036	\$214,700,500	\$89,665,500	\$125,035,000

- Last year the City subtracted \$130 million in value increment from TID 3 increasing total subtractions over the life of the TID to \$470 million.
- The subtraction levy-limit adjustment was \$286,011.
- In 2021 the City approved an addition/subtraction amendment for TID#5 to include additional areas with redevelopment potential

13





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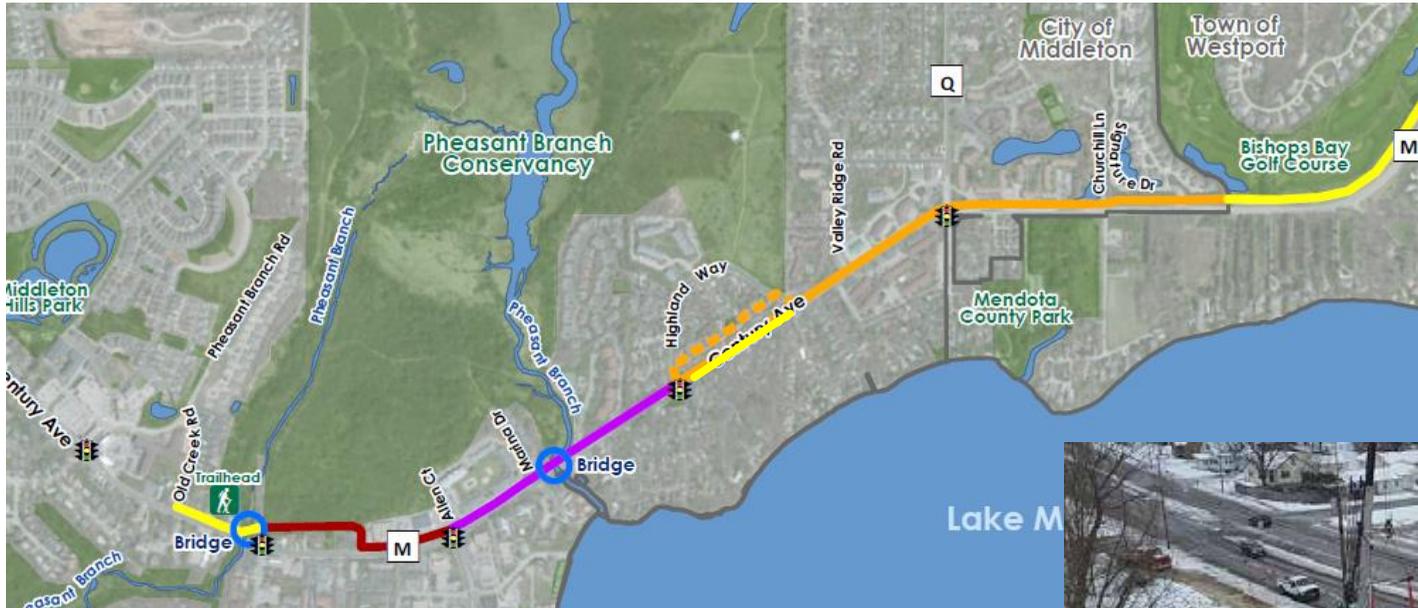
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Janie Krohmer
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North Mendota Trail



- ▶ Branch—Allen Ct. in 2020 (red)
- ▶ Allen Ct.—Highland in 2021 (purple)
- ▶ East segment planned for 2022 (orange)
- ▶ Future segments (yellow):
 - ▶ West to Old Creek Rd, possibly Donna/FLW intersection
 - ▶ Between Highland Way intersections
 - ▶ East along Hwy M (County)

Pleasant View Road Reconstruction

- ▶ Joint project designed by Middleton and Madison for a **four-lane divided road** with sidewalks and some multi-use path, to be constructed through a WisDOT contract.
- ▶ WisDOT will concurrently do a **highway safety project** on USH 14 at the Pleasant View Rd. intersection.
- ▶ WisDOT moved bid letting from May to September, so **majority of construction may not start until next spring.**
- ▶ Road hill will be lowered by about 20'. Current at-grade crosswalk at crest of hill will be replaced with an **elevated pedestrian bridge** connecting the conservancy path to the bike park.
- ▶ Three intersections in Middleton will have **roundabout traffic control**, which should provide good operations, landscaping and speed control benefits, and won't have inefficiencies that traffic signal programming would.
- ▶ New site development for apartments being considered will be possible with **sewer main extension** to be done with road project.
- ▶ Several **new storm water management ponds** will be constructed with the project.
- ▶ Middleton expects up to about **\$4 million for property and utility easement acquisitions, and about \$11 million for construction.** Federal funding will be another ~\$11 million, and Madison's share is estimated at about \$3 million.



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Registration deadline: July 31, 2022



THEN & NOW

Zarndt's Garage





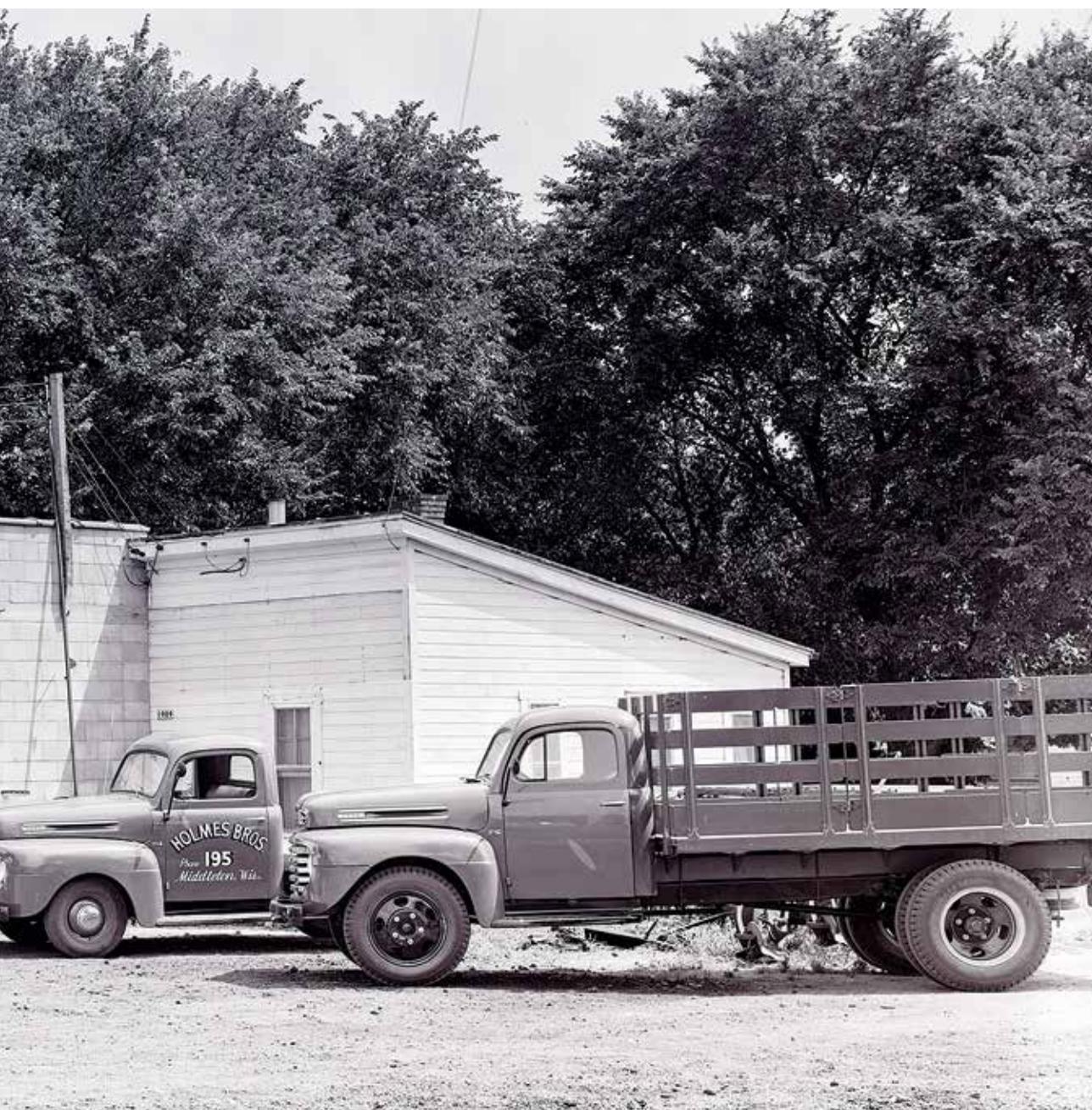
The origins of Zarndt's Garage on University Avenue go back to 1918, when Fred Zarndt built the original business before becoming a Ford dealer in 1920. He sold the business in 1927, but repurchased it in 1932 and established a Chevrolet agency. In the 1950s he served as village president. In the late 1940s his sons became involved in Zarndt's Garage, and it operated until 1968, when the property was sold to the Middleton Farmers Coop, which still operates a gas station and convenience store at that location.

Historical 1948 photo by LEIF ERSLAND
 Original negative in the possession of the MIDDLETON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 Digital photo file created by JEFF MARTIN/JMAR FOTO-WERKS
 Present-day photo by GEORGE ZENS
 Historical information from SOUVENIR VETERANS CENTENNIAL CARNIVAL by EILEEN AND TOM DANIELS, Middleton, 1948, and from MIDDLETON'S EARLY YEARS by LORENA GORDON, Middleton, 2006

THEN & NOW

Holmes Bros.





The Holmes Bros. farm implement business was established in 1946 when Herb and Oliver Holmes bought the Allis Chalmers Agency located at the corner of Aurora Street and Elmwood Avenue. They sold Minneapolis-Moline equipment, Gehl machinery and Maytag appliances. Beginning in the late 1950s, Middleton Motors used the building as a showroom and garage before Mid-Plains Telephone Co. (now TDS) bought the property in 1969.

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 Present-day photo by GEORGE ZENS
 Historical information from SOUVENIR VETERANS CENTENNIAL CARNIVAL by EILEEN AND TOM DANIELS, Middleton, 1948, and from MIDDLETON'S EARLY YEARS by LORENA GORDON, Middleton, 2006

THEN & NOW

Middleton Lumber Co.





The Middleton Lumber Company was founded in the mid-19th century by John Drives, and built on railroad property. It changed hands many times throughout its history, and one of its most prominent owners was W.F. Pierstorff, who was also the first president of the Bank of Middleton, which was founded in 1903. In 1912 the lumberyard passed into the hands of the Utter family, originally from Nashotah, Wisconsin, and in 1968 the Utter brothers sold it to the Osborne Brick Company. In the 1980s, Ron Grosse bought the property and developed the Old Middleton Centre apartments.

Historical 1948 photo by LEIF ERSLAND
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