

Middleton Review

Middleton's free community newspaper

Editorial: Does Middleton need to be more walkable?

News: The mayor undermines community-based government

Photo essays: National Trails Day, Memorial Day, Art Walk

History: Then & now

Cover story: Prescribed burns as a land-management tool

Issue 124/June 2022





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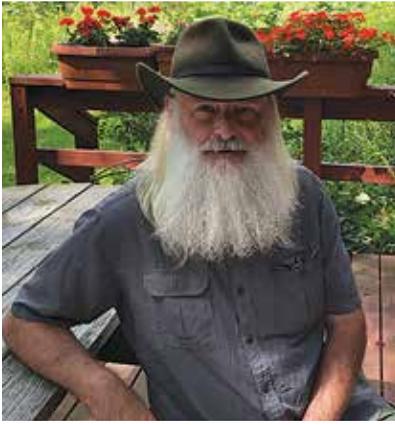
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by GEORGE ZENS

ZENSIBLE OBSERVATIONS

Does Middleton really need to be more bike- and pedestrian-friendly?

Let me start by providing some personal context: I walk for most of my local transportation needs, and when I say ‘local’ I mean anywhere in the city of Middleton, and the west side of Madison as far as Hilldale or West Towne and anywhere inbetween. I used to bike a lot, but I find walking more relaxing now, although occasionally I also ride a tricycle. I try to only use a car if I have to (or if I’m lazy, which happens more often than I am willing to admit).

I am aware that my way of transportation does not work for most people. It is possible for me because of my particular circumstances: I work from home, and have thus no commute; being self-unemployed, I set my own schedule; I can organize my time according to how long it takes me to get to and from places (sixty minutes walking to city hall via the conservancy and the creek corridor, for instance, fifty minutes if I follow the streets; ninety to a hundred minutes to some of my favorite bookshops on the west side).

That said, I can confidently make the following statement: Middleton is probably as walkable (and bicycle-friendly) as it is going to get without significantly redistributing the available roadway space among motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, and without drastically reversing decades of urban planning aimed specifically at adapting the city to the needs of the automobile.

And while city officials talk about promoting walkability and bicycle-friendliness and micro-mobility (mostly electric-powered scooters and skateboards and similar contraptions seemingly invented for the express purpose of people breaking their necks), and even include such goals in various plans, comprehensive and other, there is very little concrete happening, or even on the horizon, that would put the pious talk into practice.

Middleton has a fine network of trails and sidewalks, and although there are gaps they are of little consequence, and anyone who wants to walk or bike anywhere in the city can do so without meeting any significant obstacles or safety issues. (I am, by the way, only talking from my perspective, and cannot speak for people with disabilities of any sort who encounter challenges I have never experienced.)

People’s willingness to walk or bike for transportation is, at least in our fair city, and also in Madison, less a matter of infrastructure than of personal choice, ability and circumstance.

The city could add more miles of multi-use trails along roads by buying up right-of-way (by state law, the city is not allowed to use eminent domain for bike trails), but that would be cost-prohibitive. And while it would probably lead to more people biking (one of the city’s stated transportation goals), I am not convinced that that is a good idea, especially if, as could be expected, the increase consisted mostly of recreational bicyclists.

Based on decades of experience, my reason for that statement is that many

if not most people don’t know how to ride a bike. Oh, of course, they know how to dress colorfully in tight garments for the occasion, and they know how to keep their balance while moving in an unobstructed straight line (actually, thanks to the laws of physics, the bicycle can do that on its own), but they don’t know how to behave in traffic (or on trails, for that matter).

Even though most, if not all, of them also drive cars, they seem to forget all traffic rules as soon as they climb on their bikes. Maybe the tight spandex shorts cut off the circulation to their brains, but for whatever reason, many bicyclists don’t seem to remember how to make a left turn at an intersection, what red lights and stop signs mean, how to signal before changing lanes or direction, that pedestrians have the right-of-way pretty much everywhere, especially in a crosswalk (more motorists than bicyclists seem to know that), and that 2,000+ pounds of metal are always going to beat ten pounds of carbon fiber.

In other words, before we encourage more people to ride bikes, we should make sure they are properly trained. Lessons in trail etiquette would also not go amiss.

Meanwhile, there are small improvements the city could do - at little cost - to make life easier for walkers and bikers: It could adjust the settings on traffic lights to make them more responsive to pedestrians (and bicyclists): Currently traffic lights are set to promote the free and fast flow of cars (especially on major roads like University Avenue and Century Avenue), while pedestrians get a (short, often too short) ‘walk’ light seemingly as an afterthought after a frustratingly long delay.

At the intersection of University Avenue and Bristol Street, for instance, many pedestrians (including me) push the ‘walk’ button, but cross University at the earliest possible occasion without waiting for the light, which takes a ridiculously long time to change. The result: cars are stopped at a red light that has lost its significance as the pedestrians are long gone.

Of course, the city could, and should, also make more substantive changes to its road infrastructure to show that it is serious about improving the quality of life of people (which is what walkability is in the end all about) by, for instance, creating a pedestrian shopping and dining zone downtown.

Our elected officials, however, lack the political courage to do even that, which makes it highly unlikely that they will substantially challenge the status quo, traffic-wise, anytime soon.

Which, frankly, makes very little difference to me. I get around just fine walking and tricycling as it is, and if I don’t want to have a drink on a patio surrounded by traffic noise and exhaust fumes, then I go somewhere else. And if one intersection is more annoying than another, then I avoid it or deal with it.

After all, a major advantage of walking is not having to be in a hurry and not experiencing the frustrations of drivers.



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THE MONTH IN REVIEW

How the mayor undermines community-based government, and other news

By GEORGE ZENS

THE CITY'S PROBLEM WITH AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP

Over the past years, the city of Middleton has, through TIF, aggressively subsidized the construction of so-called 'affordable' or 'workforce' rental properties, i.e. apartments that are reserved for people whose earnings are below a certain percentage of 'area median income'. While this policy has been successful, although it creates other problems, it does not address the increasing affordability of actual homeownership. City officials are aware of this gap, but solutions are not as seemingly straightforward as with rental units.

A big part of the problem has to do with government regulations that are out of city's hands (TIF rules make it difficult to subsidize direct ownership of individual single-family homes, federal regulations make condominium financing unattractive for developers, ...), so the city's workforce housing committee has been looking at other ways of how homeownership can be promoted. In the view of many experts, ownership is in the long run more sustainable than renting because it can help build equity. The (big) assumption here is of course that people don't default on their payments, that they can afford the maintenance and repairs of their property, and that they don't get taxed out of their homes.

The city of Middleton's workforce housing committee has researched options on how the city could promote affordable homeownership. Among its recommendations:

It is a national problem for highly desirable communities where the demand exceeds supply, thereby increasing prices of land. Compounded with supply chain issues during the pandemic and ensuing construction cost increases, the problem grows worse. Even townhomes at Conservancy Bend are on the market for at least \$450,000, well over the amount affordable to anyone at the median income (about \$103,000 for a family of 3 in Dane county as of 2022) and who don't have substantial savings for a down payment. This is a matter of great urgency for Middleton's workers who can't afford to live in, let alone near, the city. Presumably, condominium development could help to fill the void with lower square footage and shared property maintenance costs. However, condominium development has not rebounded after the great recession of 2007-2009.

Although alternatives are few, the workforce housing committee recommends consideration of the following components of a city strategy, most of which are included in the city's comprehensive plan's housing section:

1. Develop a land bank with the Madison Area Community Land Trust

The Madison Area Community Land Trust (MACLT) serves all of Dane county, but so far has only developed homes within the city of Madison because there are sources of funding available (CDBG, HOME, city's affordable housing fund) that enable home development. MACLT has worked with the city assessor to reduce the property taxes paid by the homeowner. There is a controlled rate of tax increase based on the resale

formula, which is less than it would be for a conventional homeowner. CLT (community land trust) homes pay property taxes, but at a lower rate than conventional single-family homes.

The city of Madison has an affordable housing fund for these types of developments made possible by the tax increment finance law passed by the Wisconsin legislature in 2009.

MACLT sustainability/business model – MACLT gets a developer fee when they develop new homes on the land that MACLT owns. For single family homes, MACLT is the developer. For larger projects they partner with a developer. MACLT gets \$50/month (\$600/year) for condos and \$75/month (\$900/year) for houses from owners as the land lease fee.

Sources of development funding in Middleton – In any given year, the county has minimal funds (\$600,000) available through HOME funds from the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that can be used for homeownership, and they typically try to spread these funds out to multiple organizations and communities. More federal funding is expected to come to Dane county for affordable housing in the next year or two from the American Rescue Plan Act and the infrastructure bill, that could be used in Middleton for CLT homeownership projects over the next five years.

The city of Middleton also expects to have tax increment finance (TIF) district #3 close in 2030. Due to the Wisconsin state law that allows a TID to accumulate funds in its final year for affordable housing anywhere in the city, Middleton expects some funds to be available after 2030 for this purpose. Even within current TIDs, if there are projects for CLT development that would increase density and therefore tax revenue for a particular parcel, those projects possibly could be eligible for regular TIF funds in the present.

The city of Middleton could establish a land bank to buy and facilitate the development of property for the purpose of creating affordable ownership housing. Land banking is useful to quickly acquire and then hold property to time property transfer to non-profit organizations when they are ready to develop.

Mortgage type - Home owners need to get a leasehold mortgage. Freddy Mac and Fannie Mae offer these. MACLT has been vetted by some local lenders. The four local banks and credit unions that currently work with MACLT home buyers are Summit, Heartland, Monona, and Old National Bank. For construction loans MACLT has a good relationship with Monona Bank and with Forward Community Investments.

Another means by which to bank land is through property forfeitures. If a property is delinquent on their property taxes for more than three years, state statute defines the following steps to resolve the issue: (1) Dane county can pay down taxes and keep the property under county ownership. (2) If the county opts not to keep the parcel, the municipality that the parcel is within might have the option to buy it. The city pays 1% of the property's assessed value plus the taxes that are due. (3) If the municipality and county do not want the property, the

property would have to go to a public auction based on state statute. Middleton could work with Dane county to acquire tax-foreclosed properties, acquiring any suitable land within city limits for transfer to the CLT.

2. Partner with Habitat for Humanity (HFH) of Dane county

HFH has a tremendous track record, and they have previously partnered with Springs Window Fashions in the development of a small subdivision on Century Place. HFH uses a combination of community volunteer support, prospective homeowner sweat equity and donated land to enable development of single-family homes averaging about 1,100 square feet. If undeveloped land (or potential rehabs) can be located, it does help HFH select a municipality if the community provides financial support. For example, Sun Prairie contributed \$950,000 for a sanitary sewer. Oregon provided \$150,000 towards water management and applied for \$631,000 to the state for overall project development. HFH would be interested in TIF, but they typically don't qualify as single-family home development. They do not make a profit on their 0% home mortgages and need money to cover staff costs; hence, assistance from municipalities helps them decide where to put their scarce resources.

HFH watches for land and potential homes of appropriate size/neighborhoods that they could purchase at affordable market rates, or negotiate for purchase, or have donated to their mission. Prospects could include for-profit developers, individuals moving out of their homes and investors no longer needing land, and it could be residential lots of land suitable for larger scale development.

City building inspectors could be the eyes and ears for prospective sites by watching for homes that might be candidates for donation/sale to Habitat. This includes rental homes not being maintained, or long-term homes no longer occupied.

Large employers might be interested in having a team building 'frame up' in their parking lots for \$15,000. Habitat has partnered like this with Springs Window Fashions, John Deere Financial, Mead & Hunt and Erdman, all of which are on the west side of Madison/Middleton.

HFH has a formal partnership with MATC and the Sun Prairie school district to build a home. Justin Zander, the tech ed teacher who started the Sun Prairie program is at Middleton High and has asked to implement a similar program there.

3. Re-start the Middleton down-payment assistance program (DPAP)

The community development authority (CDA) had sponsored a DPAP which was active from 2005 until the end of 2010 when the CDA discontinued it, primarily due to concerns over costs of managing the program, as well as staff and legal time. There are still seven outstanding loans totaling \$87,490 to be paid back in the next few years. For homeowners who stay in place for fifteen years, the loans must be paid at the end of the fifteen years at 0% interest. Those who leave or sell earlier pay a graduated amount back on the proceeds of the sale. This provision strongly



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Five down-payment loans are outstanding, and the amount owed to the CDA is \$57,490. Ten were fully repaid, two were partially repaid (\$1,500 for one and \$2,650 for the other), and one was fully forgiven. The CDA uses the services of the Wisconsin Partnership for Affordable Housing for administration of the program. Currently, the CDA is on track for fifteen of the eighteen DPAP loans (83%) to have been totally successful.

The big question is whether the current CDA would be interested in restarting this program using anticipated revenues or other existing resources that are already allocated.

4. Consider long-term re-use of city's downtown land in conjunction with the community campus plan (CCP) for condominium development

Depending on the development parameters of the CCP, there could be land available for condo development in downtown Middleton. The city could issue a request for proposals from developers to build condos on city-owned property with a mix of both market-rate and qualified affordable units. TIF may be used for downtown parking that also could benefit the development.

The workforce housing committee believes that since the private market is not building condominiums, and the demand conceivably is high for this type of housing, the timing is ripe for the city to intervene in the market to produce housing on land that would continue to be owned by the city or a CLT, either of which addresses property inflation that typically exacerbates affordability problems.

5. Plan to use the TIF statute after expiration of TID #3 in 2030 and TID #5 in 2036

Use the 'affordable-housing extension' that allows the city to extend the life of a tax increment financing district by one year to 'benefit affordable housing'. Before a TIF district is terminated, it can be repurposed for one additional year to benefit affordable housing and improve housing stock anywhere in the community (even outside of the TIF district boundary). Several Wisconsin communities have taken advantage of the affordable housing extension in the TIF law to fund housing and neighborhood programs, to provide developer incentives for tax credit projects, to implement affordable housing plans, to create low-interest loan programs to renew the existing housing stock, and to fund construction of new affordable owner-occupied housing. Middleton has a strong need for affordable housing and should use the affordable-housing extension on the closure of TIF district 3 (2030) and TIF district 5 (2036).

CITY COUNCIL: TO BE OR NOT TO BE (PHYSICALLY PRESENT)

The first full meeting of the new Middleton common council on Tuesday, May 3, was long (almost three hours, including a closed session after the public part), at times emotional (proclamations honoring retiring police lieutenant Terry Hanson and city administrator Mike Davis brought tears to many people's eyes, including the honorees') and on bigger policy issues largely indecisive.

The council did take action on a number of housekeeping, routine or otherwise unavoidable items, such as clarifying the no-mow May resolution approved at the previous meeting to include the terraces; deferring an agreement with Middleton Outreach Ministry for the use of ARPA funds (the city's out-of-state consultant

for administering the distribution of the funds made a number of embarrassing mistakes in the agreement draft); awarding a bid for surface treatment of city streets to Fahrner Asphalt Sealing (the bid came in at just over \$176,000, but since the city had budgeted \$250,000 it was decided that the number of streets to undergo the asphalt-and-gravel treatment will be expanded until all the budgeted money is spent); authorizing filling a couple of vacant staff positions (a police officer and a volunteer coordinator at the senior center); passing a 'declaration of understanding' with fire fighters union local 311, and approving resolutions for a TIF bond and an application for a DNR stewardship grant (for the XCX Outdoor and Recreation Sports Center at Pleasant View).

The council did approve holding, or at least extending invitations for, two inter-governmental committee-of-the-whole meetings - one with the Springfield town board, and the other with the MCPASD board of education. The initiative for the meetings came from council member Luke Fuszard (district 5), who thought they could be useful to start repairing some of the bridges that had been burnt with the town of Springfield during the airport master plan process, and to talk about the challenges in view of the two referendums voters will, most likely, be asked to approve in November to increase property taxes for higher operating expenses by both the city and the school district.

While the agenda for a meeting with the board of education is straightforward, even if its purpose is less so (some council members would actually like the school district to postpone its referendum until spring of 2023, while others want to avoid at least a direct competition between the two taxing jurisdictions), the one for the meeting with Springfield will be the topic of some discussion. All council members (and, presumably, town board members) can probably agree that the two communities have many matters of common interest to discuss, not the least of which is storm water management. Opinions on the council, however, were divided on the elephant in the room in any meeting with the town - the airport. District 7 representative Dan Ramsey wanted to keep it off any agenda altogether, while Lisa Janairo (district 6) thought it would be unavoidable. In the end it was decided that the city and the town would work out an agenda together (assuming the town is interested in a meeting in the first place), and that the committee of the whole would take place without public comments.

Unanimously and without discussion the council approved the final version of the mayor Gurdip Brar's list of councilors' appointments to the various city committees and commissions. In response to criticism at his appointments practices expressed in the *Middleton e-View* (the Middleton Review's subscription based email newsletter published twice a week) he went to great lengths to explain that he had talked to all council members, that (almost) all of them got the appointments they wanted, that he had spent some sleepless nights over the whole process, that he had done a great job, and that everybody was happy. The beaming faces on the council bench and the adoring looks in his direction seemed to indicate that he has indeed charmed the districts' representatives into submission, and that all is for the best in the best of all Middleton common councils. The fact that the vote was a mere formality and that everything

had been agreed upon in advance had already become clear during the finance committee meeting, which took place, as it always does, just before the council meeting: It (finance) was chaired by newly appointed member Lisa Janairo before her appointment was even confirmed by the council.

The council postponed decisions on substance on several occasions. Following a recommendation by the finance committee, it deferred a decision on the recommendations for an affordable homeownership strategy (see previous item); it took no action on the five-year vehicle replacement plan and its recommendations for electric vehicles, as this will be discussed during budget time in a few months; it also took no action on the so-called sidewalk-funding policy (i.e. who should pay for new sidewalks where there aren't any now - the city, the property owner, as is the case now, or both?), although discussions are supposed to continue on the 'complete streets' concepts, the idea that streets should not be designed with only the needs of motorists in mind; and it sent the city attorney's proposal for a charter ordinance to overrule state law in matters of council quorums to the license and ordinance committee.

The idea for the charter ordinance comes out of the city's pandemic response. Under the emergency resolution passed by the council in the spring of 2020 (and which, by the way, has not been revoked yet, even though the emergency is over), the council and all committees and commissions had been meeting virtually via Zoom (most committees still do), and a quorum was thus established virtually also. With the council meeting in person again and the option of hybrid meetings (with some, most, or even all council members attending virtually) becoming a possibility once the city has the technology in place (not before August or September now - that date keeps getting pushed back at every meeting), the question of how a quorum is established has been raised. According to the city attorney's interpretation of state law, at least six council members have to be physically present to create a quorum. The charter ordinance would circumvent that requirement and allow for a quorum to be created through physical and virtual attendance.

The council is divided on this issue. Dan Ramsey and Gurdip Brar are in favor of keeping the requirement for a physical quorum in place, arguing, convincingly, that as elected officials they have a responsibility to make the effort to be physically present and available to the citizens (especially when the vast majority of their constituents don't have the luxury of working from home), and that people who can't or don't want to make that kind of commitment shouldn't have run for elected office in the first place (Dan Ramsey put it slightly less bluntly).

On the other side of the argument was district 4 representative Emily Kuhn who claimed that a virtual quorum would allow more people with young children to participate in council meetings. (Somehow the argument was also made that it would encourage the participation of people of color in local government.) It was also argued that it would allow council members who were traveling for business or on vacation to count towards the quorum. During the discussion, some councilors seemed to confuse quorum requirement and attendance options, however: In the past, council members have routinely participated in meetings via telephone, and they can still do so now, or via computer, although they won't count towards the quorum.

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Fact is that in the past twenty-plus years the number of instances that a council meeting had to be canceled for lack of quorum can be counted on the fingers of one hand (although nobody present could recall a precise meeting).

Overall it seems that opposition to the physical quorum requirement boils down to the fact that some elected officials have become quite comfortable in their home set-ups, and, not to put too fine a point on it, now resent the inconvenience of having to leave their houses to do the job they signed up for.

The only non-unanimous vote took place on resolution 2022-27 to adopt the University Avenue corridor plan, with Lisa Janairo opposed. Her objection was that the plan did not go far enough to promote sustainability and a less car-centric approach to traffic.

GOOD NEIGHBOR FEST: NEW ATTRACTIVENESS

It looks like this year's edition of the Good Neighbor Festival might lift some further restrictions on alcoholic beverages at the Firemen's Park fair ground, building on the breakthrough achieved last year when it abandoned the small fenced-in areas around two beer tents, and replaced them with an 'open layout' with a single beer tent and expanded fenced-in area instead.

That approach, although still cautious as it only opened up part of the park to people wandering around with a beer and included an extra fence within the fenced-in area that restricted access to the stage area in the evenings, was too bold for the Middleton VFW, prompting the veterans' association, one of the founders of the Good Neighbor Festival, to pull out of the event. For this year the organizers plan to get rid of the inside fence, and they are considering expanding the outer fence to include the craft fair (see map). An added attraction this year will be tethered hot-air balloon rides.

GNF grounds chairman Brad Ritter explained the possible changes to the members of the license and ordinance committee (L&O) on Tuesday, May 10, and they seemed generally favorable to the idea. Last year's experience with the new system was generally positive, as well as popular with the visitors (except for the inside fence), and the Middleton police department has no objections to further loosening the restrictions.

After last year's changes, this would be a further break with long-standing city of Middleton policies towards alcohol consumption that have always erred on the side of panic. The theoretical possibility that an underage person might get hold of a beer at any public event or venue has led Middleton elected officials over decades to establish a system of restrictions that is not only more severe than in many neighboring communities, including Madison, but that also, by thus vilifying alcohol, preempts any possibility of encouraging and teaching responsible alcohol consumption. On a less hyperbolic level, the city's fencing requirements impose a not-negligible financial burden on event organizers, especially if the area to be fenced in is fairly large. That was the case recently when the organizers of this coming Saturday's Middleton Art Walk on Terrace Avenue (see announcement below) - the city itself via its arts committee, by the way! - had to abandon the idea of allowing people to buy a beer at Capital Brewery and visit the different stands with their beer: The cost of fencing in Terrace Avenue, or even only part of it, would have been too high.

Fencing-in, as assistant city attorney Matt Fleming has

pointed out on several occasions, is not required by city ordinance, but through a long-established policy created many years ago by L&O members who probably had fond memories of Prohibition (Matt Fleming did not say this last bit). That policy could therefore also be replaced with a new, less restrictive policy by the license and ordinance committee, and it looks like the new generation of elected officials who have joined the city council in the last several years, including the members of the current L&O, might have a more relaxed view of human behavior and public morality than some members of the old guard did. L&O approved both the hot air balloon and the proposed new fencing.

BUS SERVICE: A SURPRISE COST INCREASE?

Madison Metro has officially included changes to planned changes to its bus service in the northeastern part of Middleton in an amendment package that will be decided upon in the weeks to come: New route Y, which will serve the South Ridge Way area among others was initially planned as a 'peak-only' route, with no bus service most of the day. Even by Madison Metro's customary low concern for the needs of the public it is supposed to serve, this marked a new level of disregard, as South Ridge Way is by far the busiest bus stop in Middleton. After complaints by Middleton officials, notably district 7 alderman Dan Ramsey who represents that area, Madison Metro changed its mind, and route Y would now operate with hourly all-day service.

The change is part of so-called 'amendment 6A' in Madison Metro's plans, an amendment that is larger than just bus service in Middleton, and also includes a new route R on Old Sauk Road.

According to Madison Metro, the total added cost of these changes is estimated at \$870,000, with part of the funding for route Y to be provided by the city of Middleton. It is at this point neither clear what Middleton's share would be, nor where Middleton would get the money from. When asked about it, Middleton city officials seemed surprised at the suggestion.

PARKS AMENITIES: FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

The city of Middleton's parks system keeps generating unpleasant financial surprises. After years of carefree spending fed by a seemingly never-ending revenue stream through 'fees-in-lieu' and other park fees paid by developers, city officials found out last year that much of that spending might have been in violation of state law, and that the city needs to reassess how it funds its park amenities. This reassessment will cost more money, and on Tuesday, May 16, the common council will (most likely) decide to pay Baker Tilly (a firm of tax advisors) \$24,500 for a 'park impact fee study and needs assessment' to put the city back on the straight and narrow concerning the spending of park development fees.

Meanwhile, older and newer park amenities are in need of repair and maintenance, and city officials are struggling to find the funds to pay for it all. Repairing and expanding the tennis courts at Lakeview Park has been postponed to 2023 at the earliest, as the quotes have come in way over the \$150,000 budget. Part of these \$150,000 (\$17,500) is now to be used to fix surface cracks in two of the pickle ball courts at Taylor Park on County Highway Q. These were installed not so long ago, and the rapid deterioration has been traced back to shoddy work by a subcontractor.

Unfortunately, however, the city is 'outside of the warranty for both the subcontractor and the general contractor', according to city staff. The Lakeview Park tennis courts budget is also tapped to pay for the Baker Tilly study.

This is part of a larger lesson that elected officials in particular have a tendency to ignore: Every bit of infrastructure that the city builds has to be maintained and repaired in the future, and it is not enough to only allocate money for the construction (the glamorous part of approving projects that politicians like to take credit for) - money also to be available to cover the inevitable follow-up costs (the other part). This is true for streets as much as for public restrooms and athletic facilities, and allowing public infrastructure to deteriorate not only means having to spend (much) more later on to get it back into shape, as the city found out when its streets became a source of ridicule from surrounding communities, and a source of frustration for residents, but also that the original construction expense might have been a waste of money.

HOW THE MAYOR UNDERMINES COMMUNITY-BASED GOVERNMENT

If there is such a thing as a mayoral legacy in the city of Middleton, current office holder Gurdip Brar's could very well turn out to be a net negative. All elected officials, including mayors, make mistakes, and his predecessors (at least the ones that I have covered in the last twenty plus years) made their fair share. But on balance they made long-lasting positive contributions to the community: Dan Ramsey (1977 to 2003) and Doug Zwank (2003 to 2007) through the push they gave to economic development (including, under Dan Ramsey, the purchase by the city of the airport and the golf course), to the protection of the environment, and to the extension of the trails network; Kurt Sonntag (2007 to 2017) through his focus on fiscal responsibility and on fixing Middleton's streets through the creation of the five-year road improvement plan. So far, however, Gurdip Brar (since 2017) will be mostly remembered for the damage he has done, and is still doing, to our city government's institutions, notably its advisory committees and commissions.

With some exceptions (like the finance committee and the license and ordinance committee for instance, whose members have to be elected officials), these committees are composed mainly of citizens who are appointed because of their competence, knowledge and sound judgment in their chosen fields of interest, whose task it is to provide expert advice to the elected officials on the common council, and who, as opposed to the mayor and the other council members, don't get paid for their work. If the city had to pay for all that advice by hiring consultants it could never afford it.

Not all committees are created equal; some have more decision-making authority than others; some are regulated by state statute, most by city ordinance; some are mostly advisory to other committees, and almost all have their recommendations vetted by the finance committee first. But they are an essential component of local government.

Appointing committee members is the mayor's prerogative, although his nominees have to be approved by the common council. Before Gurdip Brar became mayor, the appointment process was a generally uncontroversial, almost routine affair: On the third Tuesday in April,

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the mayor presented his list of nominees to the new council, and the council would approve it without much discussion. The proceedings were respectful of the citizens who were willing to serve. Both the mayor and the council valued experience, and returning members were as a rule reappointed based on merit and the work they had done.

From the first day Gurdip Brar took office as mayor, this changed. For reasons entirely his own - and that he never explained to anyone's satisfaction - he decided not to reappoint the most experienced members on most committees.

Over the course of the years he has made up rules to justify not reappointing long-serving members who for one reason or another either displeased him, or who were in the way of another candidate he favored. Political loyalty has become a litmus test to serve on a committee. His rules - far from being arbitrary - are usually targeted to eliminate specific people. Thus, for instance, he suddenly decided a few years ago that no members from the same household may serve simultaneously on city committees, even different ones. He then used this new rule to get rid of the long-serving and highly qualified chairman of the park, recreation and forestry commission who had been critical of him on certain issues, while at the same time leaving other husband-and-wife teams intact. Another one of his rules now is that nobody should serve more than two terms on a committee. He is using that rule this year to get rid of two long-serving, and eminently qualified, members of the airport commission and the pedestrian, bicycle and transit committee, who for some reason have fallen foul of him, while at the same time reappointing even longer-serving, and no less eminently qualified, members of the water resources management commission. He also uses committee applicants as pawns in his political games by appointing citizens to committees they didn't apply for - and are thus implicitly less qualified for. He regularly claims that he wants to increase gender equality by appointing more women to committees, although his record shows that he only does so when it suits him. He also has a record of leaving committee positions open rather than filling them with citizens who might not serve his political interests, i.e. might be independent-minded.

On Tuesday May 17, the last council meeting of the month, his continued efforts to play politics with the committee system backfired when the council refused to approve three of his nominees: two for the airport commission, and one for the pedestrian, bicycle and transit committee (bike-ped).

All others were approved, although there will (might) be more nominations to follow as he is still trying to fill a number of vacancies, including on the plan commission (a highly qualified incumbent decided not to seek reappointment), the library board (for some reason he has rejected the application of a seemingly well qualified female UW-Madison professor of English), the community development authority (he did not reappoint an incumbent who had reapplied), the fire commission, the public safety committee, the workforce housing committee and the commission on youth. This does not include student-member vacancies on several committees.

Council president Kathy Olson (district 1) was concerned about the fact that the mayor had moved an incumbent member of bike-ped to the commission on aging (and replaced him with a new nominee), even

though he had applied to be reappointed to bike-ped, and even though, by being legally blind, he provided a unique and valuable perspective on the safety and walkability of Middleton streets for people with disabilities. Furthermore, as per city ordinance 2.31, one member of the ped-bike committee 'shall have handicap/pedestrian experience'. Gurdip Brar agreed to reconsider his decision, and a motion by Kathy Olson, seconded by Katy Nelson (district 3) to defer approval of the mayor's new appointee to bike-ped was approved unanimously.

The mayor's proposed two new appointments to the airport commission led not only to shouting matches between him and a couple of other council members, but also to the confirmation that the new representative for district 6, Lisa Janairo, is definitely an airport critic, if not airport opponent. She was the only council member who defended the mayor's nominees, quite vigorously so, at some point suggesting that aircraft or airport expertise were not relevant for that particular commission.

This line of argument emerged because neither candidate has aviation expertise, but they both have backgrounds in accounting. And while it is true that the airport commission is among things charged with oversight of the airport's finances (like the golf course, the airport operates autonomously as an enterprise fund, which means it has its own stream of revenue and separate accounts, and does not rely on local tax dollars for its operating expenses), airport operations are vastly complicated, not least because of the involvement of the state and federal governments, and the airport commission is also tasked with cooperating 'with the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics and the Federal Aviation Administration in airport and system planning functions and other activities' (Middleton city ordinance 2.18).

Kendra Wochos (district 2), who replaces former airport commission member and chairman of the now defunct airport master plan advisory committee (AMPAC) Robert Burck on the council and who is a member of the Pleasant View Golf Course Advisory Committee, was of the opinion that a financial background, while useful, was not enough to oversee an enterprise fund, but that relevant operations knowledge was also required.

As Emily Kuhn (district 4) pointed out, if the mayor's appointees were approved, only two of the seven commission members would have any relevant airport or aviation experience.

Of the commission's seven members, five are citizens and two are council representatives: The latter are Luke Fuszard, whose district 5 includes the airport, and Lisa Janairo. The mayor's new appointees would replace an incumbent (who had applied for reappointment) with solid experience in aviation and airport operations, and who can provide the sort of high-level advice that the city could otherwise on only buy at great expense from professional consultants, and - the mayor himself (who last year had kicked a citizen-member off the airport commission to make room for himself, a power grab that led the council to change the ordinance, thus preventing the mayor from reappointing himself this year).

The mayor's new nominees have also gone on record as being critical of the airport, and although, as Randall Crow (district 8) pointed out, it is often useful to have people with varying opinions and viewpoints on a

committee, one should not put the fox in charge of the hen house. Or, as Katy Nelson quipped, you don't appoint somebody to the library board who wants to burn books. For Kathy Olson, appointing people to the airport commission who are biased against the airport would be "a bridge too far", and she would not vote for them.

Luke Fuszard worried that "a lot of scar tissue" has built up in the last few years in airport matters, and that instead of healing, the mayor's push would lead back to the increased "levels of vitriol" of the recent past.

Dan Ramsey (district 7) put it bluntly: He accused the mayor of "getting greedy", of trying "to change the dynamics like you did with AMPAC", and of "trying to stack the deck" against the airport.

Gurdip Brar eventually realized that he was not going to get his airport commission nominees confirmed, and he pleaded with council members to make a motion to defer approval of his candidates rather than a motion to deny (although there is no practical difference between the two). A motion to deny was made by Katy Nelson and seconded by Kathy Olson, but as a substitute motion made by Luke Fuszard and seconded by Lisa Janairo was approved with 5 votes to 3 (Kathy Olson, Katy Nelson and Dan Ramsey opposed), it never came to a vote.

One way or another, Gurdip Brar will have to replace at least one of his would-be appointees with a candidate with airport or aviation expertise if he wants them to be in with half a chance of being confirmed. He has no lack of candidates to choose from, by the way, as more people applied for the airport commission than for any other committee, namely eight.

Meanwhile, as city attorney Larry Bechler pointed out, it doesn't matter whether the appointments were deferred or denied: In the end the new members were not approved, and even though their terms are officially expired, the current members can therefore continue to legally serve on the airport commission "until their successors are appointed and qualified". And there is apparently no time limit by which that has to happen, no matter what city ordinances say.

This means that for now Gurdip Brar's attempt to rid himself of an independent competent voice on the airport commission has backfired, as that member can continue to serve.

On the other hand, it also means that he - Gurdip Brar - himself could now continue to sit on the airport commission for as long as he pleases. All he had to do would be to not submit his replacement for approval to the council.

As this issue of the *Middleton Review* went to press, the common council had not come together yet for its first June meeting (Tuesday, June 7), but according to the posted agenda, the mayor has swapped out one of the 'offending' airport commission candidates, although he seems to be doubling down on keeping the most qualified candidates off both the airport commission and the bike/ped committee.

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Photo by GEORGE ZENS

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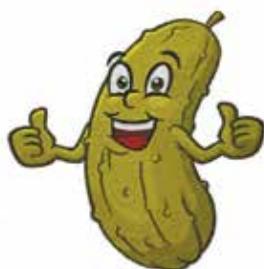
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PRESCRIBED BURNS

Fire as an environment-management tool

Controlled burns in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy help reintroduce and maintain various types of prairie ecosystems.

By GEORGE ZENS

In March and April of this year, more than eighty acres of prairie were set ablaze during three prescribed, or controlled, burns in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy. These periodic fires are necessary for the regeneration of the natural ecosystems in managed environments and nature parks, such as the conservancy.

As Robert Schubert, land manager for the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy (FPBC) explained during a recent guided tour of some of the affected areas, these burns often take place in the fall, although spring burns also have their usefulness. The latter, such as an early burn in March, differ from the later spring ones, and especially the fall ones, in that the weather is colder and the ground is often still wet, which makes for a less aggressive burn, leaving more material behind unscathed. On the other hand, too much unburned material can act as a mulch layer and prevent new plants

from coming up.

A particular challenge when burning in the spring is to balance the requirements for an effective burn and those of birds and early insects for food, not to mention reproduction. The solution, according to Robert Schubert, is ‘patchiness’ and ‘refugia’. Patchiness simply means, as the name implies, a combination of burnt and unburned (often just mowed) patches of land, while refugia (plural of refugium, Latin for refuge) are islands left untouched amid the burnt areas. These islands serve as safe zones and food sources for small animals, including many insects that don’t travel far, and are especially important in sensitive and unique habitats, such as Frederick’s Hill.

Following the burns, plants grow back fast on their own (some only because of the burns), and animals return. Sometimes the burnt areas are ‘over-seeded’ in

attempts to (re)establish desired native prairie plants or to support remnant prairie ecosystems.

Prescribed burns are not without risk, not least in urban and suburban settings. Weather conditions, especially wind speed and direction, can be unpredictable, and fires can get out of control (or, at the harmless albeit frustrating other end of the scale, not do much of anything at all). Ideal burn conditions consist of fairly dry weather and winds blowing consistently, i.e. from the same direction, at five to ten miles per hour. Sometimes, by the way, what looks like a narrow path winding its way through the prairie is really the remains of a fire break that hasn’t completely grown over yet.

According to the Wisconsin department of natural resources, prescribed fire is the intentional application of fire to a specific area, under specific environmental conditions, to accomplish planned land management



Frederick's Hill in the Pheasant Branch Conservancy before (above) and right after (facing page) a controlled burn this spring.
Previous page: After the burn around the springs.

All aerial-view photos by GARY SATER

objectives. Without the use of prescribed burning as a management tool, Wisconsin could lose many of its native grassland, wetland and savanna plant communities.

Fire was as much a part of the pre-settlement Wisconsin environment as rain, drought and the passing of the seasons. For thousands of years, wildfires occurred naturally through lightning strikes or were set by American Indians for the purpose of preparing settlements and attracting game species. Because frequent fire played a significant role in the development of much of Wisconsin's native plant communities, many plant and animal species now depend on fire for their continued existence. These periodic fires have been all but eliminated in Wisconsin in the last 150 years.

Fire is a natural and necessary component of ecosystems such as native prairies and oak openings, and pine

and oak barrens. Periodic fire is required for regeneration and growth of fire-adapted species within these systems. Land managers use prescribed burning to assist in restoring and maintaining these rare plant and animal communities.

Fire and wildlife have a historic and complex relationship in grassland, wetland and savanna communities. Prescribed fire is rarely lethal to most wildlife, yet has a profound effect on habitat by increasing the number of native plant and animal species present food sources for wildlife. The wildlife species that benefit most from prescribed fire are those that rely on open habitat in one or more stages of their life cycle. Examples of these animals are grassland birds, sharp-tailed grouse, waterfowl and pheasant. Prescribed burns also help to stimulate flowering herbaceous plants - a source

of food for white-tailed deer. Additionally, wildflower abundance and diversity support a wide variety of insects and other invertebrates, a food source that provides benefits all the way up the food chain.

Some specific advantages of prescribed burns include stimulating prairie-grass growth and improving habitat for upland game and waterfowl; creating pockets of open water for waterfowl amid cattails proliferating in low areas; promoting the growth of wildflowers, which attract insects, a vital food source for young game and non-game grassland birds; improving cover type for grassland-nesting birds, such as pheasants, and native vegetative growth for songbirds; and creating open pockets of bare ground, thus increasing diversity and richness for ground-foraging and seed-eating small mammals and birds.



More photos on pages 30 to 35.

Many of Wisconsin's native plants have developed adaptations to survive in a fire-prone community. For instance, fire-adapted prairie grasses and flowers develop deep roots and buds beneath the soil enabling them to withstand the fire, while shallow-rooted non-native plants succumb to the heat.

But these plants do not simply tolerate fire better than others, they actively benefit from fire. For instance, by removing accumulated leaf and grass litter and invading brush, fire stimulates the growth of native herbaceous species and maintaining the open character of these systems. Prescribed fire also returns nutrients to the soil, which in turn benefits the entire plant community.

Without fire, the structure and species composition of a plant community changes, providing the opportu-

nity for undesirable plants to overwhelm the site and allowing faster-growing species (e.g. maple) to shade out the slower-growing seedlings (e.g. oak). These communities would become uninhabitable to many wildlife species, especially those that have very specific habitat requirements.

Maintaining the integrity of these plant communities is especially crucial in critically rare ecosystems such as the above-mentioned pine or oak barrens, and oak savannas. Conducting prescribed burns in these systems ensures their continued integrity for future generations.

Prescribed burning is one of the least expensive and most environmentally-sound land-management practices. Removing the layer of dead grass (thatch) ensures better seed-to-soil contact for planting. Nutrients are released into the soil during burning to further enhance

the re-establishment of a new forest, or planting.

Prescribed burns also reduce the risk of wildfires, which is especially important in forests near urban areas. Reducing fuel loads is one of the most effective elements of any fire prevention and management program. Reducing brush in the mid-story of forests reduces the possibility of brush acting as 'ladder fuels' for fire to reach the crowns of trees.

Additionally, by reducing the fuel loading in open communities like prairies and wetland, fire intensity (flame height and rate of spread) is reduced and fires are easier to control and suppress.

Meanwhile, less than two months after the burns, pretty much all traces of them have disappeared in the conservancy.

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The brownish patch of the prairie on Frederick's Hill was not burned, so it could serve as a refuge for insects and other small animals.

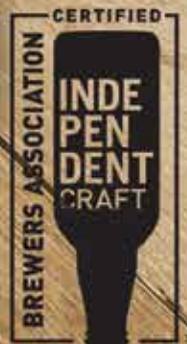
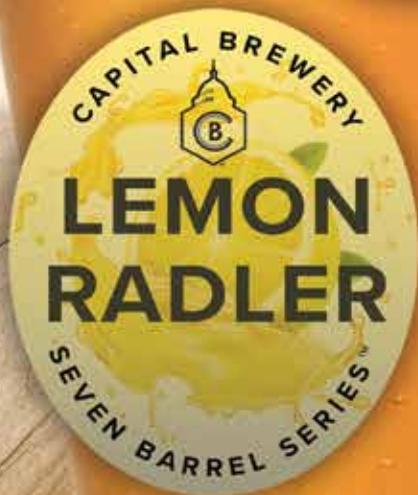
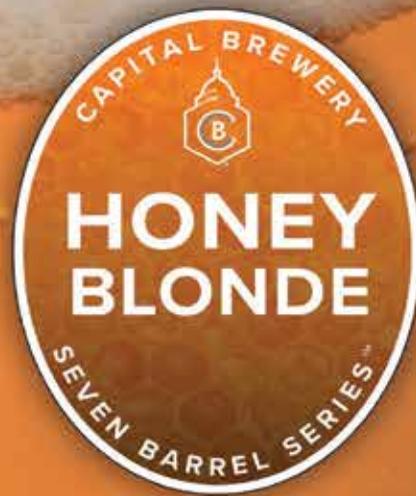
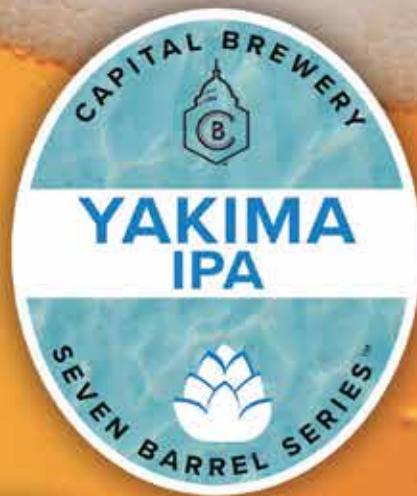


Early buttercups are remnant indicators of savannahs, like here on Frederick's Hill.



Early spring burns that take place when the ground is still cold and wet leave behind more unburned material that, if too thick, can act as a growth-impeding mulch layer.

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Views from Frederick's Hill looking south (above) and west (facing page) show vigorous regrowth after this spring's prairie burns.



Photos by GEORGE ZENS

PHEASANT BRANCH CONSERVANCY National Trails Day



National Trails Day in Middleton, June 4, organized by the Friends of Pheasant Branch Conservancy, had its main location at Orchid Heights Park, with excursions throughout the conservancy.



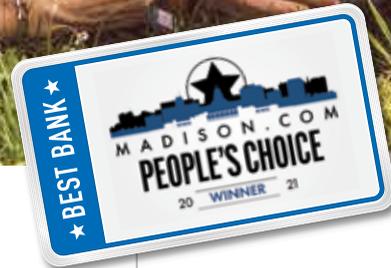
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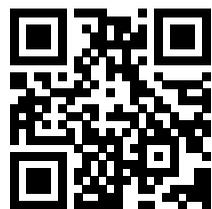
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ASHTON/LAKEVIEW PARK Memorial Day



Memorial Day, May 30, was commemorated by Middleton's VFW William 'Sonny' Simon Post 8216 with ceremonies at St. Peter's cemetery in Ashton and the veterans memorial at Lakeview Park in Middleton.



Photos by GEORGE ZENS

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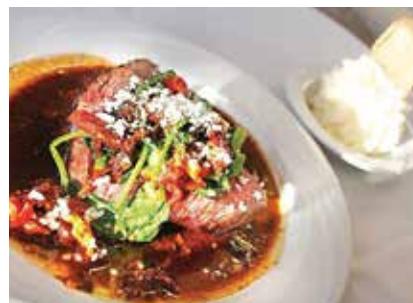
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DOWNTOWN MIDDLETON Gallery Night



*Anne Bamberg
at Little Pop Color Shop*



The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art's Gallery Night, on May 6, also took place in downtown Middleton, with numerous businesses and institutions hosting artists and their work.



*Erin Summers
at Middleton Tourism (Depot)*



*Krista Vallenstein
at The Regal Find*



*Yeonhee Cheong
at Middleton Senior Center*

Photos by GEORGE ZENS

TERRACE AVENUE Art Walk



The Middleton Art Walk took place on May 14 on Terrace Avenue, with exhibitions, demonstrations, kids activities and live music in the Capital Brewery Bier Garten.



Photos by GEORGE ZENS

WHO SERVED WHEN

An overview of all city of Middleton common councils

April to April	Mayors	1	2	3	4	5
1963/1964	Arlye McDermid	Victor Adler	Walter Bauman	Henry Busch	George Davis	Robert Jolin
1964/1965	Arlye McDermid	Victor Adler	Walter Bauman	Henry Busch	George Davis	Robert Jolin
1965/1966	Walter Bauman	Kenneth Baitinger	Henry Busch	Larry Hanson	Robert Jolin	George Kuepper
1966/1967	Walter Bauman	Kenneth Baitinger	Henry Busch	Larry Hanson	Robert Jolin	George Kuepper
1967/1968	Walter Bauman	Kenneth Baitinger	Henry Busch	Larry Hanson	Robert Jolin	George Kuepper
1968/1969	Walter Bauman	Kenneth Baitinger	Jay Gile	Wilson Groth	Larry Hanson	Thomas Henning
1969/1970	Walter Bauman	Kenneth Baitinger	Michael DesParte	Wilson Groth	Thomas Henning	Jean Jolin
1970/1971	Walter Bauman	Kenneth Baitinger	Michael DesParte	Thomas Henning	Jean Jolin	George Kuepper
1971/1972	Walter Bauman	A.L. Arntsen	Kenneth Baitinger	Thomas Cantwell	Thomas Henning	Jean Jolin
1972/1973	Walter Bauman	A.L. Arntsen	Kenneth Baitinger	Thomas Cantwell	Gregory Foss	Thomas Henning
1973/1974	Walter Bauman	Thomas Cantwell	Gregory Foss	Jonathan Friedberg	Judy Karofsky	George Kuepper
1974/1975	Walter Bauman	Thomas Cantwell	Gregory Foss	Jonathan Friedberg	Judy Karofsky	George Kuepper
1975/1976	Judy Karofsky	Gordon Ellis	Gregory Foss	Jonathan Friedberg	Patricia Ann Levin	Dan Ramsey
1976/1977	Judy Karofsky	Dorothy Collins	Gordon Ellis	Jonathan Friedberg	Robert Paul	Dan Ramsey
1977/1978	Dan Ramsey	Bradley Bjork	Dorothy Collins	Gordon Ellis	Michael Guess	Robert Paul
1978/1979	Dan Ramsey	Mary Baldwin	Bradley Bjork	Gordon Ellis	William Erpenbach	William Feist
1979/1980	Dan Ramsey	Mary Baldwin	Bradley Bjork	William Erpenbach	William Feist	Michael Finley
1980/1981	Dan Ramsey	Maggie Dohm	Dennis Dorn	Dennis Dupuis	William Erpenbach	William Feist
1981/1982	Dan Ramsey	Tom Alt	Maggie Dohm	Dennis Dorn	Dennis Dupuis	William Erpenbach
1982/1983	Dan Ramsey	Tom Alt	Dennis Dorn	Dennis Dupuis	William Erpenbach	Gordon Niesen
1983/1984	Dan Ramsey	Dennis Dorn	Dennis Dupuis	William Erpenbach	Donald Goodrich	Gordon Niesen
1984/1985	Dan Ramsey	Dennis Dorn	Dennis Dupuis	Liz Erpenbach	William Erpenbach	Donald Goodrich
1985/1986	Dan Ramsey	Dennis Dorn	Dennis Dupuis	Liz Erpenbach	Donald Goodrich	Gordon Niesen
1986/1987	Dan Ramsey	Dennis Dorn	Dennis Dupuis	Liz Erpenbach	Donald Goodrich	Gordon Niesen
1987/1988	Dan Ramsey	Don Damon	Dennis Dupuis	Liz Erpenbach	Donald Goodrich	William Peterson
1988/1989	Dan Ramsey	Don Damon	Dennis Dupuis	Liz Erpenbach	Donald Goodrich	William Peterson
1989/1990	Dan Ramsey	Don Damon	Dennis Dupuis	Liz Erpenbach	Donald Goodrich	William Peterson
1990/1991	Dan Ramsey	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Dennis Dupuis	Liz Erpenbach
1991/1992	Dan Ramsey	Sandy Allen	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Liz Erpenbach
1992/1993	Dan Ramsey	Sandy Allen	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Liz Erpenbach
1993/1994	Dan Ramsey	Sandy Allen	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Mike Duren
1994/1995	Dan Ramsey	Mike Adler	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Mike Duren
1995/1996	Dan Ramsey	Mike Adler	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Mike Duren
1996/1997	Dan Ramsey	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Mike Duren	Liz Erpenbach
1997/1998	Dan Ramsey	Jim Anderson	Julie Brunette	Don Damon	Paul Helgeson	Jim O'Brien
1998/1999	Dan Ramsey	Don Damon	Paul Helgeson	Jim O'Brien	Maureen O'Brien	Mark Opitz
1999/2000	Dan Ramsey	Paul Helgeson	Jim O'Brien	Steve Olson	Faye Schwager	Howard Teal
2000/2001	Dan Ramsey	Paul Helgeson	Jim O'Brien	Steve Olson	Faye Schwager	Howard Teal
2001/2002	Dan Ramsey	Paul Helgeson	Jim O'Brien	Steve Olson	Faye Schwager	Howard Teal
2002/2003	Dan Ramsey	David Gibbon	Paul Helgeson	Jim O'Brien	Steve Olson	Faye Schwager

Council members are listed in alphabetical order, except for the mayors who are listed in the colored first column. The Middleton common (or city) council has nine members: eight councillors (alderpersons) and the mayor, who chairs the meetings. If more than nine members are listed for a given council year (April to April), it is due to council members leaving and being replaced mid-year. Middleton became a city in 1963.

6	7	8	9	10	11	April to April
George Kuepper	Paul Lamm	<i>Jack Meehan</i>	Hans Sorenson			1963/1964
George Kuepper	Paul Lamm	Bill Sawyer	Hans Sorenson			1964/1965
Paul Lamm	Thorwald Solverson	Hans Sorenson				1965/1966
Paul Lamm	Thorwald Solverson	Hans Sorenson				1966/1967
Paul Lamm	<i>Thorwald Solverson</i>	Hans Sorenson				1967/1968
Jean Jolin	George Kuepper	<i>Paul Lamm</i>	Hans Sorenson			1968/1969
George Kuepper	Gerald Lindas	Hans Sorenson				1969/1970
<i>Gerald Lindas</i>	Arthur Schneider	Hans Sorenson				1970/1971
George Kuepper	<i>Arthur Schneider</i>	Hans Sorenson				1971/1972
Judy Karofsky	George Kuepper	<i>Hans Sorenson</i>	Keith Stewart			1972/1973
Dan Ramsey	Roger Rowin	Keith Stewart				1973/1974
Dan Ramsey	Roger Rowin	Keith Stewart				1974/1975
Roger Rowin	Mary Schlimgen	Keith Stewart				1975/1976
Roger Rowin	Mary Schlimgen	Keith Stewart				1976/1977
<i>Roger Rowin</i>	<i>Mary Schlimgen</i>	<i>Keith Stewart</i>				1977/1978
Michael Finley	<i>Michael Guess</i>	Gary Hagar	Dennis Olson	<i>Robert Paul</i>	Dorothy Schmitz	1978/1979
Chester Howard	Dennis Olson	Bradley Riesch	<i>Dorothy Schmitz</i>			1979/1980
<i>Chester Howard</i>	<i>Dennis Olson</i>	<i>Bradley Riesch</i>	C. William Threinen			1980/1981
Gordon Niesen	Richard Schwenn	C. William Threinen				1981/1982
Richard Schwenn	C. William Threinen	Thomas Ullsvik				1982/1983
Richard Schwenn	C. William Threinen	Thomas Ullsvik				1983/1984
Gordon Niesen	<i>Richard Schwenn</i>	Julia Sherman	C. William Threinen	Thomas Ullsvik		1984/1985
Julia Sherman	C. William Threinen	Thomas Ullsvik				1985/1986
William Peterson	Julia Sherman	C. William Threinen	Thomas Ullsvik			1986/1987
Julia Sherman	<i>C. William Threinen</i>	Thomas Ullsvik				1987/1988
Julia Sherman	Thomas Ullsvik	Jim Wexler				1988/1989
Julia Sherman	Thomas Ullsvik	Jim Wexler				1989/1990
<i>Donald Goodrich</i>	Julia Sherman	Thomas Ullsvik	Jim Wexler			1990/1991
Sam Greco	<i>Julia Sherman</i>	<i>Thomas Ullsvik</i>	Jim Wexler			1991/1992
<i>Sam Greco</i>	Richard Roberts	Jim Wexler				1992/1993
Dave Egan	Liz Erpenbach	<i>Richard Roberts</i>	Jim Wexler			1993/1994
<i>Dave Egan</i>	Liz Erpenbach	Jim Wexler				1994/1995
Liz Erpenbach	Mark Opitz	Jim Wexler				1995/1996
Jim O'Brien	Mark Opitz	Jim Wexler				1996/1997
Maureen O'Brien	Mark Opitz	Jim Wexler				1997/1998
Jim Wexler	Ralph Zahnow	Doug Zwank				1998/1999
Jim Wexler	Ralph Zahnow	Doug Zwank				1999/2000
Jim Wexler	Ralph Zahnow	Doug Zwank				2000/2001
Jim Wexler	<i>Ralph Zahnow</i>	Doug Zwank				2001/2002
Howard Teal	Jim Wexler	<i>Doug Zwank</i>				2002/2003

Name in bold: A member's first year as councillor.

Name in italics: A member's last year as councillor.

Name in bold italics: A member's first and last year as councillor.

Continued on pages 50/51

History

2003/2004	Doug Zwank	Rob Conhaim	<i>David Gibbon</i>	Paul Helgeson	<i>Jim O'Brien</i>	Steve Olson
2004/2005	Doug Zwank	Rob Conhaim	<i>Paul Helgeson</i>	Steve Leo	Andy Lewis	<i>Steve Olson</i>
2005/2006	Doug Zwank	Rob Conhaim	Bill Hoeksema	Mark Horn	Steve Leo	Andy Lewis
2006/2007	Doug Zwank	Rob Conhaim	Bill Hoeksema	<i>Mark Horn</i>	Steve Leo	Andy Lewis
2007/2008	Kurt Sonnentag	<i>Rob Conhaim</i>	Jon DiPiazza	Hans Hilbert	Bill Hoeksema	Steve Leo
2008/2009	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	Jon DiPiazza	Hans Hilbert	<i>Bill Hoeksema</i>	Steve Leo
2009/2010	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	Jon DiPiazza	Hans Hilbert	Paul Kinne	<i>Steve Leo</i>
2010/2011	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	<i>Jon DiPiazza</i>	Hans Hilbert	Paul Kinne	Mark Sullivan
2011/2012	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	Hans Hilbert	Paul Kinne	JoAnna Richard	Mark Sullivan
2012/2013	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	Hans Hilbert	<i>Paul Kinne</i>	JoAnna Richard	Mark Sullivan
2013/2014	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	Hans Hilbert	JoAnna Richard	Miriam Share	Mark Sullivan
2014/2015	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	Hans Hilbert	JoAnna Richard	<i>Miriam Share</i>	Mark Sullivan
2015/2016	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	Briana Giosta/Porter	Hans Hilbert	Kathy Olson	JoAnna Richard
2016/2017	Kurt Sonnentag	Gurdip Brar	<i>Briana Giosta/Porter</i>	<i>Hans Hilbert</i>	Kathy Olson	JoAnna Richard
2017/2018	Gurdip Brar	Robert Burck	Elizabeth Hetrick	Kathy Olson	Dan Ramsey II	JoAnna Richard
2018/2019	Gurdip Brar	Robert Burck	Emily Kuhn	Kathy Olson	Dan Ramsey II	<i>JoAnna Richard</i>
2019/2020	Gurdip Brar	Robert Burck	Luke Fuszard	Emily Kuhn	Katy Nelson	Kathy Olson
2020/2021	Gurdip Brar	Robert Burck	Luke Fuszard	Emily Kuhn	Katy Nelson	Kathy Olson
2021/2022	Gurdip Brar	<i>Robert Burck</i>	Luke Fuszard	Emily Kuhn	Katy Nelson	Kathy Olson
2022/2023	Gurdip Brar	Randall Crow	Luke Fuszard	Lisa Janairo	Emily Kuhn	Katy Nelson

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The four mayors in this 2007 Good Neighbor Festival parade photo represent 45 years of Middleton council history and a combined total of 58 years of council tenure: (left to right) Kurt Sonnentag (mayor from 2007 to 2017), Dan Ramsey (mayor from 1977 to 2003), Judy Karofsky (mayor from 1975 to 1977) and Doug Zwank (mayor from 2003 to 2007).



Photos by MIKE DAVIS

Kurt Sonnentag	Howard Teal	Jim Wexler				2003/2004
Kurt Sonnentag	Howard Teal	Jim Wexler				2004/2005
Kurt Sonnentag	Howard Teal	Jim Wexler				2005/2006
<i>Kurt Sonnentag</i>	Howard Teal	Jim Wexler				2006/2007
<i>Andy Lewis</i>	Howard Teal	Jim Wexler				2007/2008
Howard Teal	Susan West	Jim Wexler				2008/2009
Howard Teal	Susan West	Jim Wexler				2009/2010
Howard Teal	Susan West	Jim Wexler				2010/2011
Howard Teal	Susan West	Jim Wexler				2011/2012
Howard Teal	Susan West	Jim Wexler				2012/2013
Howard Teal	Susan West	Jim Wexler				2013/2014
Howard Teal	Susan West	<i>Jim Wexler</i>				2014/2015
Mark Sullivan	Howard Teal	Susan West				2015/2016
Mark Sullivan	Howard Teal	Susan West				2016/2017
Mark Sullivan	Howard Teal	Susan West				2017/2018
Mark Sullivan	<i>Howard Teal</i>	Susan West				2018/2019
Dan Ramsey II	Mark Sullivan	Susan West				2019/2020
Dan Ramsey II	Mark Sullivan	Susan West				2020/2021
Dan Ramsey II	<i>Mark Sullivan</i>	<i>Susan West</i>				2021/2022
Kathy Olson	Dan Ramsey II	Kendra Wochos				2022/2023

Name in bold: A member's first year as councillor.
Name in italics: A member's last year as councillor.
Name in bold italics: A member's first and last year as councillor.



A group of nine elected officials who never served simultaneously in this constellation:
 From left to right: Andy Lewis (council member from 2004 to 2008), Jim Wexler (1988 to 2015), Gurdip Brar (since 2008), Susan West (2008 to 2022), Rob Conhaim (2003 to 2008), Kurt Sonnentag (2003 to 2017), Howard Teal (1999 to 2019), JoAnna Richard (2011 to 2019) and Hans Hilbert (2007 to 2017).

THEN & NOW

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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 FOTOWERKS
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

Middleton Book Fair

Saturday, August 13, 2022

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Terrace Avenue Pavilion (Capital Brewery)

Open to everyone to buy, sell, trade:
private sellers, clubs, non-profits, commercial vendors.

The written word only:
books, magazines, books, newspapers, books, graphic novels, books, maps, books, ...

No music, movies, clothing, furniture, other junk - it's a book fair, not a flea market.

No participation fee, but bring your own booth, table, chairs, ...

Registration required!

To register, contact George Zens at: middletonreview@gmail.com

Registration deadline: July 31, 2022





Spring/Summer Special

Buy a 3-month full-service membership and receive

50% off an Express Detail

(normally \$50, but reduced to \$25 with a spring/summer membership)



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