

FROM MIKE LIPSCOMB

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## CHAIRMAN REPORT

Dear fellow residents of the Town of Trenton,

As we enter a promising Spring of 2024 for the Town of Trenton, I'd like to take a moment to address a few key successes our town achieved in 2023 and look ahead to endeavors of 2024. It has been a genuine pleasure to serve these past 12 months as your Town Chairman and I have enjoyed the time spent getting to know so many of you. I appreciate your sincerity and collaboration throughout this first year in office.

### **2023 STRATEGIC RECAP**

2023 was an exciting year for the town with a change in leadership. My sincerest thank you to everyone including our new Clerk, Police Chief and combined Zoning and Town Administrator.

During the year, we looked inward to locate what we could do better, what we could do without and how we would manage expenses for the town operations. As a result, the following optimizations were created:

- Reduced legal fees by having one monthly board meeting (as opposed to twice monthly).
- Saved incremental funding through competitive bidding on town services.
- Passed an ATV/UTV ordinance aligning with all towns in Washington County.
- Updated a detached garage ordinance.
- Developed a new website that provides proactive notifications and increased communication between residents and the town board and staff.
- Developed a partnership with the Washington County Humane Society for town residents.

### **ZONING UPDATE**

A prominent community conversation in 2023 related to zoning regulations (specific to farming and agriculture) began when a large family-run dairy farm approached the town requesting and expansion of their existing farm to accommodate 1,500 cattle. Following this request the town board engaged in extensive conversations with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and legal counsel specific to zoning to assist us in examining our zoning requirements based on the several stringent requirements set in place by the State of Wisconsin.

It is important to note that when the request was first presented, inaccurate information was spread to the community. The false claim that 10,000 cows were moving into Trenton created much fear and alarm.

During the ensuing months, a petition to deny the rezoning request was circulated and signed by many residents.

**For those of you who signed the petition - I hear your voice. I personally reviewed every signature and want you to know that we share the same values for the Town of Trenton.**

Currently, the zoning request has been rendered moot because the parcels in the application have been reconfigured. Therefore, the Town Board will not be considering any zoning change and the parcels will remain in the Exclusive Agricultural District.

As we move forward together, we will be reviewing the town's agricultural zones to make the best long-term plan for our farmland. I respect the rural heritage and future of Trenton farming and will continue to uphold my commitment to serve the best interests of the town and all residents.

As a part of this process, I have invited experts in the field of the regulation and oversight of Wisconsin's farmlands to educate both the Board and Plan Commission to guide our decisions. I ask for your patience and faith during this process. As you may know, a plan was established 15 years ago to guide Trenton into the future - the "2050" plan. This plan was carefully constructed based on input from the public, Board and Plan Commission and includes specific mapping for framing and development. We will continue to operate in accordance with this plan.

Be assured that large factory farms will not be populating and moving into Trenton and no single group's interests will be placed above the greater well-being of the town. As a longstanding resident with a vested interest in the town's future, I am dedicated to the relentless pursuit of preservation and continued success for the Town of Trenton.

### **2024 AND BEYOND**

As we look forward to 2024, be assured that the town board is working to preserve the rural and historic quality of the Town of Trenton and serve our residents. In addition to collaborating with 22 other towns, villages and cities in Washington County, I have spent hours educating myself and the town board about our roads, fire safety, EMS, zoning and elections. We continue to prioritize the safety of our residents, road improvements and town maintenance while remaining efficient with given rising costs. In addition to these priorities, we are increasing focus on identifying and eradicating invasive species along our roads and fields, developing a larger town meeting facility, emphasizing quality police services and town safety, and evaluating our permitting and ordinances.

Town of Trenton residents - join me in looking toward a bright 2024!

Warm regards,



Mike Lipscomb - Town of Trenton Chairman