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September 15, 1993

Mr. Mike Jones
CRD Agent, Juneau County
Courthouse, Room 8
220 E. State Street
Mauston, WI 53948-1386

Dear Mike:

We are pleased to present the findings of our "First Impressions" exchange with the Village of Necedah. The four City of Waterloo representatives conducted the review of Necedah on August 4, 1993. Our group was comprised of a major corporation executive, a retired downtown businessman who now is an elected official, the former City Clerk who is now a student in law school, and the university liaison. Unlike your rainy day experience in Waterloo, we enjoyed clear, sunny skies with perfect 72 temperatures.

While it is difficult to generalize our findings, our group was most impressed with the efforts currently taking place, as well as the potential, in Necedah's downtown area and adjacent waterfront. We believe that several businesses, including the new floral shop, are setting a good standard for improvements in the downtown area. We further noted that linking the downtown to the recently refurbished dam and waterfront area has great potential. It appeared to us that land is possibly available to create an expanded downtown/waterfront park and plaza.

We also were straightforward in some of our constructive criticism. For example, some of the residential areas could benefit from a tightening up of local ordinances on the unsightly accumulation of old vehicles, equipment, deteriorating structures, and other debris. We have suggested vigorous promotion of successful home restoration examples and aggressive marketing of the new subdivision featuring "log houses". Many communities present annual awards through a Beautification Committee or a chief elected official. This type of program might be useful in Necedah.

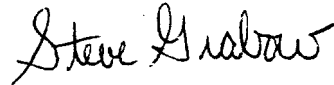
We had extended conversation with many of the downtown merchants and service providers, and found the people very friendly and helpful. We further enjoyed our role-playing as a "magazine feature writer/photographer, prospective ethnic food restaurant entrepreneur, and vacationers."

While we certainly did not achieve consensus on every evaluation category, we hope our evaluations are useful to Necedah's leadership. I do have a set of slides of downtown Necedah from our visit which I would be happy to share with you if you wish.

Mike Jones
Page 2
September 15, 1993

Thanks again for your assistance and patience with us in **this** First Impressions exchange. Waterloo is anxious to see Necedah's evaluation, and I'm confident your community's fine effort will be valuable.

Sincerely,



Steven H. Grabow
Community Resource Development Agent
UW-Extension
Jefferson **County**

SHG/ljw

Enclosure

A "FIRST IMPRESSIONS" REVIEW OF THE VILLAGE OF NECEDAH

by

Representatives from the City of Waterloo
August 4, 1993

Coordinated by: Steve Grabow, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Jefferson County

1. *What was my perception before visiting the community: What did I expect, etc.*

-I had not been in the community for over 20 years, but I remembered Necedah as having a relatively large number of shops in its downtown (for such a small community).

-Gas stop off Highway 21.

-Small rural community.

-I had this perception that Necedah would be a small rural community.

2. *Approaching the community, what do you notice first? (Evaluate EACH entrance)*

Positive:

- North woods feel.
- Nice front door industry coming in from the north on Highway 80.
- Appears to be a full service community for its size.
- Nice subdivision on south end. Nice log home model - could be promoted.
- Church with deer in the front.
- Good access from anywhere.

Negative:

- Welcome signs were placed to insignificantly to be visible.
- There were empty lots which were overgrown with weeds.
- Cars parked randomly coming from the south.
- Attempts on beautification not carried out, i.e. flower pots not tended and light pole flags tattered.
- Poor signage.
- Shabby approaches.
- Old popcorn wagon.

3. *As you drive around town your comments on:*

A. Appearance

1. Downtown

- Nice variety of shops for a small community.
- Several businesses are setting the standard for the downtown upgrading (the new floral shop, the bank, and the shops in and around the mall).
- The new dam area and outdoor fruit market had lots of activity during our visit.
- The combination of a nice little downtown and the adjacent waterfront/dam provides a pleasing atmosphere.
- Except for the Florist Shop, some of the other stores could have been spruced up to look good.
- Was good.
- Deterioration of buildings.

2. Residential

- Lots of old sheds.
- Old houses should be condemned and torn down.
- Too many abandoned buildings, deteriorating homes, and too much junk in yards.
- No pride in residential appearance.
- The abandoned equipment, cars, and trailers stand out, and could be controlled better by ordinance.
- Most homes were rundown, especially in the section right across from the industrial park. There were junk cars and other scrap iron which could have been cleaned up (possibly through an ordinance formulation and enforcement).
- Although the homes are generally small, a few owners had done some nice "paint-up and fix-up". The successful homes should be promoted to show the rest of the community what the standard should be.
- Nice subdivision (with log model) in southern part of village. This should be promoted.
- Need some controls on abandoned buildings.

3. Industrial Park
 - Industrial park was in good shape.
 - Good.
 - Good base on the north. Are there plans to expand and work off this base?
 - The new undeveloped park appears to have good potential, however the comments I heard suggested that no one is aggressively marketing the new park.
 - Nice park, however no industry in it.

4. Parks
 - Good facility with the pavilions (Lions). Potential for sharing play equipment with adjacent day care facility. A village, Lions Club, and adjacent industry partnership could be formed to continue upgrading the park.
 - Maintenance not good on VFW park.
 - Could may be come up with a simple uniform sign for the parks with a planting plan around the sign (flowers, shrubs).
 - Only saw one, seemed O.K.
 - Should take advantage of the river and downtown with a small park.
 - Looks like the idea of a downtown park was started with the "gazebo", but need to expand/continue the idea.

5. Schools
 - O. K.
 - Were relandscaping; noted the restriping of parking lot and painting of lockers.
 - Good attempt at maintaining.
 - Seemed in satisfactory condition.
 - Good.
 - Seemed in satisfactory condition.

6. Infrastructure (Sidewalks, streets, lighting, etc.)
 - The major upgrade on Highway 80 from the north is good.
 - Should concentrate on downtown; could use some new light fixtures in combination with plantings to complement nice shops.
 - The new subdivision to the south needs street paving to complement the efforts toward providing higher quality homes.
 - Deteriorating, but O.k. '
 - No curb and gutter.
 - Streets lacked curb and gutter.

B. Signing

1. Community entrance/exit signs
 - From south difficult to see.
 - Should accent with perennial plantings on north and south.
 - East sign hidden by tree branches and very far from road.
 - Very 'poor.
 - The signs leading into the community could be considerably improved.
 - The torn flags could be removed and flower pots could have flowers, instead of dead plants.

2. Streets
 - Good.
 - Were in pretty good shape.
 - Seemed adequate, but some were turned.

3. Directions to Hospital/Parks/etc.
 - Found out there is no hospital.
 - There were no directions to the parks.
 - Need a uniform sign for the village parks.
 - Could name and sign the public area around the dam.
 - None.

4. Storefront signs
 - Good.
 - The new "Flower Shoppe" and "Chopping Block" shops had accented signage with handpainted "sandwich board" signs on the sidewalk which added a nice touch.
 - Merchants should come together to develop a general theme or standard for signage.
 - O. K.

5. Industrial Park
 - We guessed we were in the new industrial park, but it wasn't signed so we had to confirm the location.
 - None.

6. City Hall, police, etc.
 - O.K.**
 - New building.
 - Offices were adequately signed.

7. Billboards/advertising, etc.
 - The one tavern with good advertising had good business.
 - Poor.
 - Some of the crude signage should be eliminated with a sign ordinance.

4. *Visitor/community information*

A. City/VillageHall

1. Is there a street map?
 - Yes, but probably needs updating.
 - Yes, but very inaccurate.
 - Yes.
 - Yes, but did not contain any community facilities (parks, schools, village hall, etc.); these should be added and the map updated.
 - Should have a map at the downtown/waterfront information area.

2. Community brochure/directory
 - Yes; good.
 - We were handed several brochures by the Village Clerk.
 - The Vacation Guide was well done as was the 1992 Guide to Juneau county.
 - The Village could be more informative about its downtown and other features.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.....PAGE 6

3. Community profile (including business and industrial opportunities)
 - The Focus on Necedah description, but could be done ~~with~~ some color and graphics such as including a Village Logo to be more effective and professional.
 - Yes.

4. Recommendations on place to stay/eat/visit....etc.
 - Recommendations on motels were given at restaurants.
 - Vacation Guide and merchants offered suggestions.
 - Yes.

5. Contact people and addresses listed if I want more info.
 - NO.
 - Not having a Chamber of Commerce limited follow-up.

6. Complimentary Items (Postcards, bookmarkers, coupons, etc.)
 - Didn't see any postcards.
 - No.

B. Chamber office/visitoinfor center

1. Easy to locate (and did people refer you to it?)
 - The info center is at Village Hall and we were given clear directions.
 - Yes, at City Hall; we asked.

2. Comments on info available (street map/brochures/community profile/etc.)
 - A pretty nice selection of community information was available at City Hall.

3. How prepared/helpful were they?
 - The Village staff was reasonably well prepared and helpful.
 - Very friendly.
 - Good.

4. Convenient hours?
 - The Village offices were closed at 2:00 p.m. with a sign saying they would be back, so we didn't get a follow-up visit.

C. Info for general community (service station/motel/bars/restaurant (shop employees, etc.))

1. How knowledgeable about the community were they?
 - The merchants were very helpful and knowledgeable.
 - The librarian was very informative.
 - Person in butcher shop was very helpful. Owners/operators of antique store were extremely unhelpful and cold.
 - Most people I talked to had a good grasp of the pertinent **info**.
 - The restaurant employees were the most useful.

2. Did they refer you to someone else who could help?
 - Yes.
 - Yes.

3. Attitude, appearance, etc.
 - The people we talked to and were served by were very friendly and laid back.
 - They seemed very informal.
 - Several folks were obviously proud of the downtown area.
 - Good to Excellent at Jimmy's, The Skillet, the Sportsman **Bar**.
 - Very poor attitude at the Down the Hatch.

5. *General*

- A. **Do residents know their community history/events/directions/etc.**
-The merchants I talked to had good insights on the community and talked about broad topics.
-Cited the inactivity of a Chamber, advised us that the Lions Club was a very active service organization, and said a point persons was needed to market the inactive industrial park.
-Were proud of the local funding of the new dam.
-The three that I talked to did.
- B. **Services....variety of retail ...lodging facilities**
-For a community this size, Necedah had a great variety of services available.
-Good for the size of the community.
-Good stores for a small town.
-For a small town, the lodging was spread out (none near downtown).
-The downtown **was a** reasonable full service commercial area.
-Lots of shops for a small village.
- C. **Are there public restrooms?**
-In the Village/Town offices.
-Both restaurants we visited had dirty restrooms.
-No. Only in the City Building.
-No.
- D. **Payphones...æ they working, phone books intact.**
-Yes.
- E. **Industrial park....does it look active & attractive?**
-Yes, except there is no industry in park.
-It could be some day.
-Not signed, but looks like it's full service (water, wide street, rail service, good access from highway).
-The industrial area on the north **is an** excellent base.
-It didn't look attractive or active.

- F. What does the community TASTE like? (Specialty restaurants/bakeries/etc.)**
-Having meat markets and a bakery downtown is great.
-Two restaurants were fair.
-Standard cafe stuff.
- G. What does community SMELL like?**
-Bakery downtown.
-Pines in some residential areas.
-Good.
- H. What SOUNDS did you hear?**
-Quiet town.
-River moving over dam.
- I. What did community FEEL like? (Emotional response, i.e. cold/warm, crowded/deserted, inviting, etc.)**
-Lack of people in town when we were there.
-Cool/deteriorating.
-The community had a casual feel.
-The flower shop helps to add color and warmth downtown. This is a great anchor.
-The fruit market adds a nice feel.

DESCRIBE THE PEOPLE YOU MET (Friendly, helpful, etc.)

- Overall, friendly.
- Not particularly proud of community.
- One tavern didn't say anything; the other gal was friendly even though busy.
- Flower shop gal was friendly.
- Generally, people were friendly.
- Everyone I talked to were friendly and helpful and willing to talk about the area.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS

- Dam could be made more useful, and more pleasant for sitting or fishing.
- Entrance to City could be cleaned up; particularly the old popcorn wagon and shed.
- Retired couple lives here now and likes it very well.
- Have good friends living just outside town - they love it, and I will now use the airport to visit them.
- Lions Club little park building in parking lot should be completed.

WHAT WILL YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THIS COMMUNITY
SIX MONTHS FROM NOW?

- Flower shop.
- Dam area and its potential.
- Large high-tech industry to the east of town.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.....PAGE 11

6. *Doing It Right!*

A. List the MOST positive things you observed about the community.

- River has great potential.
- Great services for a town that size.
- Floral Shoppe had taken effort to make it look unique and make it have character.
- The river.
- Good downtown.
- Trend setting shops downtown (new floral shop).
- Jimmy's Restaurant.
- Streets were good.
- Potential for parkway, public plaza, gateway, information area in the vicinity of the waterfront and dam area.
- The wildlife refuge.
- The church with the deer in front.
- New subdivision featuring log homes in the southern part of the village.
- Easy **to** access.
- Full service downtown area; impressive variety with meat markets, mini-mall, etc.
- Quiet
- Locational advantage with nearby recreation - need to keep good variety downtown to attract tourists downtown