

County able to see what it's in for at mill site

By MITCH MAERSCH
Ozaukee Press Staff

Ozaukee County has officially been granted permission to access, inspect and remediate the Button Factory and Waubeka Mill.

The Town Board on June 10 approved sending a letter to the county allowing access to the properties.

The purpose, according to the letter, is “to conduct necessary site evaluations, gather information and prepare proposals required to apply for grants through the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. or any other available funding sources to support the demolition and cleanup of the property.”

The letter also states that anyone entering the properties does so “at their own risk” and that the town will not be held liable for any injuries or damage from activity on the properties.

The county has said it plans to turn the properties into a park.

■ Town grants access to blighted properties so grants can be sought for clean up, park can be created

It has a \$142,800 grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corp. to assess whether the properties are a brown-field site in need of remediation, but the money hinged on accessing the sites.

Former owners Charles Sheridan and his son hadn't allowed access, instead developing multiple proposals for the properties that didn't work for different reasons.

The largely dilapidated mill has asbestos, a cracked foundation, rotted support beams and a roof in need of repairs. Fuel leached into the ground below the road from a storage tank under the mill. A portion of the mill collapsed in 2024, causing part of

Mill Street to be barricaded off for fear more could fall onto the roadway.

The Sheridans' plans for the Button Factory, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, fell through since it doesn't meet setback requirements.

The idea of turning the factory into a commercial boathouse was shot down in 2022 because the building lacks the required 10-foot setback from the river.

Charles Sheridan's latest proposal for the factory was to replace the foundation and make other improvements to create a kayak school, then donate the building to the town or county.

Town electors on May 27 voted, 23-10, to allow the town to buy the properties, but at that time any deal with the Sheridans hung in the balance after months of negotiations.

The following day the Sheridans agreed to sell the properties for \$40,000.

At the electors meeting, the Town Board mentioned paying \$45,000. Some residents thought the Sheridans should pay for barricades, fencing and other clean-up costs. Town Chairman Chris Janik said those weren't included in the deal.

If the Sheridans didn't agree to sell, the town was considering taking the properties via eminent domain, which allows governments to take private property for public use as long as owners receive fair market value.

Sheridan, who lives in Illinois, grew up in Milwaukee and said he fell in love with the Milwaukee River in Waubeka when, as a student at Marquette University, he saw the buildings and old dam on a winter day.

Charles bought the Button Factory in a 1990 auction from Ozaukee County and the mill in 2019 for \$1,000, later turning it over to his son.

Flag Day celebration right at home in Waubeka



What better place to celebrate Flag Day than Waubeka — the home of the national holiday — where on Sunday, June 14, the National Flag Day Foundation hosted a day of events that included a program at its Americanism Center, parade, festivities and fireworks. Vietnam veterans riding in a red, white and blue hay wagon (top photo) waved to parade watchers that included Linda Breimon (left in middle right photo), Mariah Braun and her daughter 3-year-old Avery. During the program, David Janik (right in photo above), president of the Flag Day Foundation, presented the Jack Janik Patriot Award to Ron Lanser (middle), a longtime member of the Warren Kane American Legion Post in Fredonia, while Scott Janik, a retired Navy captain, spoke. The award is named for David's late father and the founder of the Flag Day Foundation. After the parade, University of Wisconsin Marching Band performers danced with members of the Random Lake Rockin Grannies (right).

Photos by Sam Arendt



Organization secures funding for high school in Saukville

■ Money will allow NorthShore Classical Academy to renovate building, open next year

By BILL SCHANEN IV
Ozaukee Press staff

NorthShore Classical Academy, which earlier this year decided to delay its opening in the former Ozaukee Christian and Immaculate Conception school building in Saukville, announced last week it has secured financing for renovations and will welcome its inaugural class to the first private high school in Ozaukee County in September 2027.

Although high school classes won't be held until next year, NorthShore Classical Academy plans to offer two one-week sessions this summer for students entering fifth through eighth grades.

The nonprofit school called the financing for renovations a “significant milestone.”

“NCA was found to provide families with an exceptional classical education rooted in truth, goodness and virtue,” Cheryle Rebholz, founder and president of NorthShore Classical Academy, said. “This financing will allow us to create a permanent home that will support that mission, reflect the excellence of the education taking place within it and serve generations of students to come.”

In April, Rebholz said the school, which had planned to welcome its first students this September, decided to delay the opening for a year because, in part, of the “longer-than-anticipated process to secure financing”

“We were, with great anticipation and excitement, preparing to welcome our first students in September 2026,” she said in a statement. “A variety of factors have, however, led our board of directors to decide to delay NCA's opening by one year.”

The school has now secured financing from Bank First through its Cedarburg branch and plans to make a significant investment in the building at 341 S. Dries St., which served as a Catholic parish school from the late 1800s to 1999, then was home to Ozaukee Christian School before it moved to the Town of Trenton.

NorthShore Classical Academy purchased the building last year for \$305,000, See **School** on page 8B

Saukville news



A RENDERING (left) shows an addition to the former Immaculate Conception and Ozaukee Christian school building that may be constructed as part of a second phase of work done after NorthShore



Classical Academy opens in September 2027. The addition, which would include a new entryway, would be built between the newer (left in photo at right) and older sections of the building. Press file photo at right

School: \$2.4 million in renovations planned

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according to state real estate transaction records, and in January the Village of Saukville Plan Commission approved its plans for \$2.4 million in renovations. Those plans included a 940-square-foot addition to the front of the school between the newer section of the building, which dates to 1962, and the older portion built in the 1800s. Inna Turner, vice president of NorthShore Classical Academy, said this week that the addition and the creation of a multipurpose outdoor field will be the focus of a second phase of the renovations, “which we plan to address once the school is open and running, depending on our fundraising.” The first phase of the project, which is to be completed before the school opens, focuses on the new section of the building and includes updating electrical systems, replacing the roof, painting the interior and renovating two classrooms and

bathrooms, which will be reconfigured to meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. The gym will also be updated and painted. A construction timeline is being developed. The third and final phase of improvements will include the renovation of the cafeteria and the creation of a “teaching kitchen,” as well as work to restore the older portion of the building, Turner said. “We intend to restore rather than renovate the old building to restore it to its original glory rather than rip it down on the inside and start over,” she said. “This goes hand-in-hand with a classical education because it teaches about history.” The phases, Turner said, are not set in stone. “Some of this is fluid,” she said. “This is our wish and our desire, but it can change depending on fundraising and other factors.”

Rebholz said last year she initially intended NorthShore Classical Academy to be a Wisconsin charter school, but after the application was denied she decided on a privately funded school. “We’re 100% independent,” she said. “Not a penny will come from the state or federal government. We’re a nonprofit. “I don’t want rules and regulations from the state. I want freedom and independence from the government.” The school, which will not be religiously affiliated, will use the Hillsdale College Curriculum, with one day a week dedicated to teaching students about careers through partnerships with area businesses. The curriculum will provide a foundation in literature, history, science and math and provide four “pathways” for students — college preparation, career technical education,

the military and entrepreneurship, Rebholz, a former Mequon-Thiensville School Board member, said. The high school plans to open next year to freshmen, then add a grade level every year, Turner said earlier this year. In the meantime, it will offer summer courses for middle school students during two sessions, one from July 6 through July 10, and the other from July 13 through July 17. The offerings are Shakespeare in Action, in which students will explore Julius Caesar through theater; The Art of Strategy — Chess and Strategic Games; and D3 — Drama Dialogue and Discovery. The classes will be taught by Sara Foster, a veteran educator who has taught English, arts, reading, writing, social studies and theater.

Courts: County would have to pay for additional work hours

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ed district attorney and assistant district attorneys, while the county funds the office’s support staff, including Haasch, operational costs and supplies. The state reimburses the county for 55% of Haasch’s total salary and benefits and for the 26 hours, or two-thirds time, that the assistant works. The county will not be reimbursed for the additional 14 hours the assistant will work, nor for the assistant’s benefits. Dzwinel said the resolution approved Tuesday also will have to pass muster with the county Finance Committee and the County Board. Haasch’s office has a budget of \$162,843 this year, not counting the

changes for the assistant. The state has indicated that if staffing increases in the DA’s Office, the county would be eligible for state reimbursement for a second full-time position, McDonell wrote. The earliest that could happen would be July next year, he added. McDonell said a full-time victim witness specialist position would cost the county \$92,436. That would mean an additional cost to the county of \$18,300 for the rest of this year and an additional \$42,858 for all of next year. Those additional dollars for next year would have to be approved through the 2026 budget process, Dzwinel said.

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for the work. That clause essentially means that if the county can’t do the needed work, Vantage can hire someone to do it, City Administrator Melissa Gossett said. Mayor Ted Neitzke added that the development agreement the city has with Vantage also ensures the company will pay for any needed roadwork. Strohm said the city is still waiting on some permits from the state Department of Transportation for the lights and intersection improvements, but added that preliminary work is expected to begin in the coming weeks. We Energies is scheduled to install power lines for the lights within the next couple weeks, Strohm said. That work is expected to take about a week, he said, and pave the way for the street lights to be installed in mid-July. The county will also install rapid beacons at the Ozaukee Interurban Trail crossings at Highland and Lake drives. Bicyclists will be able to trigger the lights, which will notify motorists that they are about to enter the intersection. At the same time, Strohm said, the county is expected to begin prep work for the intersection improvements. There are about five intersections that will be widened, he said, with each expected to take about a week.

During that work, some lanes of traffic may be closed or flagmen will be present to direct vehicles, he said. The intersection improvements and traffic lights are intended to be temporary, with Vantage removing them after its data center campus is completed. The city is also moving ahead with planning the extension of sewer and water to Highway KW, Mink Ranch Road and Highland Drive near the Port Town Hall, Strohm said. The city is obligated to extend these utilities into the Knellsville area of the Town of Port Washington as part of a deal to annex the Vantage land from the town into the city. The city and Vantage are waiting for approval from the Public Service Commission or an assurance of approval from the PSC before sending the utility project out for bids, he said. He said he expected that the work will go out for bids in July, with the contract awarded in August and work starting in early September. The sanitary sewer work will likely require some road closures, Strohm said, adding that the city hopes to keep much of the water work on the shoulder, eliminating the need to close the roads for it. The work will be coordinated so traffic can get through the area near Plier’s Full Circle and Johnson Bus Co. will be able to get buses to schools on time, Strohm said.

Chief: Czarnecki likely to apply

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decide how to proceed to find a new chief. “This has all happened so quickly,” he said, noting Hingiss announced his retirement in mid-May. While the commission ideally would have started the process immediately, Biever said, there were several complicating factors. Commission member Sarah Burdette’s term just ended and Mayor Ted Neitzke announced on Tuesday that she will be replaced by former alderman Dan Becker. In addition, commission member Ed Johnson is on vacation. “We will need to hold a special meeting to talk about the whole process and what we’re looking for,” Biever said.

He said the commission hasn’t taken a stance on whether to hire from within or look regionally or nationally for a new chief. “I’m wide open on that,” he said. There isn’t any urgency in finding a new chief, Biever said. “We want to take our time and do it right,” he said. “After all, it’s a lifetime appointment.” Biever said he expects there will be a good number of candidates for the job, noting Port is an attractive community. It could take until sometime this fall to hire a new chief, he added. One person who’s likely to apply for the job is Czarnecki. “I’m interested,” he said Tuesday.

June 20

2026 DIVINE SAVIOR PARISH PICNIC

Food, Music and Fun

4:30pm: Mass in Park Pavilion

5:30pm: Food & Events Open

6:00pm: Music

8:00pm: Silent Auction Closes

8:30pm: Raffle Drawing

9:00pm: Picnic Ends

Belgium Community Park

106 Beech Street

Belgium, WI 53004