

TOWN OF LA POINTE PLANNING AND ZONING REPORT FOR 2015

January 7, 2016 – Includes Corrections

National and State Trends and Issues

The national economy continues to recover slowly. The U.S. Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce estimates privately-owned housing units authorized by building permits in November 2015 were 19.5 percent above the November 2014 estimate. New residential construction (houses started) was up 9.3% from the October 2014 estimates. Disposable personal income increased by 0.4 percent in October 2015 from the previous month.

Wisconsin is lagging in its economic recovery on a number of levels. Single family building permits are up 19% across Wisconsin between November 2014 and 2015, which is a good sign. However, Wisconsin's growth in personal income narrowly outstripped the national average, with the Wisconsin average income growing 2.7% compared with the U.S. average of 2.6%. The Wisconsin unemployment rate in January 2015 was 5%; in December 2015 it was 4.2 %. However, Ashland County's unemployment rate for November 2015 was 5.6%, and Bayfield County's was 7.5%, indicating the discrepancy between the northern part of the state and the rest of Wisconsin.

2016 Town Zoning Activities Summary

- **Permit Applications Issued:** 55 total land use/sanitary permits (Town and County) were issued in 2015 (county and town), 33% (18) more than 2014. Total 2015 Town permit revenue: **\$17,348**, which is \$25 less than 2014. This includes revenue from rental permits.

PERMIT TYPE	COUNTY	TOWN	TOTAL	NOTES
Principal structures	0	3	3	All were trailers
Accessory structures	15	5	20	Garage, storage buildings, privies, gazebos
Additions	10	3	13	Rooms, porches, decks
Driveway/road	0	5	5	Into private property
Move building	0	4	4	Move from one location to another
Change of use	0	2	2	Change structure from one use to another
Sanitary	5	0	5	Privy system or other sanitary system
Other	0	3	3	Camping, rental
TOTAL	30	25	55	

- **Certified Survey Maps:** 2 processed in 2015.
- **Permits Revoked/Denied:** One Town land use permit was revoked because construction was occurring without any building permits.
- **Violations:** One active court case originating in 2012 was finally completed in September.
- **Complaints Received:** 3 complaints were received, addressed and resolved.

- **Public Information Requests:** 3 were received and completed in 2015.
- **Permits in Process:** There are 20 town and county permits in various stages of processing. Some need additional information, and some must wait until spring to observe the site conditions. Some (county permits) have been in limbo for a long time.
- **Sanitary:** The Zoning Administrator inspected the installation of 1 POWTS system, 2 privies and permitted 2 sanitary reconnects in 2015; in 2014 there were 6 POWTS installations.
- **County Permits:** A total of 30 county permits were issued in 2015, up from 25 in 2014, or 17% increase. The Town has continued the arrangement with Ashland County wherein the Town Zoning Administrator also serves as the Ashland County Assistant Zoning Administrator; however, the value of this service continues to be a point of discussion between the Town and the County.

2015 Goals and Accomplishments

1. **GOAL:** Complete the cleaning and auditing of all zoning files

This project is about $\frac{3}{4}$ completed. I hope to take a week over the winter to get it as close to completion as possible.

2. **GOAL:** Assign Fire Numbers to all buildings

This project came to a halt because the Ashland County Emergency Manager was out sick for an extended period of time. The Town's final maps have now been completed. I plan to complete the numbering process and associated tasks in 2016, with installation scheduled for 2017.

3. **GOAL:** Develop a private road ordinance

This project is approximately 60% completed. The document has to be cleaned up, then reviewed by the Town Foreman and the Fire Department/EMS before it is introduced to the Town Plan Commission and Town Board. There may be a need for a public hearing as well.

4. **GOAL:** Update history of the Zoning Ordinance

The Town does not have specific information about when the Zoning Ordinance has been updated in the past. Some research was begun, but there is still much work to do on the project.

5. **GOAL:** Prepare and submit successful grant applications as assigned

The Town received the following grants in 2015:

- State of Wisconsin Clean Sweep grant – \$21,684.18. Over 12,000 pounds of household hazardous waste was collected and removed from the Island.
- Apostle Islands Area Community Foundation - \$3,000 for a FLIR unit for the Fire Department Ice Rescue.
- Wisconsin Office of Energy - \$75,000 to install a solar array for the Library and Clinic

2016 Planning and Zoning Department Goals

The goals listed for 2015 above will continue as goals for 2016. Completion of any/all of the goals will be contingent upon the Town Board's decisions regarding zoning and whether a new zoning administrator will be hired or not.

2016 Issues for Consideration

The issues for consideration in 2015 are the same for 2016:

1. The discrepancy between the cost of Town services provided to the County for zoning permitting and the actual amount reimbursed, if the Town continues to do county zoning;
2. If the state legislature's responds to the Town's proposed legislation regarding the impacts of the Hegwood decision; and
3. The need for long-term planning around large Town projects so that grant funding can become part of the funding sources.