

Annual Newsletter 2016

www.riverfallstown.com

Town Service Recognized

Congratulations to returning board members, Joe Mahoney and Brad Mogen who were elected to continue serving as Supervisors III and IV on the River Falls Town Board at the April 5th election. Because the Town of River Falls has five board members, elections in the even numbered years are for the Supervisor III and IV positions. The remaining three board positions (Town Chair, Supervisors I and II), plus Town Clerk and Town Treasurer are voted on during the odd numbered years. This ensures that there is a certain level of continuity and not a complete turnover of the town board in any given year.

The Town of River Falls is fortunate to have many residents that volunteer their time to provide input and assist in carrying out the work of the Town. One of the groups that have volunteered countless hours are the members of the town's Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Committee. For the last 10 years this group, led by Roy Lund and Jerome Rodewald, have researched how to best update the Town's Farmland Preservation Plan. During this time the state revised the rules that the



Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Committee Members were recognized at the 2016 Annual Meeting for their work on the Town Farmland Preservation Plan. Those attending included (left-right): LeRoy Kusilek, Tom Sitz, Brad Peterson, Roy Lund, Diana Smith, Jerome Rodewald and John Galgowski.

committee was working under several times. This stretched the work out longer than anyone expected. On February 26, 2016 the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture certified the Town's revised Farmland Preservation Ordinance. This document will help to guide land use decisions for the next 10 years in the Town.

At the Town's annual meeting on Tuesday, April 19th, Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Committee members that served during the last 10 year time period were recognized. This included: Jerome Rodewald, Roy Lund, Diana Smith, C. Edward Hanson (posthumously), Betty Schultz, Brad Peterson, Tom Sitz, Travis Rohl, LeRoy Kusilek, John Galgowski, David Gontarek, David Galetka, Kelly Cain, and Howard Ottman. Following the recognition service the Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Committee was officially disbanded due to their task of revising the Farmland Preservation Plan being completed.

Revaluation Complete

The revaluation process that took place during 2015 is complete and like any revaluation year, was not done without some difficulties, large valuation changes, and other unexpected circumstances. One hundred percent revaluation of properties takes place every 7-10 years. The years in-between are known as "maintenance years". During maintenance years, valuations shouldn't change tremendously unless there is a land use/classification change, new construction/remodeling, or a state law change that determines how land classifications are assessed. The Town appreciated everyone's cooperation and patience in the revaluation process. The Town would also like to thank Associated Appraisal staff for their diligence and patience in working through the revaluation process.

What's Inside:

- More on Farmland Preservation
- 2016 Elections
- Roadwork Projects
- Parks & Recycling Information
- Bee Pollination
- Licensing Information
- New Town Website

Town Contact List

Diana Smith, Chair
715-425-5478

John Galgowski, Supervisor I
715-425-7093

Siri Smith, Supervisor II
715-425-1339

Joe Mahoney, Supervisor III
715-425-0220

Brad Mogen, Supervisor IV
1-651-303-9028

Ruth Stern, Clerk
715-425-7373

Rita Kozak, Treasurer
715-425-8554

Town Shop
715-425-9901

Jerome Rodewald, Zoning Administrator, Cemetery Contact
715-425-0228

Michele DeLong-Reiter
Recycling Administrator
715-425-1477

All Croix Building Inspections
1-715-377-2152

Associated Appraisal Consultants,
Inc. (Assessing)
1-800-721-4157

LeRoy Kusilek,
Animal Control Officer
715-425-6185

Town Website:
www.riverfallstown.com



Farmland Preservation ~ A Long Journey ~

Wisconsin has it that every long journey begins with just one step. When the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture decided to revise the Program on Farmland Preservation, the River Falls Town Board appointed an Ad Hoc Committee to review the Town Farmland Preservation Program and related zoning.

Fitness programs today recommend 10,000 steps a day to be healthy. The Farmland Preservation Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by Roy Lund, took more than 10,000 steps to obtain the signature of Ben Brancel, Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture – but on February 26, 2016 they got it!

The revised Farmland Preservation Program canceled the previous Exclusive Agriculture Zoning which did not benefit farmers. It replaces it with a program that provides State Income Tax Credits to farmers with Farmland Preservation Zoning – provided they meet certain land conservation goals.

In the Town of River Falls, State Income Tax Credits are \$7.50/ acre on every farm acre that is zoned Farmland Preservation – whether cropland or not. An additional incentive is available for those farmers that can qualify for an Agriculture Enterprise Area.

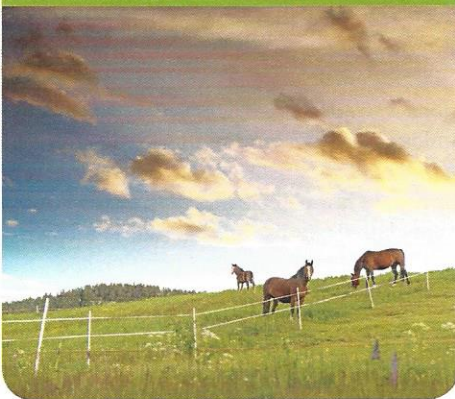
In order to be included in Farmland Preservation, the land had to meet minimum quality standards. The Ad Hoc Committee devised a point system using a United States Department of Agriculture program called Land Evaluation – Site Assessment (LESA). With Ad Hoc

Committee input, Pierce County created a Soil Quality Map that indicated those Quarter-Quarter sections that had more than 50% Productive Farmland. That gave us the LE (Land Evaluation) part of the equation. Site Assessment (SE part) took into account the size of the farm and the surrounding land use. A small field surrounded by houses isn't what the State wants to preserve. As a result, some of the previous Exclusive Agriculture land no longer qualified for Farmland Preservation, some of the previous Agriculture Residential land became Farmland Preservation.

All of the committee meetings were announced in the River Falls Journal, posted in three places and were open to the public. Attempts were made to notify those landowners involved. Land zoning is not a voluntary thing. No one was "asked" if they wanted to be in or out of Farmland Preservation. The decisions were based entirely on LESA point values.

The new Farmland Preservation Map, the New Zoning Map and Chapter 17 (Zoning Code) are available at the River Falls Town Hall and from Zoning Administrator Jerome Rodewald. They will soon be posted on the Town website: www.riverfallstown.com.

The Ad Hoc Committee followed the direction of the Town Comprehensive Plan in creating a fair and equitable Farmland Preservation Plan. The new Farmland Preservation Plan will be reviewed again in 10 years.

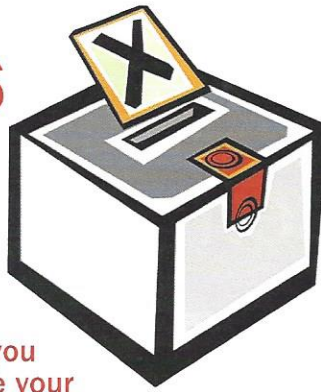


Elections - 2016

The State of Wisconsin has two elections completed in 2016 with two more to go. The two remaining election dates include: Tuesday, August 9th (partisan primary) and Tuesday, November 8th (general and presidential election). Polling hours are 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. at the River Falls Town Hall.

Are you new to the area? Did you recently turn 18, have a change of address, or a name change?

Any of these situations require that a new voter registration form be completed. Voter registration forms can be found on the town website (www.riverfallstown.com). Look under "Government" followed by the "Election Information" tabs. One item that is commonly missed when submitting the form is providing a "Proof of Residency" (POR) document. The second page of the application form lists documents that constitute acceptable POR. Voter registration forms need to be submitted at least 20 days ahead of any election in order for your name to show up on the poll list. You can also register at the polls on Election Day, but prior registration means that you will spend less time at the polls on Election Day.



Do you have your photo ID ready?

There is also a listing on the town website of the types of photo ID's that are accepted at the polls on Election Day. Town residents did a great job in the April election of having their photo ID's ready in response to the new state laws. Nearly 900 residents voted at the April election and we expect approximately 1500 voters to go through the polls at the November election.

Do you need an absentee ballot?

The state requirements regarding absentee ballot requests are also outlined on the town website. If you know you are going to be out of town on August 9th or November 8th it is not too early to submit your request for an absentee ballot now. The link to the appropriate request form is on the website. Please remember that photo ID needs to be submitted in order for your absentee ballot to be counted.

Town Park Volunteer Opportunities

Do you like to spend time outdoors? Helping out with the Town parks is a great way to get fresh air, exercise, help out your community, and get to know a few more of your neighbors all at the same time. The Town of River Falls is home to seven parks of varying sizes and they are free for all to enjoy. Volunteers help to make these parks possible. Rocky Branch Park was cleaned up on May 12th, but there are still several other upcoming clean-up opportunities that you can help with. They include:

Saturday, May 21 Halverson Park

This park is maintained in conjunction with the River Falls Lions & Masons Organizations. Work begins at 8:00 A.M.

Thursday, June 23 Hillwood, South Valley and South Ridge Parks (Times to be determined).

If none of these times work we're always looking for more volunteers that are willing to lend an hour or two as their time allows. This could include trimming back trails, picking up litter, removing invasive species or even bigger projects such as helping with trail building or removing downed trees. If you are interested in what you can do to help please send an e-mail to: parks@riverfallstown.com.

2016 Roadwork Underway

The Town Board, Town Highway Department, and residents living on certain town roads had some unpleasant surprises this spring. High soil moisture conditions going into last fall combined with the freezing/thawing cycles of this spring led to some town roads breaking up prematurely. The Town has budgeted \$350,000 to spend on road construction and maintenance for 2016. The majority of this funding has been committed for the purpose of blacktopping the eastern portion of 770th Ave. (east Randall Road). This section of town road was torn up last year to allow new culverts to be installed. Many loads of gravel were then hauled in and packed so that the road could settle for several months to provide a good "base" or foundation prior to blacktopping this year. With limited budget funds and ever increasing road construction costs, bigger

road projects such as 770th Ave. sometimes need to be carried out as multi-year projects. The additional town roads that broke up unexpectedly this spring will be addressed as town funds allow. Adequate funding for road maintenance purposes is not an issue that is unique to towns. It is also an issue that the state and even the nation are currently grappling with.

The Town would like to remind residents that the right-of-way on a town road is 66 feet consisting of 33 feet from the center line on each side of a town road. County and state roads have different standards. Right-of-way area is needed to properly maintain the road, road shoulder, and to provide for clear and safe visibility along town roads. Residents are asked not to plant trees, shrubs or gardens or put parking spaces in these right-of-way areas.



Don't let your dog be the only one unlicensed in the Town! All dogs in the Town of River Falls need to have proof of current rabies vaccination and be licensed. **Dogs licensed after April 1 require an additional \$5/dog.** Contact Rita Kozak at 715-425-8554 for dog license information.

TOWN OF RIVER FALLS

Recycling Center Information

Roadside Clean-Up May 1-31

It's time to clean your section of roadside within the Town of River Falls and bring it to the Town's Recycling Center for free disposal. You may pick up your free, clear roadside clean-up bags at the Recycling Center. Please separate items to be recycled (plastic, glass & cans) from trash.

Job Opening

The Town of River Falls is seeking a Recycling Center Assistant. This position includes working 1-2 Saturdays per month and Wednesday evenings during the months of April-October. Must be able to lift 50 pounds. Application forms and position descriptions can be found on the town website or may be picked up at the Recycling Center on Wednesday evenings or Saturdays. Please contact Recycling Center Administrator, Michele DeLong-Reiter, at 715-425-1477 for more information.

New Contract with Waste Management

The Town negotiated a new contract with Waste Management for solid waste and recycling pickups. There was an increase across the board in fees for all of their services.

Scrap Metal Prices Drop

In 2015 scrap metal prices reached their lowest price of \$35.00/ton. This is the lowest it has been in 15 years. This caused a large drop in revenue for the Recycling Center. In 2014 we made \$4431.40 for scrap metal. In 2015 we made \$1799.60.



Compactor Repairs

In early 2016 the compactor failed and needed repairs. The cost came to \$2,300.00 for a new motor and \$262.50 for some electrical work.

Outstanding Achievement

Thank you and *congratulations* on your great participation in the Recycling Program. We can be very proud of our Town as we have exceeded by **double** the amount of recycling recommended per capita by the Department of Natural Resources.

Recycling Center Comparison Chart For 2015 Versus 2014

Drop Site Totals

	2015	2014
Commingle & Paper	86.92 tons	85.86 tons
Trash & Demo	219.29 tons	215.56 tons

Collection of other Recyclable Materials

	2015	2014
Appliances	254 units	227 units
Car Batteries	0.73 tons	0.80 tons
Tires	3.29 tons	3.37 tons
Antifreeze	85 gallons	80 gallons
Waste Oil	2,500 gallons	2,700 gallons
Oil Filters	1600 units	1440 units
Scrap Metal	38.4 tons	35.5 tons
Electronics	10.0 tons	9.0 tons
Fluorescent Bulbs	617 bulbs	989 bulbs

Small Steps to Help our Important Local Pollinators

It is estimated that one in every three bites of food you eat requires pollinators for its production. The most common pollinator we tend to think of is the non-native honey bees, but other important pollinators include our beautiful bumble bees as well as hundreds of other species of native bees. Virtually all of these pollinators are in a steep population decline due to a combination of agricultural monocultures, efficient chemical weed control, loss of native forage plants, and the widespread use of a potent class of insecticides called the neonicotinoids, which are universally used as seed, lawn and foliage treatments for insect control.

Each of us can play a small, but important role in helping our pollinators. Below is a short list of activities you might consider to enhance our local pollinator populations:

Plant flowers.

All pollinators have a strong preference for native wild flowers, so if you have a choice, choose native. Early and late blooming species are extremely valuable as they provide the nourishment bees need to get their populations built up in the spring and provide the resources needed to get them through the winter. Dozens of web sites are out there to help you choose appropriate pollinator-friendly plants.

Spray less.

We all like to have a manicured lawn with no weeds. But those lawns are a desert for pollinators and provide no nutrition. Please, spray less, or at the very least, delay spraying until the spring dandelion bloom is done as they are an important spring forage for bees. It will also permit clover to grow in your yard which is another important bee plant.



Don't mow road ditch right-of-ways.

Mowed ditches have a clean look but provide nothing for the pollinators. Added benefits include spending less money on fuel/maintenance, minimizing the use of fossil fuels and more free time for the important things like family or hobbies. It also helps the ground nesting birds such as meadow larks.

Just say no to neonicotinoids.

Read the labels of

the products and plants you purchase and avoid those that have been treated with these potent neurotoxins.

These are just a few of the activities you can do to help our bees. If you want more detailed information, please Google the Bee Squad at the U of MN, which is a rich resource for ideas on helping bees: www.beelab.umn.edu/bee-squad.

The Basics on Permits/Licenses/Forms

Burn Permits: Available at the Recycling Center during operational hours or from a Town Board or staff member as available.

Building Permits/Business Permits: Contact Jerome Rodewald, Zoning Administrator

Dog Licenses: Contact Rita Kozak, Town Treasurer

Elections: Contact Ruth Stern, Town Clerk

Fireworks Permits: Contact DianaSmith, Town Board Chair

IoH Permits: Contact Jerome Rodewald, Zoning Administrator

Large Gatherings: Guidelines/Forms on Town website, submit to Ruth Stern, Town Clerk for consideration by the River Falls Town Board

Note: Many (but not all) forms can be found on the Town website: www.riverfallstown.com

TOWN OF RIVER FALLS
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Diana Smith, Town Chair

Ruth Stern, Town Clerk

New, Mobile Friendly TOWN Website

The Town recently worked with Town Web Design LLC to upgrade the town website to a new “mobile friendly” format. Many people are now using smart phones and tablet devices to access the internet. What you will notice when you visit the new town website is that there are far fewer icons on the main web page. This means the pages are set up differently so that they will be easier to read on smaller devices. A recent analytics report of the usage of the Town website showed that nearly 1000 people utilized the site during a one month time period. The usage spiked on Election Day (April 5th) with approximately 250 visits on that day alone. The analytics report also showed that mobile devices comprised the largest category of computers that were being used to access the town website. These numbers may not be huge for a corporation or even for a larger municipality, but for a town with a total population of approximately 2300 residents it shows a strong interest level and engagement on the part of our town citizens. The Town continues to work on website content and asks for your patience during this process.

