

THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Intergovernmental Cooperation element describes ways in which the Town of Somerset can coordinate, cooperate and communicate with other governmental entities to best serve the interests of the Town of Somerset and its adjoining neighbors. The primary governmental entities that affect the Town of Somerset are:

- 1) St. Croix County, since the Town of Somerset is currently under the jurisdiction of St. Croix County ordinances. The Town of Somerset also has a number of Town ordinances that are more restrictive than County ordinances focusing on land use issues that are enforced through the St. Croix County Zoning Department;
- 2) The Village of Somerset which lies in the center of the Town of Somerset and with whom we share support of the Town of Somerset Fire and Rescue Service; and,
- 3) The Somerset Public Schools, whose facilities are located in the Village of Somerset.

The Town of Somerset has entered into several formal and informal agreements regarding multi-jurisdictional issues. Continued cooperation with surrounding communities and governmental units in the belief that such cooperation can have long-term positive results such as early identification of issues, consistency, trust and the building of respect.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS, EXISTING OR IN PROCESS

EXTRATERRITORIAL ZONING

The Town of Somerset is currently working with the Village of Somerset through an Extraterritorial Zoning Committee to mutually agree on future zoning districts and definitions within the proposed ETZ area. Although the Town of Somerset did not welcome this process, it is required by law that the two municipalities work together when the Village decrees extraterritorial zoning. While the Town may wish to have its boundaries perpetually remain the same, it is recognized that ETZ cooperation is a better alternative to outright Village annexation since annexation of Town land and properties results in a significant loss of property tax revenues and tends to fragment the community.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Town of Somerset and the Village of Somerset currently have a joint agreement to provide fire protection to both jurisdictions through the Town of Somerset Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire and Rescue Service hall facilities are located in the Town of Somerset and are currently under expansion. Volunteers are from both the Town and the Village.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Somerset Public Library, located within the Village limits, serves both the Town and Village of Somerset. The library offers free library cards to all Wisconsin residents. Material not owned by the Somerset Public Library may be obtained through county inter-library loan. The library board is presently made up of two residents of the Town of Somerset, two residents of the Village of Somerset and the Superintendent of the Somerset Schools.

PARKS

Because the residents of the Town of Somerset have access to and make use of public parks, which are located within Village boundaries, the Town has made financial contributions towards the development of these parks. The Larry Forrest Memorial Park was established in 1995. The 11.17-acre park is home to two Little League baseball fields and a regulation baseball field. In the summer of 2001, two structures were acquired from the former Water Park with one now converted to a picnic shelter and the other a concession stand. The park also has an additional storage shelter, playground and three full basketball courts.

Veteran's Memorial Park of 4 acres has two tennis courts, an outdoor skating rink, and a basketball court. There are two picnic shelters on the premise with picnic tables and grill, ice-skating rink/volleyball court as well as a warming house with handicapped accessible restrooms.

ON GOING AND FUTURE ISSUES

As the Village of Somerset expands outward the possibility of land annexation will continue to increase. As annexations occur, there will be a number of issues that will need to be addressed. Some of these are loss of property tax revenue for the Town of Somerset, zoning and land use differences, increased housing densities and types of development that will occur on the annexed property. Issues dealing with annexation will need to be constantly monitored to ensure that growth satisfies the goals, objectives and policies of both municipalities.

A more immediate issue between the Town and the Village is reflected in this quote which opened an article in the April 6, 2003 St. Paul Pioneer Press focusing on school growth and planning:

SOMERSET, Wis. - Some in this Apple River Community, long known as a rough-and-tumble playground for the Twin Cities and Western Wisconsin, would like it to be known for something else too: educational vision.

One of the activities that created this reputation is a series of annual summer outdoor rock concerts that overwhelm the area as thousands of young fans assemble for "good times", creating significant traffic, drug and alcohol problems. It is important to note that many citizens and civic leaders associated with the Village of Somerset are aware of this problem and are working to ameliorate this situation and would, indeed, be happy to see the community known for "educational vision."

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION GOALS AND POLICIES

Goal 1

To continue and improve intergovernmental cooperation with the Village of Somerset and St. Croix County.

Policy 1.1

The Town of Somerset will continue to work with the Village of Somerset to create an extra territorial zone that will be of benefit to both the Town and the Village with the least disturbance of the Town's safety and welfare.

Policy 1.2

The Town of Somerset will continue to maintain communication with the Village of Somerset regarding all joint concerns.

Policy 1.3

The Town of Somerset will work to enhance the sharing of recreational areas between the Village and the Town of Somerset.

Policy 1.4

The Town of Somerset will work to maintain our existing cooperative relationship with St. Croix County and encourage the development and passage of ordinances at the County level that will support the implementation of the Town of Somerset's Comprehensive Plan.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION IMPLEMENTATION

1. Strengthen existing cooperative relationship with the St. Croix County Zoning and Planning Offices by establishing a monthly informal contact with zoning and planning staff to discuss our mutual concerns for the Town of Somerset and its place in St. Croix County.
2. Continue our diligent attention to working out ETZ issues with the Village of Somerset in a way that does not alter the essentially rural character of the Town of Somerset.
2. Once an ETZ plan has been approved by the ETZ Committee representing the Town and Village of Somerset, a Town of Somerset ETZ Committee member will attend those Village of Somerset Planning Commission and Village Board meetings that focus on ETZ issues. Additionally, when issues that come before the Village Board that might have significant impact on the Town of Somerset, members of the Planning Commission and/or the Town Board may attend such meetings.
4. The Town of Somerset will continue to support the ongoing efforts to better organize the presently very good joint Somerset Fire and Rescue Department

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION CONTACTS

The following is a list of neighboring or affiliated community and governmental agency contacts. These may be used as starting points when a possible action by the Town of Somerset may affect neighboring communities and agencies.

WisDOT- Eau Claire
District Planning Projects Engineer
Transportation District 6
718 Clairemont Ave
Eau Claire, WI 54701
Office Phone: 800 991-5285

WDNR-Baldwin Service Center
990 Hillcrest Suite 104
Baldwin, WI 54002
Office Phone: 715 684-2914

St. Croix Highway Department
Commissioner
1150 Davis Street
Hammond, WI 54015
Office Phone: 715 796-2227
Office Phone: 715 425-3725

St. Croix County Land and Water
Conservation
County Conservationist
1960 8th Ave Suite 141
Baldwin, WI 54002
Office Phone: 715 684-2874 Ext. 3

St. Croix County Zoning Office
Zoning Administrator
1101 Carmichael Road
Hudson, WI 54016
Office Phone: 715 386-4680

Village of Somerset
President
Somerset Village Hall
110 Spring Street, P.O. Box 356
Somerset, WI 54025
Office Phone: 715 247-3395

School District of Somerset
Superintendent
P.O. Box 100
645 Sunrise Drive
Somerset, WI 54025
Office Phone: 715 247-3313

West Central Regional Planning
Commission
Director
800 Wisconsin St.
Mail Box 9
Eau Claire WI 54703
Office Phone: 715 836-2918

Bass Lake Rehabilitation District
John Coughlin
755 140th Avenue
New Richmond, WI 54017
Phone: 715 246-5320

Town of Farmington
Chairman
638 Ridge Road
Osceola, WI 54020
Phone: 715 294-3897

Town of Richmond
Chairman
1428 100th Street
New Richmond, WI 54017
Phone: 715 246-3595

Town of St. Joseph
Chairman
1337 County Road V
Hudson, WI 54016
Phone: 715 549-6235

Town of Star Prairie
Chairman
1099 County Road C
New Richmond, WI 54017
Phone: 715 246-5297