

*Village of Pellston  
President's Corner – October 2020*

As indicated in the last update, we continue to strive to make the Village website as a source of information for our residents. To that end, here are some updates:

**Sidewalks**

The Village Council is acutely aware of the condition of some of our sidewalks; however, the funds for street and sidewalk repairs and replacement that are allocated by the State of Michigan do not meet the demand. It is the opinion of the Village Council that street maintenance must come first. We have this year instituted a plan for a percentage of street funds to be set aside for sidewalk repair when possible. Comparative to other communities, you will find many municipalities have ordinances in place that say 100% of sidewalk costs must be borne by the property owners. Pellston's local ordinance also had the same standards. However, some years ago the Village Council decided that a much fairer plan would be that property owners would be responsible for 2/3 of the cost, and the Village would cover 1/3. Recent estimates have demonstrated that the cost of replacing one block of sidewalk is approximately \$10,000.00. There are other communities whose rules say that property owners have no input on sidewalks and, instead, simply receive a tax notice of what is owed for the improvements.

**Transparency**

All meetings and hearings are open to the public with the exception of closed door meetings that pertain to some legal matters and personnel and are appropriately posted. Council meetings have been held and continue to be held on the second Monday of the month at 7 pm. This is in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Also, all Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests have been handled in a timely manner when received.

The Village has recently created a new website and now has control of its content, which was not the case in the past. It is important to note that the website is a continual work in progress and documents will continue to be uploaded. Budgets and annual EVIP reports are already on the website. The Village is in the final phase of a complete rewrite of our Zoning Ordinances. A public hearing will be held – and properly posted – after its completion. Once adopted by the Village Council, it will also be uploaded to the website. Any public documents are always available upon request.

**Revival Plan**

It is always the goal of the Village to encourage new business development while still maintaining our small town charm. The Village was a part of a business incubation resource program along with other communities with Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA). That opportunity was lost when Emmet County decided to withdraw from NLEA. It is our hope to be able to find other sources in the future.

### **Trailhead**

In line with development in the Village, we do believe the Trailhead Project, which is still in progress, will bring even more visitors to the area to patronize our businesses, which may also encourage additional business development. Over \$250,000 in grant funds from various sources have been committed toward this project.

### **Speed Reduction on US31 through the Village**

The speed limit is set by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and our efforts to get a reduction and a caution light have been denied each time we've petitioned for them. We are currently exploring the lease or purchase of portable radar speed signs to place on US31 and Robinson Road. Studies do show that they have an impact on speeders.

### **PFAS Contamination**

There are monthly teleconference calls to all agencies involved including the State of Michigan Departments of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and Health and Human Services (MDHSS), Emmet County, the Village of Pellston, and the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa. Village officials participate in each and every meeting. We are briefed by EGLE and MDHSS on these calls, and updates are provided on the website. Testing is in progress right now on Pellston Regional Airport property and, although it is suspected that the source of the contamination is on the airport property, until that is determined, we have no other recourse legal or otherwise. We are aware of a number of options to address the issue including community wells, water and sewer treatment plants, and deeper private wells to name a few. Few things are more important than clean and safe drinking water. You can be assured that with legal assistance and expert advice we will be on top of the situation until it is resolved.

### **Fight the Blight**

The current Nuisance Ordinance was revised a few years ago to make violations a civil infraction with very stiff fines, and it works. However, we always strive to work with the offender to rectify the situation without going to that extreme. Photos posted on a website of proposed blight are months old, and those properties were addressed long ago. It is also important to note that we conducted a Village-wide community cleanup that resulted in over 13 garbage trucks of blight being removed from our town. This was accomplished at a cost of approximately \$20,000.00, half of which was paid for from a very generous grant. Blight will always be an issue in any community and will be dealt with as needed through the ordinance as it is written.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions. In the meantime, stay safe and stay well.

James Gillett  
President