

VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT

NATURAL BEAUTY

The Countdown Begins: The Cardinal Hickory Creek Application Has Been Sent To The Public Service Commission

by Michael McDermott

The application by American Transmission Company (ATC) for the Cardinal Hickory Creek high voltage transmission line has been submitted to the Public Service Commission (PSC), and the clock is really running now with an alarm set for a year from now for the final decision. The Town of Vermont has been designated the “alternate route” and the “preferred route” now runs to the south through Mt. Horeb and then swings north along Hwy P to Middleton. BUT, the PSC has chosen the “alternate route” in the past and can still decide to put the line through the Town of Vermont.

Opposition and resistance has grown and become widespread over these last few years and we are in a good place to pressure the PSC to turn down the line. State legislators, Senators Erpenbach and Marklein and Representatives Pope, Considine, Tranel, and Nowack have all written to the PSC expressing either opposition or questioning the reasons the applicants claim justify the expensive, unneeded line. These are both Democrats and Republicans. Dane and Iowa counties have passed resolutions opposing the line. Over 30 municipalities have passed resolutions opposing or questioning the line, including the Town of Vermont. Many organizations and hundreds of people have sponsored or attended recent rallies or meetings opposing the line and proposing better alternatives.

One of the organizations active in opposing the line is the Western Dane Preservation Committee based mainly in Mt. Horeb. They are taking the lead in building public involvement to respond at critical points in the review process to take place in the next year. Other organizations in Iowa County are



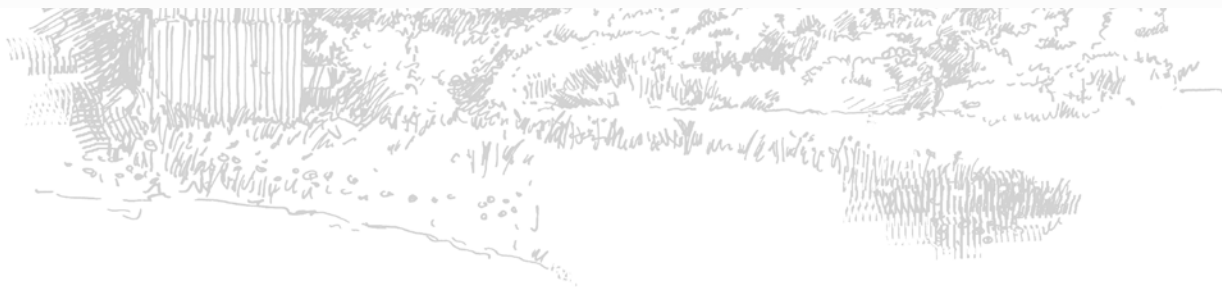
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November Election Details

The Fall 2018 General Election will be held on Tuesday November 6, 2018 at the Vermont Town Hall. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Please note that a photo ID is required to vote in Wisconsin. A Wisconsin Driver's License, Wisconsin DOT issued ID, military ID Card, or passport are some of the acceptable forms of identification. More information is available at <http://bringit.wisconsin.gov>.

If you're unsure whether you are registered to vote in the Town of Vermont, please check the website: <https://myvote.wi.gov/> or contact the Town Clerk at clerk@townofvermont.com or 608-767-2457. You can register at the MyVote website or in person prior to or on Election Day at the Town Hall with acceptable proof of residency. If you would like to register prior to Election Day, please call ahead to ensure someone will be there to assist you.

Registered voters may vote absentee by mail. You can request a ballot in writing with a copy of your photo ID, or in person at the Town Hall as soon as ballots are available. Absentee voting in person at the Town Hall will be available by appointment. In-person absentee voting ends on the Friday prior to each election.



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ATC Cardinal Hickory Creek Project Update, continued from page 1

enlisting in this effort. Another way to have a voice in opposing the line is by registering as an official intervenor. This may be done by individuals or by political bodies. Intervenors can participate in the process in ways that the general public cannot. Several town boards are considering registering for intervenor status.

The next big opportunity for both kinds of public participation will be responding to two forthcoming environmental impact statements (EIS) - one for the feds as the Rural Utility Services and the other for the Wisconsin DNR. The draft EIS for the federal agency will be out in the near future and will include issues affecting the Town of Vermont as well as all the other Wisconsin communities threatened by the line. There will be 60 days to respond to the draft. When the draft EIS comes out, a meeting will be called to get citizen response of how to protect the Town of Vermont and the larger Driftless Area.

While the process now becomes entangled in bureaucracy, there is still plenty of room and opportunity for citizen input. We know that the line is unnecessary, expensive, and locks us into outdated ways of generating and shipping electricity. What are called non-transmission alternatives show a better and cheaper way to do this. Energy efficiency like better building codes, modern appliances, and improved lighting options have already reduced electricity growth to where it is flat. Local generation like community solar is another better way, and what is called load management like using machinery and household appliances in off peak hours have also proven to be better.

This is crunch time. Stay tuned for news of the draft EIS and be prepared to jump in to defend the town and our neighbors. We will let you know of more opportunities to fight the line as they come up.

Appointed Clerk and Treasurer: A Referendum Question on the Ballot at the November General Election

By: Karen Carlock

Like many Towns, Villages and Cities, the Town of Vermont is considering a move from having an elected clerk and treasurer to having the two separate positions become positions that are appointed by the Town Board.

Wisconsin Towns Association reports that many towns are considering this change for three primary reasons:

1. The responsibilities of the positions are becoming more complicated and require personnel who have the unique skill set to complete the tasks.
2. The Town is unable to find an elector who is interested in running and serving in the positions.
3. The town board prefers to set the job description, the qualifications, the term, the compensation, and have these positions become more accountable to them.

The Town of Vermont is considering this change for reasons 1 and 2 above. Recent years have shown it is difficult to find individuals to run for the positions, and the duties of the positions have grown increasingly complicated. The Town of Vermont board is not proposing that the positions be combined – we see significant value in continuing to have two separate positions, that of clerk and that of treasurer.

The Town Board discussed this topic with residents at the Annual Town meeting this past April, and there was support for a potential change. With that support, the Town Board voted in May to put the question on the ballot. The decision of whether to move to appointed positions will be made via a referendum vote at the November 6th General Election. There are several key considerations that should be noted (adapted from Charette, Jann. Changing from an Elected Official to an Appointed One” *Wisconsin Towns Association*, Feb 2018, 15-16).

1. An appointed clerk or treasurer does not need to be an elector or resident of the Town of Vermont. An elected clerk or treasurer does have to be an elector of the town.
2. When the positions are appointed, the Town Board may meet in closed session to interview, discuss employment, promotion, compensation or performance. When the positions are elected, the Town Board may not discuss the above in closed session.
3. Compensation is established by the electors when the positions are elected, and the job description is limited to only that which is specified in state statute; whereas the Town Board determines the compensation and the job description for the appointed positions.
4. When they are appointed positions, the board may appoint a person for a term of up to three years and may choose to appoint the person as part-time or full-time. Elected officials hold two-year terms that start in April of odd-numbered years.

We will let you know the outcome of the November vote.



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Treasurer Spotlight – Financial Data in the Rural Setting

by Karen Carlock

Jenna Schmidt grew up in Spring Green and knew that eventually she would like to end up back near home. Shortly after she and her husband purchased a home in Vermont, she ran for the position of Town Treasurer. She viewed it as an opportunity to meet others in the township and to use her expertise to serve her community.

Following the completion of her graduate program, Jenna accepted a position with the state as a financial auditor. She and her husband lived in Monona for several years, and eventually decided that they were ready to move to a home in a more rural setting. They found the perfect house in Vermont, and went through a year-long, extensive remodeling before they made the move official. They love the location, not only for its beauty and tranquility, but also the convenient location that is halfway between work and their families. At the end of her work day, she loves leaving Madison behind, and walking with her dogs as they explore their property. She savors the sunrises, the sunsets, and the clear, starry skies.

Jenna has brought much value to the Town of Vermont in her role as treasurer. She has extensive experience in finance working at the state government level. She has identified areas for process improvements and developed new ways to present the Town's financial data to make it more understandable and transparent. In turn she has enjoyed learning about how local government operates and interacts with state government. Her favorite aspect of her role as Town Treasurer has been meeting residents. She has been inspired by many, with their passion for, knowledge of, and involvement in local government.

When Jenna isn't crunching numbers, she enjoys reading, playing piano, traveling, and spending time with her dogs.



Wild Parsnip: That Pervasive, Nasty Plant

By Dean Bossenbroek

Wild parsnip is rampant, filling our roadsides and fields. It seems that each year, where there were once a few, there are then groups, followed by masses of golden topped stalks. These seemingly sunny invasive plants are found throughout North America and seem to become more and more prevalent each year. Fortunately, they are easy to identify with their height of up to five feet and their yellow rosettes. They can grow in dry and wet conditions, but require sun, so they will not grow in the shade. Each plant grows 300-500 seeds, which drop to the ground. The seeds remain viable in the ground for up to three years.

The Wisconsin DNR currently classifies Wild Parsnip as Restricted, which means that the invasive species is already established in the state and has the potential to cause environmental harm or harm to human health. And that they do! Also known as poison parsnip, the sap on the shoots and leaves is toxic and causes photochemical burns. The burns occur when the sap that is on the skin reacts to sunlight. The burns do not spread to other areas, although it may seem that way as blisters begin to show themselves one to two days after exposure. Blisters may continue to arise for many days after the initial appearance. The resulting itching is akin to that caused by poison ivy and poison oak.



Individual reactions vary widely. Some people can come into contact with poison parsnip with no discernable reaction. Other people suffer intense flare ups, blistering, oozing, itching, and sleepless nights. Treatments vary from cool, wet cloths to witch

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Wild Parsnip, continued

hazel and anti-itch creams. Soothing, natural balms will provide relief for minor symptoms. For those really bad exposures, a doctor may prescribe a steroidal topical ointment and/or oral medication like prednisone.

To slow the spread of this invasive, plants should be found early, when there hasn't yet been too much spread. Cutting off the root just below ground level is ideal but is tedious if working on a large area. Mowing large infestations may be a more efficient method; however, with mowing, the timing is critical. Mowing wild parsnip should take place before the plant goes to seed. Mowing after the plant has gone to seed actually makes the infestation worse because the mower scatters the numerous seeds and carries them to new locations. Mowing early also isn't as effective, because the rosettes that have been cut have time to regrow, flower, and bolt. Mowing twice a season is the best mowing solution when possible for Towns and property owners. However, it will take three years to eradicate the patches. When working on eradication, please be incredibly careful to keep your skin protected and avoid contact with any and all parts of this bright, potent plant.



Fun for Vermonters!

It was wonderful to get out and meet community members as part of the Annual Town of Vermont Picnic held on September 9. The festivities took place at Tyrol Basin, located at 3487 Bohn Road, Mount Horeb, WI 53572.

Attendees enjoyed catered appetizers and refreshments, as well as live music. There were also plenty of activities for kids, including a bounce house. The chair lift rides were wonderful and the weather couldn't have been better. Thanks to those who attended. We'll try to continue to improve the picnic and would love to see even more of you next year!

We'll close this issue with a chuckle from days of old in the Town of Vermont:



HORSE STEALING.—A pair of black mares formerly owned by S. KLAUBER, Esq., of this city, were stolen from the premises of FREDERICK W. GEIESE, in the town of Vermont. Mr. G. paid the last instalment on the horses only last week. A buggy was taken from a near neighbor of Mr. G.'s, which, with the whip and harness, was found about two miles south of Black Earth. No clue has yet been found.

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How to reach us:

Publisher: Lisa Orman, 608-767-4930, home; lisa@kidstuffpr.com

Managing Editor: Dean Bossenbroek 608-669-1728,

dean.bossenbroek@gmail.com



Lisa and Dean

Mission Statement: It is the mission of Vermont's Voice to provide information about our town and articles of interest to the residents of our town in order to promote a sense of community, encourage participation in and understanding of town government, and improve communication among residents. Vermont's

Voice is a volunteer, citizen-run publication that encourages and depends on citizen participation in providing information, articles, or suggestions for articles, photos, criticism, and help with mailings. The cost of printing and postage is included in the town budget. Vermont's Voice is not the official voice or viewpoint of the town government.

Keep up to date on town ordinances, meetings and other business at <http://www.townofvermont.com>.

Town Officials

Chair, Karen Carlock, 773-682-8599

Supervisor #1 Scott Moe 608-767-4738

Supervisor #2 John Hallick

Supervisor #3 Todd Culliton
608- 767-4145

Supervisor #4 Doug Meier 608-767-8860

Town Clerk Chris Christian 608-767-2457

Or email:

clerk@townofvermont.com

Town Treasurer Jenna Schmidt

Town Patrolman Jack Schulenberg
608-437-5490

Building Inspector Johnson
Inspections 608-444-0372

Plan Commission Members

Chair Doug Meier 608-767-8860

Vice Chair Jim Elleson 608-767-3553

Secretary Diane Anderson

Scott Moe 608-767-4738

Dean Bossenbroek 608-669-1728

Todd Culliton 608-767-4145

Alex McKenzie 608-217-8611

Judy Robb

Designed and edited by

KidStuff
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