

# VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE

GOVERNMENT

NATURAL BEAUTY

## Norton Urness Leaves the Town of Vermont

By Jane Hanson

I said goodbye to Norton Urness. I'd write his biography, but it has been done so beautifully that anything more would be superfluous. Rather, I would like to remember the funeral, a ceremony filled with ritual, tears, chuckles, and sad smiles.

As I surveyed those in the church pews, I saw children, sisters, cousins, - many of whom represented the founding families of our township - as well as those who had gone head-to-head with Norton on town issues over the years. These were people who knew the difference between opinions and people.

Carried by his children and grandchildren to his final resting place, Norton was laid to rest beside his parents and his daughter, Christine. I glanced sidelong at his teenage grandchildren,- those who had carried his casket here. Their tears flowed without inhibition - Grandpa would be so sorely missed.

The record turnout of mourners then returned to the basement of the church, where food and love were served in equal portions. This, truly, was the heart of a country funeral - remembrance, respect, and celebration - a ritual intrinsic to country life.

Goodbye for now, Nortie - thank you for your caring and husbandry of our township - and thank you for your friendship and sharing.

## Chip Sealing

Every year, a different quadrant of the township has its roads resealed. This year, the roads of the northeast quadrant will receive a fresh coat of chip seal. These roads include Braun, Cedar Hill Lane, Schaub, Cowan, Dalby, Enerson, Foseid, Haag, Kramer, McKenzie, Michaelis, Moen Valley, Old Indian Trail, Roberts, Schaub, Stanfield, Union Valley, and Vermont Church.



If you have not had a chance to meet Jack Schulenberg, Vermont Town Patrolman, do stop and introduce yourself if you see him out working in the township this summer. Jack and his family are lifelong residents of Vermont.



Norton Urness

### Goodbye to Supervisor Hanson

After 10 years of service on the Board of the Town of Vermont, Bill Hanson has stepped down. His seat was won by Larry Ziemer in the April 7 election. Hanson's emphasis was on the reduction and containment of Town taxes. Thank you, Bill.

# VERMONT'S VOICE

## New Land Use Plan Ready for Review

By Jim Elleson, Vice Chair of Planning Commission

After more than three years of deliberation, debate, and innumerable drafts, the updated Town of Vermont Comprehensive Land Use Plan is ready for public review and comment.

### What is the Comprehensive Land Use Plan?

From the Introduction: "This plan is a guide for decision-making for the Town of Vermont government in managing changes in land use and in carrying out the business of the Town. It provides a framework to guide Town leaders and landowners in making land-use decisions that respect the rights of landowners while preserving and enhancing those qualities that make the town a special place to live and work."

This Plan is the latest iteration in an ongoing land use planning process that began in 1979 with the first Town of Vermont Land Use Plan. Subsequent revisions were adopted in 1985 and 1997. The plan is expanded quite a bit over the 1997 Land Use Plan, to comply with

Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning law. But it is still based on the same four goals that were the heart of the 1997 plan:

- 1) Maintain and preserve the rural character of the town;
- 2) Preserve agricultural opportunities;
- 3) Protect the environment; and,
- 4) Protect and preserve the natural beauty of the town.

### What's New in the Plan?

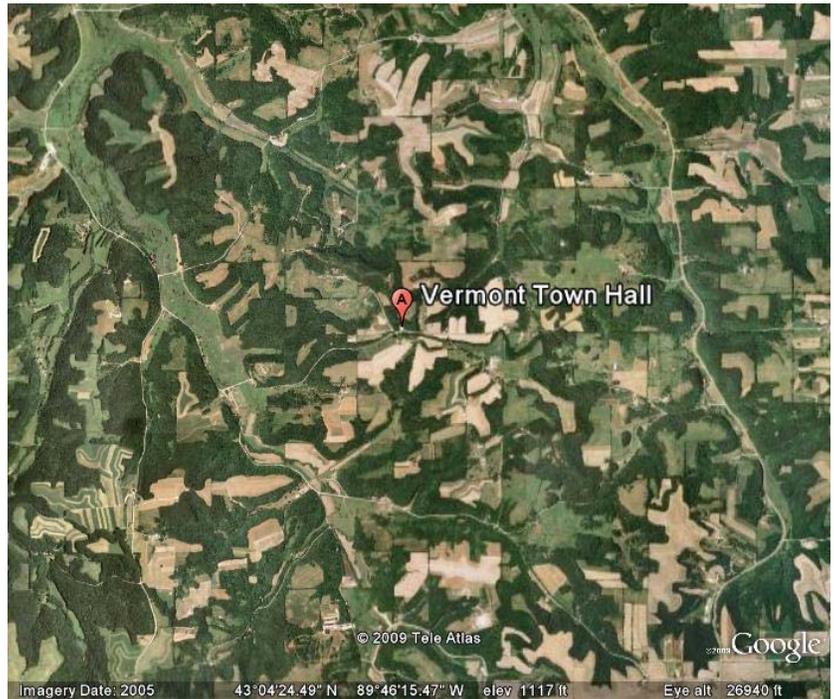
The plan is expanded to address each of the nine elements required by state law: Issues and Opportunities; Housing; Transportation; Utilities and Community Facilities; Agricultural, Natural, and Cultural Resources; Economic Development; Land Use; Intergovernmental Cooperation; and Implementation. For each of these elements, the plan describes the current situation and outlines how we expect to address these areas in the future. Some of the elements are fairly brief because they have limited relevance to our rural town. The elements that are most important to our four goals get the most extensive treatment: Agricultural Resources, Natural Resources, and Land Use.

The policies outlined in the plan are essentially the same as those contained in the 1997 Land Use Plan. We have clarified the language and added some detail to some policies that we have found to be ambiguous or incomplete.

The most significant new policy is a limitation on the height of buildings constructed on ridgetops, to a maximum of 22 feet. Respondents to the public opinion survey in Fall 2005 were strongly in favor of limiting ridgetop development. The new policy does not prohibit construction on ridgetops, but it seeks to minimize the impact of ridgetop building on the natural beauty and rural character of the town.

### Who Wrote the Plan?

The new plan is a collaborative effort reflecting the input of 288 citizens who responded to the survey, over 50 citizens who participated in a series of six focus groups, and 13 current and former Plan Commission members who met twice a month over the course of 3 years to carefully consider every possible implication of every provision in the plan.



# VERMONT'S VOICE

## Where Can I Get a Copy?

The Plan is available on the Town website at <http://www.townofvermont.com>. Town residents or property owners can receive a copy by contacting the town clerk at 767-2457. Copies are available at the Town Hall by appointment and at the Mt. Horeb Village Office at 138 East Main Street and at John Bird Accounting at 1116 Mills Street in Black Earth during normal business hours. Copies are available for on-site use at the Mt. Horeb and Black Earth Public Libraries.

## Is This a Done Deal?

The current draft of the plan has been thoroughly considered and discussed, but it is still just that – a draft. You may submit signed written comments to the Town Clerk before the hearing.

After the public hearing the Town Board had in March, the Board has the option to adopt the plan with no changes, to make changes themselves, or to send it back to the Plan Commission for revision. Once adopted by the Town Board, the plan has the force of law in the town. (As noted in the Implementation section, there are several town ordinances that will need to be revised to be consistent with the plan.) Once a final plan is adopted, it will be sent to the county for adoption by the county board and incorporation into the county plan and ordinances.

## Timeline for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

October 1999 – Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning Law requires local governments to develop and adopt a comprehensive plan by January 1, 2010.

June 2004 – A planning consultant proposes to develop a plan funded by grant money and \$20,000 from the town. The Plan Commission decides that we can use local, volunteer expertise to develop a plan better suited to our specific needs.

Summer and Fall 2004 – Plan Commission formulates a plan and timetable for public participation and plan development.

January 2005 – A public meeting introduces the planning process and gathers input from residents on their goals and visions.

March-April 2005 – A series of citizen focus group discussions identify specific concerns in several comprehensive plan topic areas.

Summer 2005 – Plan Commission develops a public opinion survey with assistance from the UW-River Falls Survey Center.

September 2005 – Survey is mailed to residents. Response rate is 70%, much higher than usual for this type of survey and a credit to our town citizens.

January 2006 – Based on input from the survey and focus groups, the Plan Commission begins identifying needed revisions to the 1997 Land Use Plan.

December 2008 – After three years of meeting twice every month, and developing and discussing nearly 40 drafts, the Plan Commission presents a final draft to the Town Board for approval.

January 2009 – Town Board approves the final draft for public review and comment.

March 4, 2009 – Public hearing date, citizens can comment on the plan.

## Participants in the Development of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Plan Commission Members:

Barb Grenlie

John Brings

Bruce Ellarson

Jim Elleson

Eric Haugen

Don McKay

Johanna Solms

Steve Frame

Bill Hanson

Marc Robertson

Mark Sherven

David Stanfield

Marian Swoboda

Over 50 citizens who participated in focus groups, 288 citizens returned surveys

# VERMONT'S VOICE

## How to reach us:

Editor: Lisa Orman, 9504 Union Valley Road; 767-1102, office; 767-4930, home; 767-1103, fax; [lisa@kidstuffpr.com](mailto:lisa@kidstuffpr.com), e-mail  
Assistant: Jane Hanson, 6115 Hwy. J, 767-5050, [finalyfarm@tds.net](mailto:finalyfarm@tds.net)

**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.

Look for this issue of the Vermont Voice on the Vermont Web Page! Check it out at <http://www.vermonttown.com>.

## Town Officials

*Chair*, Mark Sherven 437-3732  
*Supervisor #1* Larry Ziemer 437-4292  
*Supervisor #2* Don McKay 437-4071  
*Supervisor #3* Steve Cowan 767-4616  
*Supervisor #4* Barb Grenlie 437-5856  
*Town Clerk* Marc Robertson 767-2457  
Or email: [clerk@townofvermont.com](mailto:clerk@townofvermont.com)

*Town Treasurer* Sarah Danz 767-6017  
*Town Patrolman* Dave Haugen 767-3313  
*Building Inspector* MEI 608-643-5329

Bruce Ellarson 767-4974  
Eric Haugen 767-3327  
John Brings 767-3800

## Plan Commission Members

*Chair* Barb Grenlie 437-5856  
*Secretary* Johanna Solms 767-2467  
*Vice Chair* Jim Elleson 767-3553  
Don McKay 437-4071

## Fire Wardens

Frank Hinze 767-3827  
Fern Frame 767-3915  
Shirley Brandt 767-3030

Summer 2009

## VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE      GOVERNMENT      NATURAL BEAUTY

4670 Cedar Hill Lane  
Black Earth, WI 53515

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
Permit #5  
Black Earth  
WI 53515

Address Service  
Requested

Designed and edited by

**KidStuff**  
PUBLIC RELATIONS