

**VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEETING**

January 15, 2026 at 5:30 pm

LOCATION: Village Hall, 130 N. Chestnut St. Lower level board room (East rear entrance)

**Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86397153197?pwd=GmBbRPTkXkfFAxa5jdlglUqSLB40S.1>

Meeting ID: 863 9715 3197

Passcode: 040689

**AGENDA**

1. Call to order
2. Discuss/Possible Action on 312 W. Main St. (Old Village Library) desired uses and development objectives
3. Discuss/Possible Action on Façade Improvement Program
4. Discuss future CDA projects, priorities, and goals
5. Adjourn

Please note that members of the Village Board may attend the meeting for information only, no official action of the Village Board will occur at the Meeting.

**Laurie Neeley, Chairperson**

Posted at the Village of Ellsworth, Library, and Village website Sent to P.C. Journal (Information Only)

# VILLAGE OF ELLSWORTH

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130 N CHESTNUT STREET, ELLSWORTH, WI 54011 | PHONE 715-273-4742 | FAX 715-273-6460

## **Community Development Authority, January 15, 2026**

### **Agenda #2 – Discuss/Possible Action on 312 W. Main St. (Old Village Library) desired uses and development objectives**

The Village has been working to obtain the information necessary to proceed with the sale of the property located at 312 W. Main Street. The following prior reports related to the site have been located:

- Facility Condition Assessment (2020)
- Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (2022)
- Asbestos Assessment (2022)

In addition, the Village has commissioned an appraisal of the property to determine its market value. The appraisal is currently underway and is anticipated to be completed in the near future.

At previous meetings, the Community Development Authority discussed priorities for the future use of the site which included maintaining architectural quality, compatibility with surrounding businesses, ensuring guaranteed value added to the tax roll, and encouraging a use that attracts a high volume of people.

#### **Site Information**

The site has two parcels; each is zoned Commercial. Each parcel is approximately 8,650 square feet. The building is a split-level two-story structure which totals approximately 7,200 square feet. The building is on the south parcel and a parking lot with 20 parking spaces is on the north parcel.

The Commercial District provides an area for commercial, business and professional service uses in the Central Business District and other areas of compact development served by public sewer or in areas that comply with the minimum lot sizes for private sewage systems as specified in COMM 85 of the Wisconsin Administrative Codes.

**PRINCIPAL PERMITTED USES.** By way of illustration, and not exclusion, the following and like business services are permitted: appliance dealers; art, gift, jewelry and notions shops; bakeries, insurance and real estate offices; barber shops; beauty parlors; banks and financial institutions; clinics; clothing stores; drug stores and pharmacies; eating and drinking establishments; florists; food lockers; fruit, vegetable, meat, fish, grocery, supermarkets, and other retail food stores; furniture, department, and hardware stores; funeral homes, hotels, motels, motor lodges, and inns; laundries and dry cleaners; liquor stores; music, radio and television stores; news-stands; offices; optical stores; parking lots; places of entertainment; retail

stores; sporting goods stores; clubs, fraternal organizations, and lodges operated for profit; vehicular sales and service; gasoline stations; funeral homes; municipal buildings; state licensed daycare. Any land or building use which utilizes a 'drive through' for conducting business, such as a bank or fast-food restaurant, or any business which is primarily motor vehicle oriented such as an auto body repair shop, gasoline service station, auto repair, auto sales or machinery and equipment sales and service.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends the CDA determine if any additional priorities or objectives for the site are needed.

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## **Community Development Authority, January 15, 2026**

### **Agenda #3 – Discuss/Possible Action on the Façade Improvement Program**

In late 2024, the Village submitted a grant application to fund a Façade Improvement Program (FIP). As part of the application process, a draft program framework was developed.

The goal of the Façade Improvement Program was to encourage exterior building improvements that emphasize the historic significance and unique character of downtown structures through restoration and rehabilitation. The program was intended to provide financial assistance to downtown commercial property owners to support exterior improvements that enhance architectural character and overall visual appeal.

The Village's proposed financial assistance was designed to incentivize reinvestment in downtown properties and improve the aesthetic quality of the downtown area. However, the Village was not awarded the grant funding, and as a result, the program was not implemented.

The Village Board has budgeted \$10,000 for a Façade Improvement Program in 2026. The FIP framework needs to be updated to reflect the available funding level. In addition, the full framework should be reviewed to determine whether other changes are necessary, including whether the program should continue to be limited to exterior improvements.

#### **Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Community Development Authority review the Façade Improvement Program framework and determine whether any changes are needed

# Façade Improvement Program

The Village of Ellsworth Façade Improvement Program.

## **Goal**

The goal of the Façade Improvement Program (FIP) is to encourage improvements that emphasize the historic significance and uniqueness of downtown structures through building restoration, while also ensuring that all enhancements align with the newly developed Downtown Design Guidelines. This approach fosters a cohesive aesthetic throughout the uptown and East End Business Districts, preserving the area's character and promoting a unified vision for future growth.

## **Enhancements**

The Village of Ellsworth is interested in actively supporting initiatives that will enhance the appearance of the downtown area and the retail / commercial areas in our uptown and East End Business Districts.

## **Financial Assistance & Incentives**

The Village established the Façade Improvement Program (FIP) to provide financial assistance to commercial property owners in the downtown area to rehabilitate the exteriors of their properties. The Village's financial assistance is designed to enhance the visual aesthetic of the downtown area by providing financial incentives to property owners whose rehabilitation plans seek to restore the character and quality of their buildings. In addition to preserving architectural integrity, the program aims to increase foot traffic to commercial businesses by creating a more inviting and vibrant streetscape, which in turn is expected to increase the value of commercial properties throughout the district.

## **Preference**

Preference will be given to historic buildings, however, other buildings may be eligible but all awards will be at the sole discretion of the selection committee. Preference will also be given to those who have not applied previously. The selection committee is composed of the following:

- Village President
- Finance Committee Chairperson
- Community Development Authority Chairperson
- Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce Board President
- Ellsworth Chamber of Commerce Executive Director

- Plan Commission Chairman

### **Village Participation**

The Village's financial participation shall be limited to 50% of the rehabilitation costs; minimum per project of \$5,000, and up to a maximum per project of \$15,000. Property owners may receive such assistance from the Village once in a three-year period per building. The same property owner may apply for another building which also seeks Village participation. The availability of funds for the FIP is subject to annual appropriation of \$20,000 or additional appropriation by the Village Board. Awards for assistance under the program will be made on a first come first served basis. The deadlines for applications will be February 1 and July 1 of each year. Awards of grants will be final after the Village Board meetings in March (for February 1 applications) and August (for July 1 applications). If funds are not committed to the FIP by July 1, for projects in the downtown area, funds may then be used for:

- Projects throughout the Village, consistent with the intent of the program, with preference given to those projects having the greatest direct or indirect impact on the downtown program area.
- Projects undertaken by the Village to improve the downtown area.

### **Funds**

Funds may only be used for exterior repairs or improvements such as:

#### **Eligible Improvements**

- Cleaning of Building Exterior
- Exterior Painting
- Masonry Repair and Tuck Pointing
- Other Repairs That May Improve the Aesthetic Quality of the Building.
- Removal of Metal or Wood Material Covering Historic Facades.
- Repair to Building Exterior Facades Including Front, Rear and Side Facades.
- Repairing or Replacing Cornices, Entrances, Doors, Windows, Decorative Details and Awnings.
- Signage Removal, Repair or Replacement When Included as Part of a Comprehensive Façade Improvement Project.
- Other labor and materials used to rehabilitate the façade. In cases where property owners hire a contractor to complete the work, the contractor must be licensed.

#### **Ineligible Improvements**

- Demolition of Buildings
- Inappropriate Cleaning Methods, Repairs, Replacement
- Installation of Metal, Vinyl Siding
- Interior Improvements
- Roofing and Parking Lots

### **Grant Policy**

The Village will not discriminate against any contractor / consultant because of:

- Age
- Color
- Developmental Disability as Defined in S51.01(5)
- Handicap
- National Origin
- Physical Condition
- Race
- Religion
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

### **Program Implementation**

Application Implementation

- The applicant must submit a completed application by the February 1 or July 1 deadlines. Please call the Village Hall 715-273-4742 to request an application or go to our website under Business Resources.
- The application must include plans which show:
  - Price quotes from two retail suppliers for projects that involve material costs only and no labor costs
  - Samples of other materials may be requested as part of the project review.
  - Samples of paint colors must be included in the application
  - A schedule for completion of the project
  - All proposed work, including any structural work or repairs
- The application must submit at least two 8 by 10 "before" color photographs. Please include all areas of work.
- The project application must be approved before the work commences on the project. Expenses incurred before the project application is approved are not eligible for reimbursement.

- Submittal of at least two 8 by 10 "after" color photographs upon completion of project and to ensure reimbursement. Please include all areas of work.

### **Program Functions on a Reimbursement Basis**

The property owner can request reimbursement for pre-approved project expenses by submitting a reimbursement request form with proof that the expenses have been paid to the contractor or supplier.

### **Changes in the Work**

Changes in the scope of work included in the approved application must be pre-approved by the FIP Review Committee. Deviation from an approved plan may disqualify the applicant from the grant program.

### **Project Completion**

Projects must be completed no later than December 31 of current awarded year for the February 1 application deadline. Projects must be completed no later than December 31 of the following awarded year for the July 1 application deadline. Any change in the project scope from the original application must be approved by the FIP Review Committee.

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## **Community Development Authority, January 15, 2026**

### **Agenda #4 – Discuss future CDA projects, priorities, and goals**

Previously the CDA discussed possible future projects including downtown and East End revitalization, Housing and Infill development, economic development and business attraction, public-private partnerships, and community image and beautification, façade improvement, park/trail enhancements and improvements, ordinance review and enforcement, vacant properties, housing rehab, and rental properties.

From the possibilities the CDA prioritized the East End Redevelopment District Plan implementation, business recruitment, and park and trail enhancements.

The CDA should develop strategies and actions to advance the projects. Possible strategies and actions are listed below.

### **Business Recruitment**

1. Target Priority Business Types
  - Identify business categories that align with community goals, such as downtown retail, restaurants, professional services, healthcare, light industrial, or destination uses.
  - Focus recruitment on businesses that increase the tax base, generate foot traffic, and complement existing businesses.
2. Market Available Sites and Buildings
  - Maintain an up-to-date inventory of available commercial and redevelopment properties.
  - Prepare marketing materials highlighting site readiness, infrastructure availability, and redevelopment incentives.
3. Leverage Redevelopment Tools and Incentives
  - Promote available tools such as TIF assistance, façade improvement grants, site improvement grants (WEDA or PCEDC), or low-interest loans (WEDA or PCEDC).
  - Clearly communicate eligibility requirements and expectations to prospective businesses.
4. Support Business Expansion and Retention
  - Prioritize local business expansion as a recruitment strategy to strengthen the local economy.
5. Streamline Development and Permitting Processes
  - Work with Village staff to ensure clear, predictable, and efficient permitting and review processes.

- Provide a single point of contact for businesses navigating redevelopment or site development.
6. Enhance District Identity and Visibility
- Support branding, signage, and streetscape improvements that strengthen the identity of commercial districts.
  - Promote the district as a cohesive destination for customers and investors.
7. Coordinate with Community Partners
- Collaborate with the Chamber of Commerce, regional economic development agencies, utilities, and educational institutions to expand recruitment reach.
  - Align recruitment messaging with regional economic strengths.

## **Park and Trail Enhancement**

### *CDA Role Statement*

The CDA's role in park and trail enhancements is to support economic development, placemaking, and redevelopment by investing in strategic improvements that increase property values, attract private investment, and enhance the vitality of redevelopment districts.

- Identify parks, trails, and trail connections that directly support redevelopment areas, commercial districts, and key gateways.
- Establish criteria for CDA involvement, such as proximity to redevelopment sites, potential to increase foot traffic, and impact on property values.
- Create a list of priority park and trail projects where CDA participation would leverage redevelopment or private investment.
- Focus on projects that connect parks and trails to downtown, redevelopment districts, and employment centers.
- Identify funding sources the CDA can leverage, including TIF, grants, sponsorships, and public-private partnerships.
- Coordinate with Village departments, developers, and community partners to maximize funding opportunities.
- Provide policy guidance on design elements that enhance placemaking, such as trailheads, lighting, signage, landscaping, and public art.
- Ensure designs support economic activity, visibility, and connectivity to nearby development.
- Coordinate park and trail investments with active or planned redevelopment projects.
- Use park and trail enhancements as catalysts for adjacent private development and reinvestment.
- Support marketing and communication efforts that highlight park and trail improvements as community and economic assets.
- Encourage programming and events that increase use and visibility of enhanced areas.

## **East End Redevelopment Plan Implementation**

The plan aims to remove blighted conditions in the East End area, promote economic development, enhance community character, and increase the quality of life in the Village. The plan objectives are designed to fulfill the goal of the East End Redevelopment District. The objectives are:

### 1. Enhance Walkability and Accessibility

- Make the East End more walkable and inviting for both visitors and businesses using placemaking techniques such as landscaping, street furniture, public art, and shade elements.
- Resolve sidewalk accessibility issues such as height and pitch discrepancies.

### 2. Strengthen Economic Vitality

- Attract new businesses along Broadway and Morse Streets, especially those that are engaging for visitors of all ages.
- Incentivize property improvements or sales through grants or assistance programs.
- Increase the tax base by revitalizing underused spaces.

### 3. Capitalize on Tourism and Existing Community Visioning Efforts

- Better connect the Ellsworth Creamery and Cheese Curd Festival to East End businesses through improved wayfinding and multi-modal access.
- Explore expansion and/or enhancement of park facilities to support community events, such as a pavilion or bandshell in East End Park, and enhance connections between the park and Broadway Street.
- Align redevelopment efforts with existing community-driven plans such as Ellsworth Design Team's Community Design Charette, which reimagines the East End as a cultural and entertainment district.

### 4. Preserve and Enhance Community Character

- Leverage available resources to address blighted properties in the redevelopment area.
- Improve and maintain historic architectural elements of East End buildings.
- Emphasize aesthetics and visual cohesion in redevelopment efforts

## ***Possible CDA Strategies and Actions***

### 1. Set and Maintain Redevelopment Priorities

- Confirm near-, mid-, and long-term redevelopment priorities consistent with the adopted plan.
- Focus on projects that increase the tax base, improve walkability, and strengthen the district's identity.
- Periodically revisit priorities as market conditions change.

### 2. Advance Priority Redevelopment Sites

- Identify parcels requiring CDA involvement for acquisition, clearance, or site preparation.
  - Propose appraisals, environmental reviews, and feasibility analysis as needed.
  - Recommend land disposition terms that support plan objectives and public benefit.
3. Leverage Redevelopment Tools
- Evaluate and recommend use of redevelopment tools, including development agreements, grants, TIF, and other financing mechanisms.
  - Ensure public investment is tied to clear redevelopment outcomes and private commitments.
  - Coordinate timing of public improvements with private development activity.
4. Support Streetscape, Park, and Public Realm Improvements
- Participation in streetscape, trail, and park improvements that support redevelopment and placemaking.
  - Coordinate investments with redevelopment projects and capital improvement planning.
  - Encourage improvements that enhance walkability, aesthetics, and connectivity.
5. Encourage Business Recruitment and Reinvestment
- Support recruitment of uses that align with district goals, including mixed-use development, restaurants, retail, and visitor-oriented businesses.
  - Promote reinvestment in existing buildings, particularly along key corridors.
  - Coordinate marketing and event activity that increases district visibility.
6. Align Zoning and Policy Tools
- Recommend zoning changes, PUDs, or design standards necessary to implement the plan.
  - Ensure redevelopment maintains historic character and architectural quality.
  - Coordinate with the Planning Commission and Village Board on regulatory updates.
7. Monitor Progress and Adjust Strategy
- Review redevelopment progress annually, including private investment, public improvements, and tax base impacts.
  - Adjust priorities, tools, and strategies as needed to remain responsive to opportunities.
  - Determine when plan goals have been achieved and when district termination should be considered.

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Community Development Authority develop strategies and actions to implement the identified