

The Post-Journal

Sherman Eyes Future With Slew Of Projects



The village of Sherman has made many physical improvements this summer, including work on the sidewalks on Main Street. Photo by David Prenatt

SHERMAN — Paul Simon wrote *“Everything’s the same back in my little town,”* but that’s not the case within the town of Sherman.



Former residents returning to Sherman may think the village still looks the same. However, there's an array of new things going on behind the scenes and just under the surface.

Overall, work is progressing on a comprehensive plan for the future of Sherman. Committees have already been formed and, while only village residents can be on the planning board or the steering committee, anyone in the greater Sherman area is invited to add their input, said Sherman Mayor Colleen Meeder.

Everyone in the Sherman community is invited to participate in the first Visionary Workshop, which will be held at 6 pm on Tuesday, Oct. 1, in the fire hall, Meeder said. *"People are getting excited about it,"* she said. *"The steering committee is going to gather and recap right after the workshop."*

Visitors to Sherman will likely notice the Dollar General store that opened in 2017. However, Meeder said, the groundwork is being laid to bring a grocery store back.

"We're hoping we can have a grocery store by the end of the year," she said.

There are new things going on in Sherman's infrastructure as well. The village is in the process of obtaining grants for a \$6.2 million upgrade to the wastewater treatment facility.

Plans are also underway to upgrade the village's water system. The village is currently applying for a WIIA grant which will pay for 60% of the project and provide a zero percent loan for the remaining 40%.

The surprise donation to the village of several buildings on Main Street, which was announced on Aug. 19, has given Sherman an opportunity for development, Meeder said. The buildings, donated by businessman Van McConnon, include the properties at 129 W Main St., 123 W Main St., 121 W Main St., and 130 W Main St.

"We just signed the contract for the donated property," she said.

The process is underway to move the food pantry into one of these properties so it will be more visible and better able to serve the people, Meeder said.

Other plans for these properties include housing the rural center and creating space for family and social services and other needs, Meeder said.

Additionally, the Chamber of Commerce has been working on putting together a mural on the outside wall of the Ox and Rooster restaurant at the intersection of Route 76 and Main Street.

"Members of the Chamber and the Historical Society are really excited," Meeder said. *"We're really hoping we get a good turnout at the Visionary Workshop to get input from the community."*

Work has already been done to improve the sidewalks on Main Street, which were cracked and uneven, and the village has been working with Chautauqua Rails to Trails to improve the Sherman section of the 28-mile trail, a portion of which was recently named the Rosie Billquist Nature Trail. A \$500 donation from Billquist's husband will be used for maintenance and support of the trail.

With so much happening in the village, Meeder is quick to say *"the school is the anchor in the community. We're definitely committed to working together."*

Sherman Central School, which has been ranked the No. 1 overachieving school district by Buffalo Business First for 12 years in a row, has seen a striking increase in enrollment. Superintendent Michael Ginestre said that 62 new students registered for school this year and *“we could not be happier to maintain and expand our programming.”*

The enrollment of so many new pupils is due in part to the approval of a new tuition policy for out of district families. The new three-year rate structure, approved by Sherman Board of Education members, is intended to attract new families to Sherman Central School.

In a related matter, Ginestre said construction of the new entrance should begin in May or June. The new entrance will have many safety features, including a two-door entry procedure and new security cameras, he said.

“As far as the building projects, we have been approved by the State Education Department in regards to our Smart School project,” he said. *“We also plan to open bids for our capital outlay project that will continue with flooring work inside classrooms.”*

There are many more plans for both the school and village to keep promoting the Sherman area. Some are far distant ideas and other have begun to take shape. Under any circumstances, however, its clear that everything’s NOT the same back in the little town of Sherman.

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