

CHAPTER 1

**COMMUNITY BACKGROUND
INFORMATION**

INTRODUCTION

The Town of Mukwonago originally adopted a Master Plan in December of 1981, which was intended to be a comprehensive guide for the elected officials, Plan Commission and the residents of the Town of Mukwonago to direct future growth and development in the Town. The Master Plan was a long-range policy document including goals, objectives, and policies for the different elements. Subsequent to the original adoption, updates of the Plan were made in 1990 and 1998, which included updates to the Commercial and Recreational elements, delineation of the environmental corridors and isolated natural areas, updating of the statistical charts, land use and development and subdivision activities.

In 1999 the Wisconsin Legislature enacted a Comprehensive Planning Law which is set forth in Section 66.1001 of the Wisconsin Statutes. The Comprehensive Planning Law requires that comprehensive plans be completed and adopted by local governing communities by January 2010, in order for a County, City, Village, or Town to enforce zoning restrictions, land division regulations or official maps. The Town in cooperation with their private planning consultant is now about to undertake that process to comply with the Comprehensive Planning Law.

COMMUNITY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

History

The first settlement in the Mukwonago area was the Potawatomi Indian Village along the Fox River where the Village of Mukwonago is now located. The Winnebago tribe also lived in Waukesha County before the Potawatomi tribe arrived in the early 1700's. In 1832, the Potawatomi ceded their lands and white settlers soon arrived.

The Indian village site was considered desirable by the new wave of white settlers. In the spring of 1836, Sewall Andrews, and Henry Camp attempted to erect a house at that site. The remaining Native Americans objected to the intrusions, so Andrews and Camp built their house about a mile and one half northwest of the Indian village near the still existing Andrew's house (Mukwonago Museum). During the same year, Charles Cox and Joseph Smart set up homesteads in Section 19 of the Town, as did Tom Sugden in Section 26. Following the early settlers in 1836 additional families arrived. A colony of 20 socialistic families from England purchased 160 acres around Spring Lake in 1843, led by a man named Hunt. They built one large log cabin for the whole group to live in, supplemented by smaller cabins. Following theories developed by Robert Owen, a Welsh born factory owner, everything was owned by the community and everyone was to receive an equal share of the necessities of life. The land did not yield the crops needed to support them and in 1850 the colony broke up. Several Owenites, including the Steele, Johnson, Skidmore, Whitnall, Blackworth and Hunt families did not return to England but remained in the Mukwonago area. Other new timers, who moved to the Town or the Village before 1840, included the Jones, Hills, Raynons, Chafin, Prescott, Winch, Ray, Bond, Blood, Elmore, and the Basselt families. By the end of this decade, Mukwonago included a hotel built in 1837, two stores, a shoemaker, blacksmith, and post office. The first permanent bridge was laid over the Fox River in 1843. A flour and sawmill started operating in 1847 and two years later, the Mukwonago Chief began printing. Henry Hinkley was elected the first Town Chairman in 1838, when the Town of Mukwonago also included the present Towns of Genesee, Ottawa and Eagle.

For the rest of the 19th century, Mukwonago grew as a farming community. Construction of the Milwaukee and Beloit railroad track running through the village provided the farmers with transportation for their crops. Schools and churches were established to further fulfill the basic needs of the residents. Social clubs and activities were also important. In 1878, 19 young women who swore never to marry formed an "old maids club". When they met for the last time in 1905, only Martha MacArthur, Josephine, Rose & Fanny Chapin, Dr. Evelyn Hoehne and Betty Andrews had remained single. The Mukwonago Territorial Badgers, survivors of the pioneers who lived in Wisconsin when it was still a territory, held meetings from 1899 to 1928.

The character of Waukesha County changed in the late 1800's from being exclusively agricultural to including resort activities. Travelers from Milwaukee, Chicago, and all over the country visited the fresh water springs at Spring Lake and Kellogg Springs as well as other springs throughout the county. Several large hotels were built in Mukwonago to house those seeking the curative waters. Another popular recreational activity for both visitors and residents was clam digging from canoes along the shores of the Fox River. The area now known as the

Vernon Marsh was used for activities other than hunting and fishing; farmers harvested wild hay and other crops. During the prohibition era, the marsh hid several moonshine stills.

Mukwonago was never isolated from the political events of state and national importance. In 1919 a “women’s liberation” parade marched through the village square drawing women from many of the area’s prominent families. Mukwonago dairy farmers showed their clout when they broke with the Wisconsin Cooperative Milk producers in 1934 through their vote to keep the United Dairy plant open. The Mukwonago delegation was among those who met with the Governor of Wisconsin and later with the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture about the milk pricing controversy.

The Village of Mukwonago was incorporated from the Town of Mukwonago in 1905. The population of the Town remained at about 800 from 1890 to 1950 when the influx of suburbanites began. In 1954 a lot and single family home in the Town sold for \$9,000 to \$13,500, by 1960 the population increased in the Town to 1,579 residents.

The beauty of the Town did not go un-noticed by developer Francis Schroedel. In the 1960’s he bought 900 acres adjacent to a lake south of the Mukwonago River and planned a 756 room convention and resort center called Rainbow Springs. He considered this project to be the triumph of his career, but he never saw it to completion. Before the hotels furnishings were installed for a project completion target date of May of 1967, Schroedel ran into financial difficulties. The Marshall and Isley Bank foreclosed on Schroedel and bought the complex in 1973. Since then, there have been several efforts to open Rainbow Springs, the most recent one occurring in the summer of 1981. The 736-room hotel was partially destroyed by fire in the early 2000’s and subsequent to that, the Town of Mukwonago Board and the Waukesha County Park & Planning Commission terminated the Conditional Use permit for the hotel and convention center on said property and only allowed it to operate the golf course and clubhouse.

Through the 1960’s and 1970’s more homes sprang up in the Town. Construction of the Rock Freeway (I-43) from Milwaukee to Mukwonago in 1972 aided the influx of new residents. By 1980 the growing needs of the Town residents resulted in the construction of a new Town Hall next to the existing one on Beulah Road.

Over the years, many of the Town’s first families have moved or died out. Agricultural activities still exist operated by descendents of the settlers as well as by newcomers. The Town is now a mix of agricultural and residential areas but old and new residents appreciate the Town’s natural beauty and unique character. It was with preservation of this community flavor and preservation of the natural beauty in mind that the citizens of the Town of Mukwonago embarked upon the original long range land use plan to encourage preservation of its quality of life to their heirs.

Smart Growth Requirements

In October of 1999 the Wisconsin Legislature adopted new legislation for comprehensive planning. The intent was to require local municipalities to complete a comprehensive plan taking into consideration the effects of such a plan on the surrounding communities and required the adoption of the resulting plan by ordinance. These regulations will effect the implementation of the Town’s Plan and require that all elements in the existing Plan will have to be expanded

and upgraded in accordance with the nine elements and their requirements in the new Smart Growth Law. All elements of the Plan are now required to be consistent.

The nine elements outlined in the 1999 legislation for consideration and inclusion in any future comprehensive plan prior to 2010 are the basis of the 1999 Smart Growth description of a comprehensive plan.

1. Issues And Opportunities Element: Background information on the local government, a statement of overall objectives, policies, goals, and programs to guide future development and re-development over the next 20 years. This element shall include information on population, household characteristics, employment, demographic trends, age, education and income.
2. Housing Element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the local government to provide an adequate housing supply that meets the existing and forecasted housing demand in the Town.
3. Transportation Element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development of transportation modes, including highways, mass transit, bicycle, walkways, railroad systems, systems for the disabled, air, trucking and water transportation. The plan should also show the local goals of the county, regional, and state transportation plans.
4. Utilities & Community Facilities Element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide future development of utilities system and community facilities, such as sanitary sewer, water supply, storm water management, solid waste disposal, recycling, telecommunication, cemeteries, health care, childcare facilities, police, fire, library, schools and other public facilities. This section should also include a forecast of expansion or rehabilitation projects for various systems and utilities.
5. Agricultural, Natural & Cultural Resource Element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for conservation and the effective management of natural resources, historic and cultural resources, community design and recreational resources.
6. Economical Development Element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs of the stabilization, retention, expansion, and focus of the economic base and quality employment opportunities in the local market area. Assess the categories or types of business and industries desired by the communities, its strength and weaknesses, and evaluate any contaminated sites for future development.
7. Intergovernmental Cooperation Element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs for joint planning, decision making with other jurisdictions, including school districts and adjacent communities. The location of any public building facilities and sharing public services.
8. Land Use Element: A compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps and programs to guide the future development and re-development of public and private property. This

section contains projections for future residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial lands including the assumption of net densities. This section should contain a series of maps that shows current and future land uses, agricultural lands, soil types, floodplains, wet lands, public utilities service districts and community facility areas.

9. Implementation Element: A compilation of programs of specific actions to be completed in a stated sequence including any changes to the local codes and ordinances. This section describes how each of the other elements will be integrated and made consistent with the other elements and shows a measurable scale for achieving these standards. A process for review and updating of the Plan or any amendment must be noted with complete review no later than every 10 years.

A Public Participation Plan was endorsed by the Town Board in January of 2006, which encouraged the interaction and involvement from the citizens of the community through open discussions, communication, dissemination of information between the citizens and the focus group, continuous updates on the Town's website and conduct of a kickoff meeting. Public participation in the comprehensive plan meetings were at the discretion of the focus group chairman. Special meetings, when needed, were scheduled throughout the planning process as determined by the Town, which included an open house when the plan was completed. Public informational meetings were necessary, along with the final public hearing. The Public Participation Plan required the plan to be available for its review; in its entirety at least 30 days prior to the open house/public informational meeting and public hearing.

The Town of Mukwonago held a kickoff meeting to update their plan to be Smart Growth compliant on May 31, 2007 at the Town Hall. The content of the kickoff meeting included discussion of the comprehensive planning law, the nine elements and other factors of the law that are required it to be completed no later than January 1, 2010. Also discussed, was the existing Town Plan and the fact that if the Town did not update their plan in compliance with the Smart Growth Law, it could not make land use decisions such as zoning, land divisions or have an official map.

Pursuant to the comprehensive planning law, the comprehensive plan must be adopted prior to January 1, 2010. The comprehensive planning law requires that all nine elements must be consistent, requires public participation in the development of the plan, requires that the plan must be adopted by ordinance and must be adopted in its entirety. Not only does the law require the adoption of the comprehensive plan by January 1, 2010, it also requires that any official map, land division, and zoning actions carried out by the Town beginning on that date must be consistent with the comprehensive plan. The Town's official map is incorporated herein by reference and any change in the official map shall also be made part of this comprehensive plan.

The Focus Group which was appointed by the Town Board to work with the Planning Consultant, was made up of a cross-section of citizens from the Town of Mukwonago including a longtime farmer, a local business man, a number of residents who lived on a variety of parcel sizes in the Town, an environmentalist, a lake resident, a Plan Commission and Town Board member.

The Focus Group was updated on the fact that the Town is participating in cooperation with Waukesha County in the updating of the Waukesha County Development Plan with 28 of the 37 communities in Waukesha County and the new components of the Southeastern Wisconsin

Regional Planning Commissions (SEWRPC) 2035 Plan. Also discussed, were some of the goals and objectives of the existing Master Plan for the Town of Mukwonago, which were most recently amended in 1998, the anticipated process in how the public could participate in the plan, and the results of the Town and County questionnaires which were conducted in 2002 and 2006 respectively.

After concurrence of the specific chapters by the Focus Group, and review of the chapters by the Planner Committee which consists of all members of the Town Plan Commission and Town Board, they were then placed on the Town's Internet website for review and comments by the residents of the Town. At the completion of the project, an open house was held to discuss the plan and a public hearing was held prior to adoption by the Plan Commission and Town Board.