January 21, 2021

Hello fellow Springfield Residents,

I was waiting to send out my January Chairman’s letter. First the Town of Springfield just completed the purchase of 7+ acres of the former Springfield Inn ball diamond and property. The town has been talking to the Duhr family on and off for the past 20 years. It became available late last fall and the board decided to purchase the land adjacent to the existing town hall as we were land locked and didn't have enough land to replace our failing septic system. We will be asking for volunteers to come up with ideas for converting some of the land for a new town park. Welcome to our new neighbors Bill and Pam Gray who purchased the current Springfield Inn property. Looking forward to working with and wishing good luck to the new owners.

Now on a more serious topic. Many of our townspeople just received a card from Jake Niesen. I spoke with Jake last Tuesday, January 12th. I heard Mr. Niesen was planning to send out a flyer using the $150,000 estimate for the project; the $150,000 number mentioned at a meeting was a verbal guess from our town engineer on a total project price including the purchase of the land. Mr. Niesen’s card also incorrectly indicated there is only one residence that will benefit from a turnaround at that dead end; there are seven property owners, with five different residences in that area. The Meinholzes have offered to donate the land needed to make a cul-de-sac turn around. The town board has also discussed adding a deferred assessment to the property; if anyone attaches to the town road they would be responsible for some of the costs to improve the road. We are still in the discussion and planning stage.

Now a brief history. Both the Meinholz and Niesen families competed to purchase the former Andy Buechner farm. The Meinholz family ended up the owners much to Niesen’s duress. There have been bad feelings ever since. The town and myself have been trying to come up with a peaceful solution to no avail. Whippoorwill Road is split down the middle with the Meinholz family on the Springfield side and the Niesen family on the Town of Berry’s side, further complicating the issue. Springfield and Berry had a meeting onsite with the landowners to look at all options to resolve a turn around. As you can imagine this didn’t go particularly well. Jake was not willing to work with the towns and Berry stated they were not willing to force a resident to give up land, so Springfield started discussing other options that would keep all of the improvements on Springfield’s side. So approximately 3 weeks ago Mr. Niesen called me and asked if I could stop by after work and discuss the original proposal of the cul-de-sac at the end of the existing pavement. I discussed the issue with Mr. Niesen and his daughter and they were still against any improvements but would rather keep the turnaround at the existing pavement; they wanted to think about it. Mr. Niesen attended the next town board meeting and wanted to know if the town built the upper turnaround could the town prevent the Meinholz family from using their two development rights at that location. The board said no, which brings us to our current discussion.

So why build a cul-de-sac. If you travel down Hwy 12 in our township you can plainly see the access roads the Wi DOT created all have cul-de-sacs. This is done for safety reasons. It provides access for Fire and EMS vehicles as well as school busses, delivery trucks and garbage trucks. The end of Whippoorwill Road is shown on Google Maps as a thru street even though Springfield has asked them to correct it. For those of you who came to a quick decision, put yourselves in the Meinholz family’s shoes. Would you want unwanted trucks and traffic turning around in your driveway at all hours of the
day and night? If Fire and EMS can't function properly what is the cost to the owners? What is the cost of a life? These are the things we as elected officials are sworn to protect. I'm sure if a town of Berry resident had any issues they would be right down to our town hall to ask why we didn't do the right thing. A special meeting on this topic has been scheduled for February 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. which gives residents a couple of weeks to research and provide additional input. Please contact the town hall or town supervisors to express your thoughts and contact Mr. Niesen and ask him to put away all those bad feelings and work with his neighbors and the towns to come up with a safe solution. In compliance with public health orders, the February 9th meeting will be held virtually, using the connection information in the letterhead.

Sincerely,

Jim Pulvermacher, Chairman
(Sent with the knowledge and consent of the Town Board)

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