

Date: November 1, 2022
From: **Mike Gainor**
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Pine City, MN 55063



Hi Todd,

I'm delighted to share an update on the Pine City Community Action Plan process.

Through the original phase of the Pine City CAP Plan process, which ran from March into July 2022, volunteers identified a number of projects to improve Pine City. Please see this project breakdown memo for the full list. That first phase ended with volunteer presentations to the community on July 21.

Since that time, numerous volunteers remain actively involved, whether on the CAP Leadership Committee or pursuing projects identified in the CAP process. Staff have been supporting the volunteers in some projects, and taking a more active role in others.

- Since the conclusion of Phase 1, a number of volunteers have been actively pursuing various projects on that list, with City staff support:
 - CAP volunteers wrote a grant to fund flower baskets in Pine City. While that grant was not awarded, the volunteers were undaunted and are going forward with plans to make a limited number of baskets happen in downtown Pine City as a proof of concept, and fund this with private donations.
 - Six plastic benches, obtained with donated plastic bags and made from recycled materials, have been distributed to Pine City businesses and nonprofits.
 - Volunteers are going forward with plans to make local history posters to frame and place in local businesses. This effort will be privately funded.
 - Members of the Community Connectivity committee are actively working to dramatically increase our walking/biking trail system. The City Council approved a 10-phase concept plan. Contact have been made with organizations and property owners and government officials who would be involved in Phase 1. Volunteers and staff are working to obtain necessary right-of-way easements, after which they will apply for grants to fund the project.
 - Members of the Community Pride committee have put many hours into planning for the Pine City Entertainment and Recreation Center (PERC), meeting with stakeholders and property owners to help build a concept plan for the project that will earn wide community support for this multi-million dollar project.

- CAP volunteers are working closely with the Parks & Recreation committee to make several improvements happen quickly, and make progress on long-term plans.
 - A location for Pine City's first dog park has been identified, City Council has voiced support, and we hope to make this happen in 2023. Volunteers will be helping to make plans and bring in private donations for the project.
 - Plans are in the works for a donated riverside property (Thomas Park) to made into a primitive, educational park. A survey will be carried out in the next few months.
 - Volunteers are building community support for Fawn Park, a long-term project.

- Staff have been making progress on several CAP goals.
 - Due to CAP identifying this as a goal, staff has been in discussions with MnDOT about relocating their current facility (in a prime Hillside Avenue location) to another location. MnDOT is actively pursuing that option at this time, is in negotiations with another property owner, and hopes to be out of the Hillside Avenue location in 2024.
 - Staff are researching what would be needed to open a dead-end street onto Cross Lake and make it a 3rd Avenue Landing, with dock in summer and ice access in winter.

- In October, we received news that Pine City has been awarded a \$50,000 Blandin Boost Grant specifically to develop plans and build local consensus around four areas from the CAP Plan. This work will be carried out between now and September 2023:
 1. Improving transportation, health and wellness with an accessible local walking/biking trail.
 2. Increasing housing through the tiny home/small home options.
 3. Improve healthy eating options in Pine City.
 4. Develop plans and create local consensus for the Pine City Entertainment and Recreation Center (PERC).

The full CAP Leadership Committee met in October to refine goals, and will meet again in November.

The CAP process outlined major areas for our Comprehensive Plan process, and progress is underway on the writing of our Comp Plan update for 2023.

We had high expectations for the CAP Plan process, and the results exceeded those expectations. It showed community members – many of whom were relative newcomers to our community – that they are welcome, that their ideas are valued, and that their many hours of volunteer work would be rewarded with positive outcomes. It triggered an outburst of community pride and volunteer enthusiasm that is still going strong. While our updated Comprehensive Plan will be a wonderful and valuable tool to help guide Pine City’s future, the “action” in the Community Action Plan is the ongoing efforts of our volunteers, and I firmly believe that the results of those efforts will make a difference in Pine City for generations to come.

Best,

Mike

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