

“Priorities for the City of Manitowoc”

Happy New Year everybody! We hope your holidays were as successful as they could possibly be and we hope that the coming and going of Christmas and the start of the New Year has helped you to develop even stronger relationships with those who you love and respect.

As we enter the year 2007, there are some priorities for us all to think about in local government.

At the top of the list, a concerted effort needs be made in regard to the redevelopment or demolition of the old Mirro building at 1512 Washington Street. The building, currently owned by Eric Spirtas, is blight and an eyesore that puts our community in a bad light to visitors and locals alike.

The building’s basic functions are currently being supported by Mr. Spirtas, but we need to work collectively to figure out a positive final disposition for this abandoned monster. We will make every effort to accomplish this “extreme make-over” this year.

The next big effort of 2007 is to work with the developers of Harbor Town to finally find that major soft goods retailer (department store) that has been so elusive. Kohl’s, Target and others just don’t seem to feel comfortable in a marketplace our size, but we know that if we focus our shopping dollar leakage on our own area, we’ll ultimately be able to attract another store where families can shop for clothes without driving out of town.

Energy and continued optimism is what has made Harbor Town the success it is and there is more of that where it came from in the first place.

Along with the “big box” clothing store we’re looking for, we also need to find a suitable replacement to takeover the key role that Cooks Corner has played in our downtown for the past many years. Our downtown has made huge strides over the years in staying vibrant and rebuilding itself after difficult times. The demise of Cooks Corner presents us once again with the opportunity to find a solid anchor that will bolster all downtown businesses.

The Christmas morning fire at local nightspot Digger Dave’s was another eye opener in regard to what can happen when one least expects it.

First of all, thanks to the firefighters on duty and those off duty firefighters who came in to fight the blaze. In the blink of an eye, the lives of the families of firefighters can change, but thank God in this instance there weren’t even any fire ground injuries.

And while there were no deaths or injuries to anyone who called an apartment in that building “home”, several pets lost their lives. The death of a pet can be dramatically disabling for its owner or master and so our sympathy goes out to those affected in this manner.

The lesson here once again is to please be very careful with open flames, candles and smoking materials. And please make sure that you have a working smoke detector.

A position is currently open on the City of Manitowoc Harbor Commission. The Commission is responsible for making policy and operations decisions regarding the harbor, lakefront and riverfront areas of our community. The committee meets on a regular basis, as well as for immediate needs issues, usually in the early evening hours.

A background and interest in economic development, the environment, shipping, recreation or boating would assist a candidate in receiving the appointment, but common sense and an interest in serving our community may suffice.

Dropping a letter or sending an e-mail to the Mayor's Office that indicates why you might want to serve our city in this capacity as well as some background information about yourself will demonstrate your interest in this position.

The Harbor Commission is an unpaid committee of the City of Manitowoc.

Letters of interest can be addressed to the Mayor's Office, 900 Quay Street or e-mailed to kcrawford@manitowoc.org.

Manitowoc Mayor Kevin Crawford may be reached at 920-686-6980.