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WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 2022

TWO SECTIONS

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Menominee's 80-acre purchase

One official calls wetlands a 'pet project'

By ANN MEYER

EagleHerald Staff Writer
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MENOMINEE—While the City of Menominee awaits a wetlands study on the 80 acres it purchased, people are beginning to kick around ideas for what one

ward representative described as a pet project.

First Ward Representative Michael DeDamos said Monday he could have voted either way in May when the city council considered the \$239,000 purchase, but decided to cast his vote for it. He occasionally feels buyer's remorse when he considers half of the acreage might be in a wetland area and not suitable for real estate development, he said.

But DeDamos said he's been

reading about possible wetland uses, including building a hiking or biking trail. It's become a pet project, he said.

"I'd like to see it get used," DeDamos said, noting the land has sat idle for decades. Another parcel adjacent to the acreage the city purchased also contains a large amount of wetlands.

The city council voted 6-3 May 9 in favor of the purchase at

See PROPERTY, A3



EagleHerald/Ann Meyer

Menominee City Council member Michael DeDamos said Monday the wetlands area the city bought as part of an 80-acre parcel could be used for a hiking or biking trail. He attended the city's Fourth of July event with his two children.

Choosing summer school

Peshtigo students excited about course offerings

Special to the EagleHerald

PESHTIGO—When we think of summer school, we often think of remedial classes. However, the students at Peshtigo School often choose to take summer classes. The classes offer everything from science and technology concepts to camping skills to art mural painting.

"Teachers have been providing awesome experiences for our kids," said Peshtigo Elementary Learning Center (PELC) summer school coordinator Becky Gensler. PELC June offerings included many creative

enrichment classes like Dinosaur Discovery, The Crafty Gardener, Backyard and Recreation Games, Awesome Science Experiments, Viva Mexico, Coding Chaos, Let's Go Camping, according to Gensler. At the high school level, students were also able to take enrichment classes in areas like art and weight training.

One of the PELC enrichment classes involved hiking and lots of activities related to camping.

"I just wanted them to have fun and learn about camping activities," said teacher Kelly Nemece. She taught kids songs, arts and crafts, and games that they might engage in while camping. "I had fun teaching this class and it seems like the kids did, too."

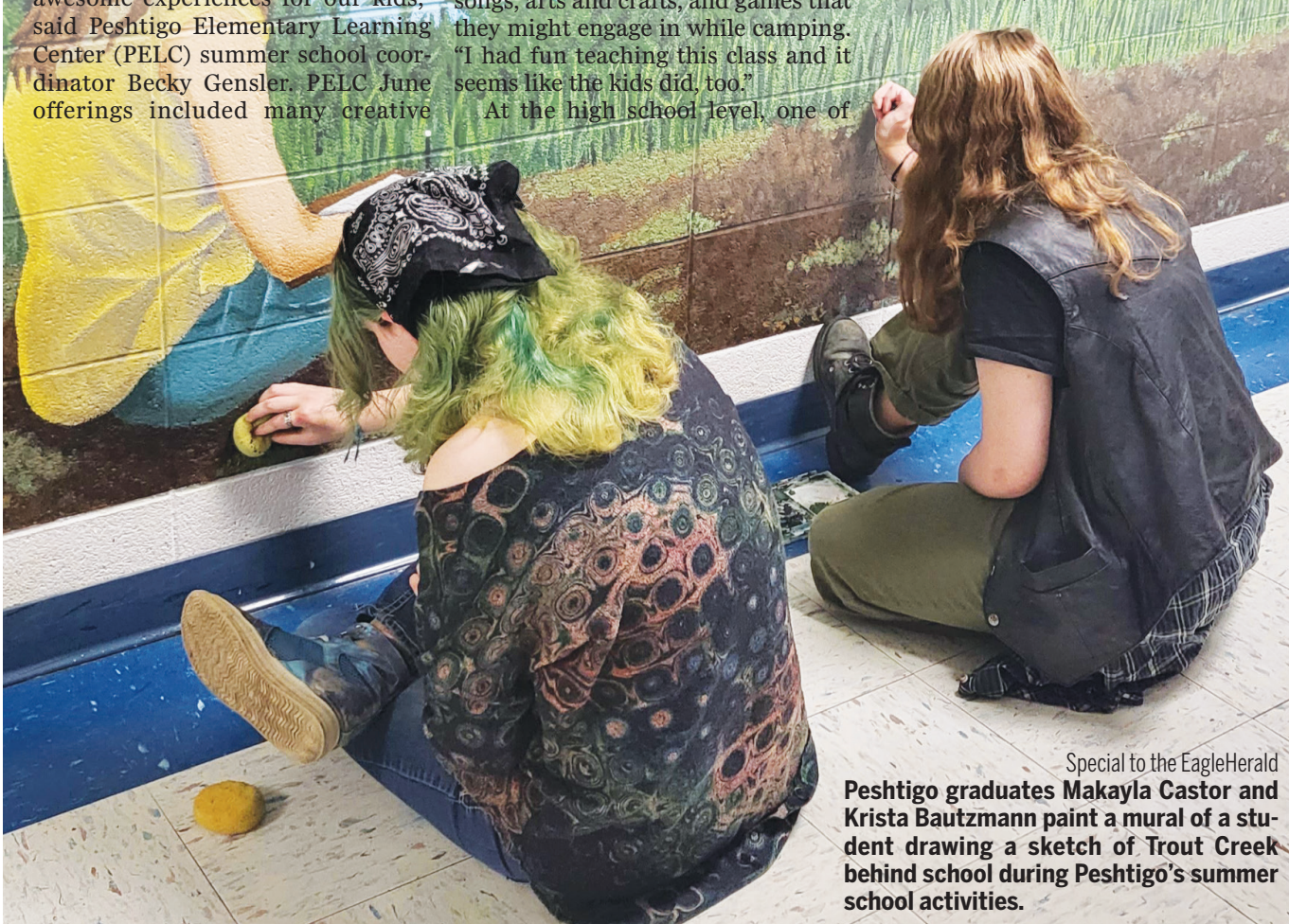
At the high school level, one of

the enrichment classes was taught by Andrea Cornette. Her students painted murals throughout the middle/high school. The highlight was a large mural of a student painting Trout Creek.

"This mural was a way to connect to the community and nature surrounding our school," Cornette said.

Makayla Castor and Krista Bautzmann just graduated, but wanted to paint the mural to "leave their mark upon the school." They said they wanted to create a work of art that

See SUMMER, A3



Special to the EagleHerald

Peshtigo graduates Makayla Castor and Krista Bautzmann paint a mural of a student drawing a sketch of Trout Creek behind school during Peshtigo's summer school activities.

Fighting the housing shortage

Menominee agency offers assistance to low-income residents

By ANN MEYER

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MENOMINEE—With a steady waitlist, the Menominee Housing Commission can keep its advertising budget trim. But it could use more funds to assist low-income residents.

"There's definitely a housing shortage," said Executive Director Jenny Staidl.

It employs just five full-time employees to run its affordable housing program and maintain its 127 apartments. Besides Staidl, it's staffed by a program director, two full-time maintenance staff and a maintenance janitor.

Rent is designed to be no more than 30% of its low-income residents' income, based on the formula it uses, she said.

But with demand outpacing supply and a limited amount of funds to provide, the commission's budget is stretched to the maximum, she said.

The housing commission's Section 8, or Housing Choice voucher program, allows low-income people to find their own apartments in the community. "We pay a portion of their rent based on income," Staidl said. The program receives federal funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

See HOUSING, A3

Good morning,
Richard Dombrowski!
Thank you for subscribing to the EagleHerald



6 67288 18092 5

DEATHS

Butler, Ruth A.
Dory, Thomas F.
Duame, John Jr.
Kroll, Casimer P.
Pell, Dan
Staquet, Margaret J.

INSIDE

Local: Holiday fun in Menominee County. **A2**

Sports: Legion baseball brings the fireworks. **B1**



TODAY: Partly cloudy.
HIGH: 72 **LOW:** 63

TODAY'S INDEX

Advice	B7	Opinion	A4
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Classifieds	A8	Sudoku	B7
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FROM A1

SUMMER:

acted as a mirror to the nature around them and connected students to the art program.

Summer school planning starts in February, and thus far the work teachers and administrators put into programming has paid off. Besides the awesome courses offered, Peshtigo improved the sign-up process by having online registration this year. Also, the district purchased all PELC students books corresponding with the content of their classes.

Gensler stated, "Both teachers and students were excited to share these books with their parents."

Summer school starts up again in August for students who could use a boost in reading and math before the school year starts. PELC students can get a jumpstart to the year by attending the next session from Aug. 1-12. Gensler adds, "I really have a dedicated staff who are passionate about kids and making summer school a success."

Editor's note: This article was submitted by the Peshtigo School District.



Peshtigo students Kenzie Nault and Ava Buzard learn about native plants and pollinators from Anne Bartels with the assistance of Melissa Polzin in Jess Herbst's Crafty Gardener class during summer school.

Special to the EagleHerald

HOUSING:

Development.

The program sets "payment standards" at a maximum of \$850, including utilities, for a two-bedroom apartment. "Then that unit meets our criteria and they can take it," she said. The cap is reconsidered every October.

With rents higher than the housing commission's criteria in many instances, Staidl tries to work with landlords. It doesn't have the funds to provide larger vouchers. "If we start paying that much, we wouldn't be able to keep all the people we have on it. We only have so much money," she said.

The housing commission currently offers just 53 of 61 available vouchers because it doesn't have the funds for all 61. "We aren't giving out any (new) vouchers either because we're at our funding limit," Staidl said. One person may be getting \$500 a month and another \$200. "We have 40 people on that (wait) list in Section 8," she said.

Rent is easier to control at the 83-unit air conditioned building it operates on the Menominee River, which offers amenities like an outdoor garden, an indoor community room and a computer room, the maximum rent for a two-bedroom is \$584, while the maximum rent for a one-bedroom is \$493 and includes cable, internet, heat, water and electric, Staidl said. "These apartments are small. You have a bedroom and bathroom, living room and small kitchen," she said.

Singles live in most of the units in the 100-tenant building. Marijuana isn't allowed, but some pets are OK. About eight dogs live in the building, Staidl said. "I don't know how many cats," she said.

About 71 of the 83 apartment are one-bedroom units, while 12 are two-bedroom apartments. The units are nicely maintained with attractive kitchens and baths.

It also has 44 fully occupied townhouse apartments—in two-three- and four-bedroom configurations—on 46th Avenue,

designed for families, but they're in high demand.

"We had three families move out that bought homes" in the past year, she said. "That's the goal—to try to get them self-sufficient. They were able to do that by saving some of their stimulus money." Most work full-time but don't earn a lot of money, she said.

Retired seniors and people with disabilities fill most of the housing commission's apartments on 8th Avenue and the river.

Large windows bring in the sunlight in resident Marge LeMay's room at the housing commission's apartments on 8th Avenue. LeMay, of Menominee, moved to the public housing building after her husband died. She likes living there, she said.

Most of its residents do, Staidl said. They typically stay for five to seven years. "We don't get a whole lot of movement here," she said. "We don't advertise a lot. Typically we have a waiting list and we pull from that list when we have an opening."

LeMay is typical in arriving as a single, empty nester.

"Couples in their own home, they can manage," Staidl said. "When one passes away, they'll sell the house and move into an apartment like this."

The housing commission doesn't offer care, so over time people often transition to an assisted-living or skilled-care facility. "It's independent living. You could have home health care come if someone needed that, but they're pretty independent," Staidl said.

Its convenient location, walking distance from Jack's Fresh Market, appeals to many people, Staidl said. "They do walk from here to Jack's. There's a path. It goes under the bridge," she said.

During COVID, the housing authority opened a computer room so residents could do a Zoom meeting with their family, she said.

Few issues arise in the apartment building, which went smoke-free eight years ago, Staidl said. "We had some issues with smoking, but that's under control," she said.

PROPERTY:

W5592 56th 2.5 Road, with council members Josh Jones, Wendy Baron, DeDamos, Dennis Klitzke, Jacqueline Nutter and Bill Plemel supporting it and Mayor Jean Stegeman and council members Frank Pohlmann and Donna Marineau opposing it. In the two months since then, the council has commissioned a wetlands study but hasn't decided how the property will be used.

The council didn't have a specific plan in mind when it approved the purchase. Based on the discussion, some thought it should be developed into houses, while Nancy Douglas, director at the Menominee Business Development Corp., spoke at the May council meeting about the need for the city to provide more sites for potential businesses.

On Tuesday, Douglas said, "I obviously think where we have so little available property in the city, we were smart to take this opportunity." Until the wetland study is complete, the city won't know how much property is considered wetlands and not suitable for building. "It could be as much as half," she said.

How the parcel should be used ultimately is up to the council, she said. "This city council will have to let us know what their preferences are," she said. Then grant opportunities can be pursued.

Jenny Staidl, executive director of the Menominee Housing Authority, which isn't part of the city, said demand exceeds supply for affordable housing in Menominee. The authority owns an 83-unit apartment building on the Menominee River and several two-, three- and four-bedroom rental townhouses geared toward families on 46th Avenue in an area not far from the 80-acre parcel the city purchased.

"We are full," Staidl said. Most residents in the apartment building are seniors who stay until they move into an assisted living or skilled-care facility, but occasionally a spot opens for a younger individual. "It's harder for families to find housing," she said.

The wetlands study will help determine how much of 80-acres can be developed. If the land isn't suitable to build on, it's possible the city could sell wetland credits through a wetlands bank to organizations that need them for environmental reasons, DeDamos said Monday. Essentially, the city would be paid for the land it's not using.

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources administers a wetlands mitigation bank, where credits can be sold to applicants who need them to obtain permits. The state has restricted the use of wetlands to preserve the natural resources. To fill in a wetland, the developer must obtain a permit. The state wants to ensure sufficient wetlands continue to exist, so in some cases, it allows a developer to purchase a credit from an existing wetlands preserve.

WHAT IS A WETLAND?

The Michigan Municipal Wetland Alliance describe four common wetlands:

Marshes can be a few inches or a few feet deep and are located near bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, ponds and streams.

Swamps have standing water or saturated soil and typically include trees and shrubs.

Bogs have a mossy floor, peat depots and acidic waters and often are home to "numerous specially adapted organisms."

Fens are less acidic than bogs and have higher nutrient levels.

Joe Dulak, the real estate agent representing the seller, said he wasn't an expert on wetlands but is aware regulations exist concerning their use.

"You've got the state of Wisconsin and the state of Michigan. Each has their own pre-existing rules and regulations pertaining to that," he said. Typically and environmental engineering firm is hired to assess how the area can be used.

The EagleHerald's calls to the Michigan Municipal Wetland Alliance and the Michigan Department of the Environment, Great Lakes and Engineering, weren't immediately returned Tuesday.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- **The Coalition To SAVE The Menominee River:** Thursday, 2 p.m., Northeast Wisconsin Technical College in Marinette. The public is invited. A Zoom link to the meeting can be found on the coalition website, jointherivercoalition.org.
- **Peshtigo Class of 1965:** Monday, 11:30 a.m., Cramer's Vernon Hills Golf Course, Kamm Road, Peshtigo. Lunch open to all classmates, spouses and guests.

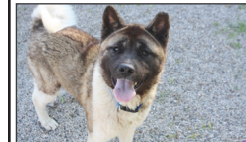
Now covering more local news and sports stories



PETS OF THE WEEK

ALL ANIMALS ARE MICRO-CHIPPED

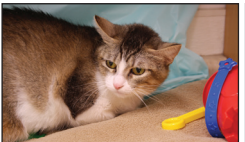
Remember, there is no fee to drop off or surrender animals, but donations are welcome!



Hey! My name is **Bentley**! I enjoy attention and seem to like to play. One of my favorite games is "catch me if you can" so a fenced in yard may be ideal for me. I do seem to be house-trained but I can be a bit of a nervous/anxious piddler. I seem to be fine with other dogs. I am currently being treated for Lyme and Anaplasmosis, my meds will go with me, but any follow up will need to be done at your own vet.



Hello, my name is **Cali**! I'm a friendly girl who enjoys attention. Like most cats I also value my independence and enjoy my alone time. When I am feeling more affectionate, I do enjoy lying next to my humans. I have lived with other cats, but I was low man on the totem pole and tended to be picked on, I may do fine with a chill, submissive, kitty friend, or better as an only child. I have lived with older kids and done well with them.



Hello, my name is **Lyala**! I'm a sweet but independent gal, I came from a home that was a bit too full of felines so I wasn't interacted with a ton when I was younger. I think time and a quieter home environment may be just what I need!



WE'RE OPEN!

The Shelter is resuming our regular hours
Tuesday - Friday 12 pm - 6 pm
Saturday 12 pm - 5 pm
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These Pets of the Week are sponsored by: If you would like to adopt ANY OF THESE ANIMALS or any other animal, stop by or call the Menominee Animal Shelter, Inc. at N184 Haggerson Court, Menominee, MI (906) 864-PAWS (7297). Or visit us on the Web: mashelter.org or www.petango.com for a complete listing with photos. E-mail: animals@mashelter.com. Hours: Tuesday-Friday--Noon-6pm, Saturday--Noon-5pm

Chopper Dropper



August 1, 2022 | Riverside Golf Club
Menominee, MI | *Approximately 5 pm*

700 numbered golf balls, dropped from a helicopter.
Closest to/or first in the cup wins \$10,000!
700 tickets will be sold, \$50 each or 3 for \$100.
1st Place \$10,000 · 2nd Place \$2,500 · 3rd Place \$1,000

Stephenson Lions Club Golf Outing

Best Ball Scramble Format with a shotgun start at 12 noon. A dinner and auctions will follow. Sponsorship of holes are available for \$125.
Entry Fee: \$80 per golfer (includes green fees and dinner)
Carts are \$35 each or bring your own.

To register a foursome, or buy Chopper Dropper Tickets contact:
Jim Svinicki - 906-250-2325 or Email: jsvinicki48@gmail.com
or contact any Lions Member.