

Town of Greenville

Martenson & Eisele's Planning Department assisted the Town of Greenville in Outagamie County with the development of a new Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. We applied the regulations of their current Conservation Subdivision Ordinance and their proposed ordinance to two undeveloped sites chosen by the Town. The work of Martenson & Eisele clearly demonstrated that the proposed ordinance encourages innovative rural development that minimizes environmental impact while allowing the developer to realize a profit by providing home buyers with an affordable way to enjoy a lifestyle with a country feel. M&E's findings were presented to a well-attended meeting of Town officials and interested residents.

The Town of Greenville requires that all platting for proposed residential development outside of the sanitary sewer district meet the requirements of their Conservation Subdivision Ordinance. The current ordinance requires 40% of the development be open space if more than 50% of the undeveloped parcel site is comprised of any of several natural features. Only 35% of the development need be open space if less than 50% of the site contains the natural features. The open space cannot include detention ponds required to meet stormwater management regulations. The minimum lot size is 24,000 square feet.

The proposed ordinance includes a formula to determine the amount of buildable area on the site and the open space required. Areas on the site deemed unbuildable based on environmental characteristics are determined. The amount of unbuildable land is subtracted from the parcel's total acreage, and the result is multiplied by 40%. The amount of land determined by this calculation must be open space in addition to the lands deemed unbuildable.

While this calculation of open space is different than the current ordinance, the significant difference between the two ordinances lies in how they determine how many lots the development can have, and what their minimum size can be. The proposed ordinance divides the maximum buildable area by a density factor that reflects the level of common utility service proposed for the development. If no common water or sewer services are provided, i.e., each lot will have a traditional well and septic system, the maximum buildable area is divided by two (the density factor). If there will be shared wells serving at least four homes, the density factor used for dividing into the buildable area is 1.6. If there will be a development-wide water system the density factor is 1.3, and if a common water and sewer system is provided, a density factor of 0.9 is used.

To accommodate these lower density values, which allow more lots, the lots in developments with development-wide water systems can, instead of being 24,000 square foot lots with 100 foot frontages, be 16,000 square feet with 90' frontages. If common water **and** sewer systems are provided, lots can be only 13,500 square feet with 85' frontages.

One intent of the Town of Greenville's proposed Conservation Subdivision Ordinance is to encourage what might be called "mini-sanitary districts" in the more rural areas that are beyond the boundaries of the main sanitary district. Town officials believe this is a more environmentally-sensitive way to develop because it reduces the amount of disturbances to the earth and potential problems caused by the construction and operation of individual wells and septic systems. The work of Martenson & Eisele clearly demonstrated that the proposed ordinance encourages innovative rural development that minimizes environmental impact while allowing the developer to realize a profit by providing home buyers with an affordable way to enjoy a lifestyle with a country feel



