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Photo by Michael Cooney

## Waterfront housing plan moves forward

### Multifamily, commercial mix offered at Pioneer site

By Jack Tierney  
OSHKOSH HERALD

Middle-income housing with commercial space and other amenities will be the next big thing to drive economic development along the southside Sawdust District's riverfront.

With a 5-2 vote last week, Redevelopment Authority (RDA) members endorsed T. Wall Enterprises LLC out of Middleton to guide the Sawdust District into the future with the Mill on Main at 43 E. Seventh Ave. that would frame the Pioneer Island area.

Another proposal by a group of local developers led by Chet Wesenberg was the only other out of five submitted that the RDA considered but received only two votes for approval.

T. Wall Enterprises has completed multiple projects throughout Wisconsin including the City Deck in Green Bay. The \$38 million proposal is for three mixed-use developments with multifamily and commercial use constructed over three phases, totaling up to 296 market-rate apartments, 19,000 square feet of commercial space, up to 255 underground parking spots and another 194 on the surface level.

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## Lifest revival

Big Daddy Weave, a contemporary Christian band from Mobile, Ala., performs during Sunday morning services at the conclusion of Lifest, which returned to the Winnebago County Fairgrounds last weekend. Founder and chief executive Bob Lenz announced a second Lifest in Music City, Tenn., set for July 29-31, and said his year-round ministry is in the final stages of a \$1.8 million campaign.

# Cannabis use issues identified through conversation

## Experts promote health approach to behaviors

By Joseph Schulz  
HERALD CONTRIBUTOR

Adults and adolescents turn to substances to ease a feeling of pain, or to feel better, but can make the problem worse, which is why advocates want parents to have honest conversations with their children about substance abuse.

While some turn to marijuana or al-



cohol to cope with problems, self-medicating may be making things worse, according to Samantha Hilker, Winnebago County community health strategist and Drug-Free Communities coordinator for the Breakwater Drug and Alcohol Coalition.

"Adults maybe use substances to feel less

## Fifth in a series

Breakwater, a community coalition focused on youth and adult substance use in Winnebago County, is sponsoring this series on cannabis, a topic gaining attention as 'cannabis culture' evolves with legalization efforts and its future impact on society.

bad, or use some substances to feel good," she said. "A lot of times with kids, people think they're using it because they're curi-

ous – they want to party, they want to have fun, it feels good – but now we're seeing that maybe kids are using them to feel less bad too."

Without going to get help or find a resource to help build coping skills or to work through those personal issues, she says those problems will fester under the surface.

That's why Hilker believes parents must talk to their children about substance abuse, especially because Breakwater is

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## Substance use

FROM PAGE 1

seeing a large jump in drug use between middle school and high school.

“One of the most effective ways to prevent youth substance use is to just have those conversations with your kids starting at an early age,” she said. “It doesn’t have to be a big intimidating sit-down and stare at each other across the kitchen table conversation.

“It can be five minutes while you’re out on the walk, playing in the yard, or driving to the grocery store. Having those small conversations can open that line of communication, which helps prepare your kids to call you if they’re finding themselves in a situation that they’re uncomfortable with.”

Hilker added that having those conversations requires parents to be open and honest.

University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Police Capt. Chris Tarmann, who has children of his own, says having those conversations can be a difficult line to straddle.

“You don’t want to turn off your child; you don’t want to approach them and yell at them,” he said. “You want to open a conversation with them and see if you can help guide them.”

Culture can play a role, especially in a state like Wisconsin with a deep-seated drinking culture, Tarmann said. He has season tickets to the Wisconsin Herd and when going to a basketball game, it’s normal to have a beer, which may not set the right example.



Tarmann

“I was just thinking, ‘How do I help them understand that you shouldn’t always have a beer?’ In our culture, it’s always there, it’s available,” he said. “So, it’s making that decision, ‘I don’t have to have a beer today.’ It’s not going to change the game for me; it’s going to be the same experience.”

Children learn by watching their parents, which doesn’t always give the full picture,

so it’s important to partner an example with a good conversation to help them make the right decisions, Tarmann noted.

“In Wisconsin, we embrace the (drinking) culture, but we never step back and think, ‘What’s it doing for our culture?’ he said. “We need to pause and take a look at it and think, ‘How can I help prepare my children?’”

Likewise, Dr. Eric Smiltneek, an addiction medicine specialist at Aurora Medical Center, emphasizes the importance of being honest with children about substance use and abuse.

He says parents should be honest about the risks associated with youth substance abuse.

“If people get too ‘this is bad, don’t do this,’ it may shut down their kids and make them not want to talk about it, but if you’re too ‘well, I don’t worry about it,’ that’s probably not the correct method either,” Smiltneek said.

In terms of marijuana, Winnebago County Sheriff John Matz said parents should be honest with their teens about the potential

legal ramifications.

“At 17, you’re treated as an adult and if you have several contacts with law enforcement, and you’re charged with the possession of marijuana, that’s something that changes your ability to reach all the goals that you have in life,” he said.

Hilker encourages parents to have a conversation about healthy versus unhealthy relationships with substances.

“Having that conversation about a healthy relationship with substances or an unhealthy relationship with substances is important because substances, in general, are not a good coping mechanism,” she said. “We’re not a bunch of prohibitionists; we’re not out here trying to say nobody should have alcohol, or nobody should do this or that.”

“We do have a vested interest in keeping it out of the hands of youth and making sure that they understand consequences and can see good examples of healthy relationships to alcohol or whatever substances may be in the community.”

## Educators publish free climate science workbook

The Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy has published a free climate science workbook intended to provide tools high school and college teachers can use to help their students understand the evidence of global warming and climate change and the human activities that cause them.

The online workbook integrates existing curriculum subjects in science courses — such as heat, light, energy, and acids and bases — into a discussion of the properties and effects of greenhouse gases, especially

climate warming and ocean acidification.

“Global warming is the biggest challenge humanity has ever faced,” says Bassam Shakhshiri, UW professor of chemistry and director of the science literacy center. “Our hope is that all students learn to understand and appreciate the importance of taking responsibility and stewardship for their local communities and the whole planet we inhabit.” The workbook can be found at [scifun.org/ClimateWorkbook/home.html](http://scifun.org/ClimateWorkbook/home.html).



Oshkosh Public Library

## Lifelong learning

Local history and genealogy librarian Michael McArthur was honored with the Community Partner Award from the Learning in Retirement program at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh. McArthur has been doing presentations for LIR for several years, covering local history, technology and other topics for a group of lifelong learners.

## UW presidential search committee named

The University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents appointed a 19-member Search and Screen Committee to identify the next UW System president.

Current president Tommy Thompson has been serving in an interim role since July 1, 2020. He replaced Ray Cross, who retired after a 42-year career in higher education, including serving as president from February 2014 to June 2020.

Sabrina Mueller-Spitz, associate professor of biology, represents UW Oshkosh

on the committee.

The committee will schedule listening sessions at UW System’s 13 universities in September, when additional faculty, staff and students will be invited to participate. The sole finalist in a previous presidential search was “forced to withdraw” amid an onslaught of criticism that Board of Regents leaders viewed as “unfair” and “unprofessional” in 2019.

The committee is perceived as more representative in its membership.

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# THINK ABOUT IT

Cannabis culture has evolved. It's not all tie-dyed clothes and Bob Marley posters. From edibles and THC levels to storefronts and online shopping - a lot has changed!

# TALK ABOUT IT

Wisconsin is surrounded by states that have legalized cannabis in some way. Has that changed how you feel about cannabis in any way? Has that changed the thoughts or feelings of those around you?



For more information or for references to facts on marijuana visit [www.breakwaterwi.org/resources/](http://www.breakwaterwi.org/resources/)

