

## **Windmill may have new home on Island Park**

Little Chute Windmill, Inc. has decided to consider an alternate site for the Little Chute Windmill and Van Asten Visitor Center. Through a mutually beneficial partnership with the Village of Little Chute, the Windmill may have a new home on Island Park on the Fox River in Little Chute. Due to the planned renovation of the locks system along the Fox River, a new drawbridge will be needed to access the park and allow boats to move through the canal located along the river. Relocating the Windmill to Island Park provides ample reasons in the eyes of the Village to seek federal funding to build a new bridge to the park which can handle automobile traffic. Originally the Village was considering a plan to build a relatively expensive pedestrian draw bridge to Island Park which would have been funded 100% by local tax dollars. By utilizing federal funding, the Village will save a significant amount of money by building a vehicular draw bridge instead of a pedestrian draw bridge. At their board meeting on June 20, the Village of Little Chute Board of Trustees voted in favor of pursuing the possibility of this partnership including the consideration of investing the money they would be saving on the bridge to help fund the Windmill Project. This sum, combined with the sale of the land comprising the current Windmill site, could get us very close to reaching our fundraising goal. Additionally, the sale of the current Windmill site would create an opportunity for new development in the Village's downtown Tax Increment Finance District.

Beyond dollars, there are many benefits to locating the Windmill on Island Park. It perfectly compliments the development planned as part of the locks renovation along the Fox River. The plan for Little Chute's stretch of river includes boat slips and picnic areas adjacent to Doyle Park and a trail system on the dike between Heesakker Park and Island Park. The Windmill meshes with the Dutch heritage of the canal, locks and dike and would enhance the area as a heritage parkway. Residents and visitors would be able to access the Windmill and Island Park by land and by the river, as well as Doyle Park and Heesakker Park. It also creates a link between the Windmill and Little Chute with the rest of the Fox Cities communities that are choosing to recapture and redevelop their valuable riverfront. Island Park is about 5.5 acres, allowing for mixed recreational use including ample parking on site. All of these elements combined would create a significant draw to the area, perhaps more so than if the Windmill were located at the present site. Just envision the plentiful recreation opportunities for residents and visitors. The list of benefits goes on.

While excitement is growing about this opportunity, there are several hurdles to be overcome. As yet, no official agreement has been made between the Windmill and the Village. We remain hopeful the Windmill will have a new and much improved home, and look forward to working with the Village of Little Chute to make this visionary project come to fruition.