

“IF WE CANNOT RECONCILE ALL OPINIONS, LET US ENDEAVOR TO UNITE ALL HEARTS.”

NEW-HARMONY, (IND.) June 2024

**EARLY ALERT FROM  
COUNCILWOMAN LORA  
ARNEBERG - HARMONY  
SCHOOL.**

*By: Dan Barton*  
**June 2024**

OR - HAS THE CHICKEN COME HOME TO ROOSTE?

In May, I received a cell phone call from Councilwoman Lora Arneberg about two grants that the Town of New Harmony were to receive. One for improved WIFI service and the other for monies for purchasing back the old New Harmony School property.

It should be noted that at the April 24, 2024 meeting of the New Harmony Town Council, Councilwoman Arneberg remarked that the former school property would be ideal for future housing, as it is not in the Flood Plain.

The following is what we discussed.

To: Councilwoman Arneberg  
From: New Harmony Gazette  
Publisher, Dan Barton

May 14, 2024

Dear Councilwoman Arneberg:

“First of all, I’d like to thank you for contacting me yesterday, Monday, May 13, 2024, about the two Grants you spoke of that will undoubtedly be of great benefit to the Town

of New Harmony, once received and implemented by you and the Council. However, I must ask you to email me the details of those two Grants and what you and the Council propose to use them for.

“Unfortunately, Cell Phones and I do not get along. My hearing these days is next to nothing, one ear entirely deaf and the other functions at about 50%, that’s why you don’t see me at any meetings. My hearing is officially a disabling condition per the Veterans Administration. So, I must ask you to email me the details of the two Grants that you spoke of, how much and from whom, etc., etc.

“I recall that you said something about them being, one for \$50,000 and the other being \$200,000, but from whom, I did not get. Also, I recall that you said something about the \$50,000 going for town WIFI and I’d like the details on that program, since I have no idea how it would benefit New Harmony. The other monies, \$200,000 I believe you said could possibly go for repurchasing the old school property, of which I think you said something about using the property for affordable housing. I’d like the details on that since the costs will go way beyond \$200,000 to develop into housing. My last question is, when and where did you say the meeting on these matters would be held and if it is a closed Executive type meeting or if it’s open to the public. I won’t be there for reasons that I stated above,

but just in case someone asks me, I’ll have an answer. Sincerely, Dan Barton”

To: Dan Barton  
From: Councilwoman Arneberg

May 14, 2024

“Dan, the county council held a special meeting last week to allocate remaining federal ARPA funds within the county. Several projects from New Harmony were presented to the county council and they chose the two below for funding based on the spending restrictions and goals for ARPA funds. Both grants will be from the county to the town of New Harmony.

“\$25,000 - downtown data - the first grant will be for installing hardware for a Downtown data signal at Main and Church Street - It will basically be a wifi cloud for our downtown core. This is a project that has been researched over several years by various people for the benefit of Visitors and Local’s in our downtown core. Especially during festivals when we have many visitors with poor cell signal and / or vendors, who can’t process credit cards it will also be very beneficial. It will support all data features on mobile devices.

“\$200,000 - the second Grant is for the town purchasing the school property. This property will be sold in the next few years, and I strongly

believe the community should be able to decide what happens to this important piece of property. The school sits on about 30 acres of land, which is in the only large tract in the town boundary and not in the flood plain. Which makes it the only large tract of land we have to grow our community - in whatever way we decide to do so. The town also still has \$100,000 from the original sale of the property available as matching funds for this purchase.

“This could be housing, green space, a community center, or various options in the school. But if the town can secure the ownership of the land, at least we get to decide what will happen there in the future. If this land is sold into the private market, I think we have to consider the unfortunate possibility that the school building would just continue to degrade over the years.

“There will be a public meeting coming up specifically to discuss the re-purchase of the school property but I don’t have a date on that yet. I will definitely let you know when that is decided. It also works out very well for timing that the town is getting ready to redo their comprehensive plan because this will no doubt be an important piece of the future of the community if the purchase goes through.

“Aside from public input about purchasing the property, the final terms of the sale will have to be negotiated with the seller as well. So nothing will happen immediately. We just have an exciting opportunity to consider.

“Let me know if you have any follow-up questions. And thank

you for helping to spread the word. It’s important that the community have an opportunity to be informed and express their opinions on this opportunity. Love Arneberg”

The last statement by Lora Arneberg is very important my fellow citizens - “It’s important that the community have an opportunity to be informed and express their opinions on this opportunity.” Indeed, the future of New Harmony is in your hands, ladies and gentlemen. Be sure you don’t let it pass you by.

Though I was surprised at the announcement by Councilwoman Arneberg about the Town applying for and receiving the \$200,000. I was concerned that it was never discussed in a public meeting before it was applied for and what the Town planned to do with it. But, I’m still glad that she notified The Gazette when she did.

After all, it should not have been a surprise that the Town intends to use this money for a housing development on school property, Lora made this pronouncement when she ran for the Council seat last fall. She received received 210 votes in last November’s election, second only to Jeff Smotherman, which tells me that this is what the townspeople of New Harmony want, overwhelmingly.

Here are some of the public statements that Lora Arneberg made on the run-up to the November elections:

“I want to grow the town, ensure it’s future, and bring the voice of younger families to the council.”

“I would love to see us go after more grants, especially for quality of place projects that can bring amenities to the community to grow the great place we already have. My focus would be growth - more amenities, more housing...”

“We need more housing for current residents and potential new citizens.”

“We need more housing. For every house I have, we have at least 10 requests for housing that we can’t fill. If we want this community and our tax base to grow we have to support those who want to bring new development to town.”

“We need to encourage building and have ways to incentivize and assist those interested in creating new housing.”

Publisher’s Note: If you, the citizens, want to be a part of the Town Council process and have knowledge of what is going on, you must attend meetings, that’s the only way you can be part of what’s truly going on in New Harmony.

Hopefully, more on this development in the July issue of The New Harmony Gazette!

On March 15, 2019 the Town of New Harmony sold the New Harmony School (56,000 Sq. Ft.) and the 31 total acres of land to Erick Arneberg for \$125,000. Mr. Arneberg died on August 6, 2022 and the School and property are now in the name of Indian Mounds Farm, llc.

**JEFF’S, UH,  
MISUNDERSTANDING OF  
INDIANA CODE!**

*By: Dan Barton*  
**June 2024**

I’m always careful about Acknowledgment Statements from politicians. Sometimes they mean what they say and sometimes they don’t. In Jeff Smotherman’s case I’ll leave that up to you the reader until he finishes his future discussion with the town Treasurer and Council on their investment policy.

Here is what Jeff said in his email to The New Harmony Gazette on May 1st, 2024, after several weeks of my trying to explain to him how I thought Indiana’s Statute 36-5-5-6 works, and concerning how he and the New Harmony Town Council was “mis-understanding” that statute, “mis-understanding it” - “not understanding it”:

To: Dan Barton            From: Jeff Smotherman:

“Dan, I stand corrected on the understanding of the code, and in all my reading had not seen that particular code. It appears minimally we need to adopt a resolution yearly outlining our investment policy allowing our Clerk treasurer the ability to move within our guidelines. Thanks for your research and time put forth in clarifying what I was understanding in IC 36-5-6-6. Why would it not say per the policy of council in the code as well as regarding investments? Also, were you able to get an understanding of the Indiana Public Deposit Insurance Fund? I have a letter from the bank stating our funds being fully insured by

the PDIF. I don’t want to publish it because it was not sent to me, but shared with me. Glad to sit and show you it. Thanks, and I will be sharing this info with our Treasurer and Board.”

To: Jeff Smotherman:

“I don’t think you need a resolution or a policy of the council, or your own guidelines. It’s already a state law. (IC 36-5-6-6) As vague as state statutes are the state can always be called upon to clear them up.

“Your remarks about Indiana Public Deposit Insurance could very well prove to be true, but I would never bet the ranch on FDIC or FDIP - when Silicon (Bank) went down a hell of a lot of their depositors, (90%,) were not covered; why? I have no idea, but the easiest way to cover your investment bets is always to take responsibility yourself and make sure you diversify your investments, spread the risk. It doesn’t have to be five or six banks like Posey County (Treasurer), but at least two. Posey County Treasurer has a whole staff, Karla has at most, one person. Also Posey County has an Auditor, and the Clerk and Treasurer are separate, big difference.

“The City Ordinance you referred me to was just that, an ordinance. New Harmony is governed by a (State) Statute. That’s because of our size, 800 people. The city (ordinance) you sent me has something like 30,000 people, a whole different set of rules (in Indiana). I don’t really care what bankers or banks say Jeff. Just keep it in your file for further edification. The Town Council should have invited more than Jim Alsop, he is

now retired. And as I said, United Fidelity never had a branch in New Harmony either. Thanks for your response.”

Publisher’s note: As you may have surmised, I do find it odd that Jeff uses the term “...the understanding of the code...” more than once in his statement to me. I think he means his mis-understanding of the code, but that’s politician talk. Bluster! I didn’t have all that much trouble myself getting the gist of it, but I did discuss it with a couple of others who were understanding it as I did, and as I had previously explained to Jeff.

Why he thinks the Town Clerk Treasurer needs a Town resolution/outline - or guidelines from the Town Council within which to move, goes beyond my understanding when the law is clearly delineated in IC 36-5-6-6. This only makes me think that Jeff is still not clearly understanding the Council’s duties under the Code. He’s also still asking me for clarification of the code by saying to me; “...why would it not say per the policy of council in the code as well as regarding investments?” He is still not understanding that the Code is the law and doesn’t need Council approval to be followed or enforced. It’s pretty much self explanatory if it’s understood correctly, and not Mis-Understood!

At this point, I think if the Town Council or its President still don’t understand the language or ramifications of IC 36-5-6-6, then Smotherman should, himself, get in touch with the State Board of Accounts, Mitch Wilson, Government Technical Assistance & Compliance Director, and have a

sit down with him ( Not with me!) or one of his representatives and get all of the kinks officially knocked out. Or I will be forced to do just that.

The other things I find interesting about Jeff's email to me is his statement that, "... in all my reading I have not seen that particular code." Actually, it was Jeff who originally sent me the Code 36-5-6-6, via email on April 22, 2024, and I have just been responding to him about his mis - understanding of that code.

In fact, Smotherman then tried to confuse the issue even more by sending me an "Ordinance" not Indiana Code, from a town up north called Highland, Indiana, with around 30,000 people, that had nothing to do with Indiana Code, as he mis-stated it. It's the Code that rules not some town statute from up north. Phew! C'mon Man!

Also, Jeff Smotherman says to me in his email, " I have a letter from the bank stating our funds being fully insured by PDIF. I don't want to publish it because it was not sent to me, but shared with me. Glad to sit down and show you it." Now, I have a policy with all politicians;

whatever you have is not for my eyes only, whatever you have is for the citizens who you represent and who I write for. Not private, off the record meetings of any confidential documents - that's the slippery slope in my opinion. Thanks but no thanks. My email is draybarton@gmail.com.

Banks will say what they have to say or what they want to say - their main interest is in deposits. If they were always above board there would be no investigations by the feds. I would not like to see The Town of New Harmony be the first town in Indiana to test the strength of the FDIC or the FDIP - insurance arrangement. In California, 90% of the depositors of Silicon Valley Bank were not covered, it was reported. Who Knew? The best path is the path of Diversification - take the responsibility on yourselves Town Council and minimize your risk!

Karla Atkins is set to retire from her position as the town's Clerk/Treasurer as of September 1, 2024.

Jim Alsop retired from United Fidelity Bank this Spring of 2024.

Right now, I have other stories to do!

I would serve this meal with red skin garlic whipped potatoes, Roasted asparagus & Rosemary bread.

Bon Appetite!

### Ingredients

2 chickens quartered  
4 tbs butter  
2 tbs Cognac  
18 pearl onions  
1 lb fresh mushrooms quartered  
1 chicken bouillon cube  
2 tbs flour  
1 c chicken stock  
1 tsp tomato paste  
1 c good red wine  
Salt & pepper

### Directions

Brown chicken pieces on all sides in hot butter  
Pour cognac over chicken, skin side up and touch flame to it  
When flame is out, remove chicken set aside  
Brown mushroom & onions in butter, in same skillet  
Stir in flour & tomato paste, stock and wine  
Heat and stir constantly until to boiling point  
Add chicken and seasoning, simmer covered until tender apx 45 minutes or more depending on size of chicken  
Enjoy!




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THE  
**NEW-HARMONY GAZETTE.**

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**NEW HARMONY GAZETTE**  
**JUNE RECIPE**  
**By: Denise Rapp**

**COQ AU VIN**  
Serves 6

This is a delicious French classic, but don't let this recipe intimidate you, for it is easy.

