

## Schuetz property should be public, but under which local government?

I personally believe the Schuetz property on the outskirts of McFarland should become public property, but under which local government? Should McFarland own property in Dunn or should the property belong to some other

governmental entity?

Although I have not been following this issue very closely it is my understanding that the majority of the purchase funding will come from state or county funded grants with \$10,000 offered by Dunn and somewhere around \$167,000 from McFarland funds.

But who is really paying for this? We all are! If you are a taxpayer in Wisconsin, Dane County, McFarland or Dunn you are paying for this purchase. People speak of "grant funding" as though it was money being given to this purchase from some other mystical entity - money grown on trees or just created out of thin air.

Let's be clear, grants are taxes redistributed. So in essence you could say we are paying the full purchase price of the property through our taxes.

Since the property is not now within the village boundary maybe we should leave it where it is, in Dunn. As far as governmental control, maybe we should leave this to the main governmental unit redistributing tax dollars for its purchase - this is obviously not the Village of McFarland. If the Village of McFarland is to own the property, annex it first.

What's a fair purchase price? This has been one of the more interesting topics of this debate. Have proper appraisals from more than one source been evaluated? Have the owners ever been counter offered or are we just following the owners lead on this?

Whenever I have made a major purchase I do the research and negotiate the purchase price, even before seeking funding.

Finally, I have heard this property referred to as a jewel and an important addition to the conservancies surrounding our village. Get real, this is a tired old piece of farmland with a bunch of overgrown and dying apple trees, weed trees and scrubs, a home and

(Continued from page 2)

the typical steel sheds and other outbuildings of a farm.

It is going to take a lot more money and a whole lot of professional and volunteer effort to ever return this to a "natural" or park setting so many people think it can be.

Someone should purchase this land, at a reasonable and negotiated price and make it public property contiguous with the surrounding public lands. But you must be realistic about what this land is, it's real purpose and who should control it. There are more questions than answers on this issue.

Sincerely,

**Bill Stoneman**  
McFarland