

Town of Montrose
Montrose Town Hall
April 6, 2026
1341 Diane Avenue, Belleville, WI 53508
Subject: Meeting to Discuss Safety and Parking in Paoli

Dane County Highway and Transportation Commissioner: Clement Abongwa
Dane County Deputy Highway Commissioner - Operations: Tim Pelton
Dane County Highway Engineer: Charlene Schmid
Dane County Associate Highway Engineer: Kevin Eslick
Dane County Land and Water Director: Laura Hicklin
Dane County Parks Director: Jolene Stinson
Dane County WRE Division Manager: Jeremy Balousek
Dane County Supervisor: Patrick Downing

Town of Montrose: John Sayles, Town Paoli Development Committee; Junior Eichelkraut, Town Land Use Chair; Jennifer Armstrong, Town Clerk/Treasurer

Merchants Present: John Cioci, Eric Mayves, Cheyenne Blevins, Teresa McMann, Tarna Hunter, Mike Klonsinski, Kelly Hickman, Lori McGowan, Nic Mink, Rich Joseph

Others Present: Tim Schmitt, Cheyenne Belvins, Randy Francois, Kase Crampton, Deb and Jerry Brucaya, Andrea Ziegler, Jennifer Novinska, Dan Tyler, Bruce Pinkston

The meeting began at 9:01 on April 6, 2026. John Sayles facilitated the meeting as Roger Hodel, Town Chair, is on vacation.

The merchants introduced themselves.

Clement Abongwa: County has observed safety concerns along the section of Hwy PB near Diane Avenue and is working with the Town to develop solutions. All parties involved must work together and today's meeting is intended to gather information; no decisions will be made or solutions found at this time. Safety is the priority, while supporting local business. The county will perform a development review, and as a result some responsibilities will fall to the County in coordination with the Town, some to the Town, and some to the businesses - as the need for improvements is driven by business activity, the businesses are responsible for the improvements. The commissioner will work determinedly and closely with the Town to identify solutions. He requested this meeting to hear from businesses about the challenges along Hwy PB.

John Cioci: Parking during large events is a significant concern, including both illegal parking and the speed of vehicles. Issues stem largely from inadequate parking and lack of sidewalks. There is no predictable location for pedestrian crossings and pedestrians may step out from anywhere. Parking is disorganized and vehicles pull out unpredictably. The existing walking path is a dirt path, which is difficult to maintain when icy or muddy, and many pedestrians walk along the edge of the road. Events exacerbate these concerns. Speeding on Diane Avenue is a problem even on non event days.

Nic Mink: Paoli has become a Midwest top destination, as noted by prominent publications. Significant investment has been made to improve the Sugar River Watershed and current facilities and infrastructure are not adequate to support the amount of people using the river; he estimated that \$40–60 million has been invested. Businesses have experienced a significant increase in taxes and substantial increase in use. Neither County nor the Town has provided assistance as businesses have exponentially grown as have safety concerns. Without coordinated action, the work invested by the County and local businesses could be undermined.

Lori McGowan: Individuals using the river or biking in the area park in the Mill private parking lot.

Junior Eichelkraut: Has entered into an agreement granting the DNR access through his property to connect the Badger State Trail with Sun Valley Pkwy; project completion will significantly increase bicycle traffic.

Rich Joseph: Paoli is a major bicycling destination and approximately \$6.5 million is being invested to restore the Stewart Tunnel in Belleville; impacting Paoli bike traffic. Paoli's infrastructure should support these increases.

Deb Brucaya: Sun Valley Pkwy could be widened from the trail to Hwy PB to include a designated bike lane.

Mike Klonsinski: Paoli is an opportunity to create a showplace town and a destination point. In some ways merchants are a victim of their own success, all must work together.

Clement Abongwa: The influx of issues needs to be considered holistically. The group will look at a range of options; today's meeting is focused on gathering information.

Kelly: A more organized parking plan is needed, including safer routes to and from parking areas; establishing designated parking, improving pedestrian access, considering County-owned land for parking, and possibly creating a walkway around the canal to connect to parking.

Rich Joseph: Preserving Paoli's historic character and adjacent land is of historical significance. Canal Street is a Town road and dead ends into a farm field and the Mill parking lot.

Randy Francois: Raised concerns about large trucks traveling on Hwy PB through Paoli.

Clement Abongwa: The County cannot restrict truck traffic in any direction, restrictions would have to be enacted at the Town level.

Andrea Ziegler: Trucks frequently hit the light pole due to the sharp turn around the Paoli Park, trucks cannot make the tight turn without entering oncoming traffic. The turn becomes more difficult to navigate when the square is filled with parked cars and pedestrians.

Nic Mink: Even on non-event days, traffic on Hwy PB is backed up to Sunset.

Mike Klonsinski: Diane Avenue functions as a chokepoint. A traffic circle was proposed on the old Hwy plan.

Clement Abongwa: Traffic circle would result in a loss of farm land.

Randy Francois: Significant changes are expected in the next few years as approximately 800 new homes are planned for construction in Belleville, resulting in more congestion.

Clement Abongwa: The county will be looking for long lasting solutions. Many stakeholders need to be included to gather data and develop a comprehensive and holistic plan.

Kelly: Would it be helpful to have numbers from merchants.

Clement Abongwa: Yes, when there is a dedicated project manager to fully gather and assimilate data.

Nic Mink: The Montrose Town plan has private businesses restoring the old buildings. Businesses have done that, now it is a thriving community and there are safety concerns. Questions about process: Paoli has witnessed 10x exponential growth and safety is a concern, are there ways to try to expedite the process. Concerned that Seven Acres will be blamed if someone is hit.

John Sayles: Today's meeting is for information gathering only on traffic and parking, not for rushing or discussing solutions.

Clement Abongwa: The goal is to pursue a holistic, comprehensive, cautious, and carefully implemented solution. The situation may require additional assistance and specialized expertise for the County to make an appropriate determination. County will work with the town. Jurisdictional Transfer is a possibility with the town and may address some of the identified challenges. A jurisdictional transfer is an elaborate process that involves the State and will take time. When the County develops proposed solutions, the elements of any agreements will be clearly identified and outlined.

Pat Downing: Has witnessed the increase in traffic, interested in continuing to help address safety concerns regarding parking and traffic.

Deb Brucaya: Has there been discussion of parking availability on Town-owned plats and streets.

John Sayles: Been reviewed carefully, the area is currently a soybean stubble field, a formal parking lot would be better as a long-term solution.

Clement Abongwa/Kevin Eslick: Special event permits are required for large events, the application is on the County Highway Department website. Event organizers submit a parking and safety plan for County approval in concurrence with the Town; the Sheriff's Office is also involved, details such as whether roads are closed, trucks routed, and other safety parameters are reviewed and coordinated.

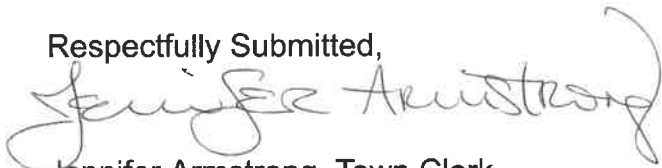
Tim Schmitt: Ways are needed to designate County Highways as truck routes.

John Cioci: Are speed bumps a possibility in Paoli.

Clement Abongwa: Speed bumps are a possibility if there is a jurisdictional transfer, but should be carefully considered before implementing. The Commissioner concluded the meeting by stating that the County wants businesses to thrive but to do so safely. He emphasized the importance of all parties working together, community, and noted that the County will be transparent about what it can and cannot do, while working diligently to identify solutions.

Meeting adjourned at 10:28am

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jennifer Armstrong". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jennifer Armstrong, Town Clerk