

Dodge County Independent Letter to the editor

March 11, 2008

The Post Bulletin had a wonderful article in the March 1st edition about the Ghost Towns of Dodge County. The Dodge County Historical Society has documented and located 23 ghost towns with a plan to erect markers at each site. These markers would commemorate the memory of the people who came before us to settle Dodge County. They seek to preserve and revere the efforts, hopes and dreams of the people who made it possible for us to thrive in Dodge County today.

Kasson managed to avoid the ghost town status. We thrived due to the grace of God and hard work. That does not imply that our Kasson forefathers should not be revered as well for their efforts, hopes and dreams. What a wonderful monument to the memory of our predecessors in the former Elementary School! I did not attend that school; my memories are elsewhere. However, that building represents the character of those who came before us: hardworking, hopeful, and true. Let's not dismiss the importance of their spirit and efforts.

In regards to the proposed demolition of said building, I feel that it would be a travesty to lose all it represents. Those bricks do not belong in a landfill somewhere. We cannot afford to rebuild anything of its scale. Why waste it? Our "throw it out" society assumes everything is expendable. In the current mode of consideration, "reduce, reuse, recycle", a

plan to repurpose the building speaks to us as a community. I cannot imagine going to the Hubbell House in a newly constructed building; who would travel to see newly constructed buildings in Boston or Europe?

I contest the conclusion that "the people have spoken" to demolish the former Elementary building. Did they really? I have overheard and spoken to many people who have expressed other ideas to me. Some state they were voting no to a new library. Some were voting no to raising taxes. Some were voting no to housing government offices in there. The actual wording of the second opportunity to vote (the first opportunity never happened due to confusion), included too many options. People see and react to their personal agendas, not to the intended agenda of the Council. Saving and repurposing the former Kasson School building is as necessary to our heritage as the markers to the memory of the ghost towns. Instead of seeing this as a drudge or burden, perhaps see it as an opportunity to showcase our town. Explore some of the many options for green remodeling and make Kasson a town with a sense of reverence and bridge the past to the future. Too much work? I don't suspect our founding settlers would have expressed that view. A legacy takes commitment and vision, and I would challenge the Council to uphold the legacy of Kasson MN.

Sincerely,

Susan **Joachim**