

Bee Editorial

Vacant properties shouldn't be ignored

Land development is the biggest issue in Amherst and has been for years. But the one question often raised and not really addressed, is vacant property. Whenever a developer proposes a brand new building, residents respond, "What about all your empty buildings?"

Is letting the developers build new buildings without taking responsibility for vacant spaces irresponsible? Supervisor Satish Mohan thinks so. He said he will go as far as to propose another resolution — the first one failed — to make developers accountable for their existing developments. During Monday's Town Board meeting, he vocally drafted the resolution he plans to submit.

He is considering a clause in the town's development policy that if 10 percent of the town's parcels are vacant, then no new development proposals would be accepted. He went on further to say that

if specific developers had 5 percent vacancies, then their proposals would not be considered.

Is he onto something? I'm sure the developers will have a lot to say in opposition to such a resolution — if it ever makes it onto the board agenda.

In some areas of Western New York, empty storefronts are contagious — starting with one business, spreading to more and ending with an empty plaza. Empty sections of town are often related to increased crime, rodent infestations and eventual structural issues.

There are many beautiful developments in town, but there are also many ugly, empty spaces. The Vix at Maple and North Forest roads, and the Ames on Sheridan Drive (which the Planning Board has approved for a Wal-Mart) are two examples of existing vacancies being ignored while green space is developed.

"We need to develop the town for future generations, not just this generation," Mohan said.

Isabell Berger, who lives near the proposed Maple Road Town Centre project, said it didn't take her long during her tour of the town to find numerous vacant parcels — ranging from large to small, and old to new.

Building Commissioner Tom Ketchum said the number of vacant parcels fluctuates monthly, adding that some of the spaces in the pictures are currently in the process of being filled. He said the town has averaged 90 percent for commercial occupancy.

Many recent proposals are for several spaces, not one large big box store. Maybe an emphasis should first be put on empty spaces, which are useless and contribute basically nothing to the town. One resident stated it simply, "Why are there so many vacant properties?"

Spindle items



JESSICA FINCH

Associate Editor

• **A TIME TO SHINE** — Are you in it to win it? The 2007 Village of Williamsville Holiday Lighting Contest Committee will be judging exterior-lit residential homes located within the Village of Williamsville. Entries must be submitted no later

than 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 17. The entry form must include your name, address and contact information, such as phone number and e-mail. To enter, send an e-mail to aaron.stanley@chubbrealstate.com, fax to 631-8306, or by mail or in person to 5528 Main St.,

Williamsville. Winners will be awarded more than \$400 in cash and prizes, with first place winning \$200. The awards presentation will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 20 at 5528 Main St.

Call 631-8300 for more information or visit www.chubbrealstate.com to view the list of entries.

• **SANTA TO A SENIOR** — Home Instead Senior Care in Williamsville is sponsoring a special holiday campaign designed to brighten the lives of hundreds of local seniors. Home Instead Senior Care has teamed up with community organizations, retailers and volunteers to collect, wrap and donate gifts to needy or lonely seniors in Buffalo through Be a Santa to a Senior.

"We see older adults who have no one during this festive season, and that makes for a very sad and lonely time," said Eric and Lisa Wiedemann, owners of the Home Instead Senior Care. "It's important to reach out to isolated older

adults during this special time of the year." Through Dec. 14, participating nonprofit organizations will identify needy seniors in the community and provide those names to Home Instead Senior Care. The Christmas tree in HSBC Bank at Sheridan Plaza, 1690 Sheridan Drive, Kenmore, will feature ornaments with the first names of the needy seniors and their respective gift requests.

Holiday shoppers can pick up an ornament, buy items on the list and return them, unwrapped, to the bank branch, along with the senior ornament attached. Volunteers collect, wrap and distribute the gifts. A citywide gift-wrapping day will be held from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Dec. 15 at Cardinal O'Hara High School.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering to help with the citywide gift-wrapping day, contact Eric and Lisa Wiedemann at 630-0657. Businesses are encouraged to contact the local Home Instead Senior Care office about

adopting groups of seniors.

• **SHOPPING FOR A CAUSE** — On Saturday, Dec. 8, the cash registers at the Buffalo City Mission's two thrift stores will be ringing up the bargains, just in time for holiday shoppers. For one day only, the Buffalo City Mission will host its second "Customer Appreciation Sale," providing up to 30 percent savings on all in-store items, including clothing, furniture, household items, toys and more. The event is free. Customers can take advantage of these great deals from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the Mission Thrift Stores at 510 Dick Road, Depew, and 2303 Union Road, West Seneca. The Union Road location also will display used cars from Mission Motors, which can be purchased.

Proceeds from Thrift Store sales will help the Buffalo City Mission to feed and care for men, women and children in Western New York who seek food, shelter and help. For more information, visit www.buffalocitymission.org or call 854-8181. Let your holiday spending help others who are in need.

Out of the Past

125 Years Ago Dec. 7, 1882

The Board of Trustees of the Village of Williamsville approved enforcement of the following village by-law: "To compel all persons to keep the snow and dirt off of the sidewalks in front of the premises owned or occupied by them."

Salt thrown upon the streets to melt snow and ice produces obstinate diseases in horses' feet and is also productive of diphtheria, pneumonia and asthma. The use of salt on the streets is prohibited by law.

Mr. Jacob Pfohl, of the Transit, had a quantity of oats taken from one of his barns during the past two weeks. No clues have been obtained.

Mr. John Snyder, accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Fanny E. Blocher and Allen B. Rinewalt, was driving west on Thanksgiving Day when he became snow blind and mistook a ditch for a stepping stone. The whole party was dumped into the snow, but the horse being gentle, no material harm was done.

The observance of Thanksgiving Day here was very general. The day was just cold enough to make indoor exercises enjoyable.

At New York on Sunday, about 500 people were arrested for breaking the Sabbath. They comprised milkmen, grocers, drivers of vehicles, bootblacks, newspaper vendors and bill posters. Nearly all were discharged with a reprimand.

Articles for The Bee should be written only upon one side of the paper, and if more than one sheet is used, each page should be numbered.

100 Years Ago Dec. 5, 1907

Fire was discovered Thursday morning in the barn of Fred Spiesz, living southeast of the village. All six horses and 29 cows were saved. Sixty tons of hay and 300 bushels of oats were lost.

Mrs. Mary Fischer was elected president of the Loyal Christian Benefit Association.

75 Years Ago Dec. 8, 1932

Announcement is made this week of the opening of a new garage at Main and Richfield by Al Klein and George Loohn.

The Park School presented a 300-pound hog, raised at the school, to the Amherst Welfare Committee during the past week. Harland F. Pope, local butcher, has worked up the porker. Hungers appeased by these kind acts will make grateful acknowledgements.

John J. Neiderpreum died suddenly Friday morning, December 2, 1932. He was the Buffalo division representative for the Pennsylvania Tire Co.

Edward Sticht, president of the Amherst High Science Club, gave a thoroughly interesting talk on geology at an assembly on December 2.

To carry on the for the Green and White of Neumann High this season, coach Rev. W. F. Fornes will have a fast but light aggregation.

The Ladies Aid of St. Paul's, Eggertsville, will serve a sauerkraut supper on December 8.

50 Years Ago Dec. 5, 1957

One of the most handsome of the new buildings recently built in Snyder is the home of the Jefferson Savings and Loan Association. It is located at 4574 Main Street at the corner of Chateau Terrace.

Crede D. Hagerty, principal of the Smallwood Drive School, District 18, was elected president of the New York State Association of Elementary School Principals at a meeting held the forepart of this week in Syracuse.

Victor Barberio of Williamsville has been elected to his second term as a board member of the Buffalo Shoe Repair Association.

Wilbert J. Regnet, postmaster of the Swormville Post Office, has announced that beginning Sunday, the post office will be open Sunday mornings from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. for the convenience of its customers.

25 Years Ago Dec. 1, 1982

Sixty Williamsville high school choral students will perform Dec. 10 and 12 during a Christmas songfest with Mitch Miller and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra in Shea's Buffalo Theater.

Dr. Gerald P. Murphy, director of Roswell Park Memorial Institute, has been elected national president-elect of the American Cancer Society.

For Sale: "Barbie and Ken clothes, 25 cents each outfit."