

Herald-Star

www.heraldstaronline.com

Vol. 215 No. 280

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021

\$1.00



• **INSIDE:**
Toronto walking on sunshine.

— Page 1B

Former school site eyed by retailer

By **LINDA HARRIS**
Staff writer

STEUDEVILLE — Urban Projects Director Chris Petrossi told council Tuesday the nationally known retailer eyeing the old Grant School site before the pandemic is back in the picture.

Petrossi said the company, which has never been identified, “put (its) search on hold for the pandemic but they’re back, actively looking at the community again.”

In October 2019 — before the pandemic — council agreed to rezone the property to central business district (B-1),

paving the way for that unidentified retail developer to come forward with plans for the 0.94-acre site.

Petrossi said a one-acre site is the developer’s sweet spot.

“They want to be downtown,” Petrossi said. “We are working with that company

again.”

Petrossi’s comments came after 1st Ward Councilwoman Asantewa Anyabwile renewed concerns over the lack of grocery stores in walking distance to the city’s downtown population.

Anyabwile said several council members, herself

included, have tried to interest grocery chains or mom-and-pop operations in opening a store downtown, but suggested council “get together as a committee to address it, because we’re always stronger in numbers.”

See **SITE** Page 5A ➔

A bridge timeline...

June 2000: A BHJ-commissioned study presents evidence supporting the need for a new bridge.

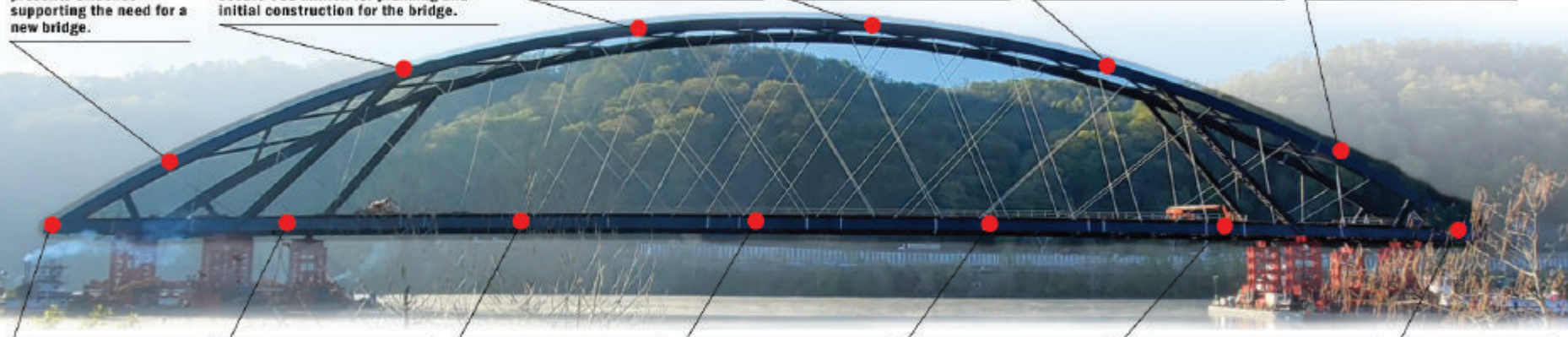
August 2005: U.S. Sens. Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller, both D-W.Va., secure \$18 million for planning and initial construction for the bridge.

November 2013: The Federal Highway Administration issues a Finding of No Significant Impact after studying environmental and other impacts of establishing a new bridge.

July 2016: The Flatiron Corp. of Broomfield, Colo., is selected to build the bridge after submitting a bid of \$131 million, the lowest of three received for the project.

July 2018: A groundbreaking ceremony is held in a lot behind the Wellsburg Smith Oil gas station, where crews later established an assembly yard for the bridge’s 830-foot-long main span.

April 27, 2021: Crews transport the main span down river to the bridge’s future site and lift it 80 feet into the air and onto its piers.



January 1998: The BHJ Metropolitan Planning Commission names a new Ohio River crossing its top transportation improvement goal.

September 2003: A BHJ advisory committee of public officials and citizens select a general area south of Wellsburg and near Brilliant as the best site for the span.

August 2012: Public meetings are held at Wellsburg Middle School and Buckeye North Elementary School to accept comments on proposed sites around the two communities.

January 2015: The West Virginia and Ohio departments of transportation agree on the division of costs for the bridge, with West Virginia to provide 65 percent and Ohio, 35 percent.

November 2016: Officials announce the span will have a tied arch, or bowstring, design.

December 2018: Crews begin construction near Ohio Route 7 of a temporary trestle from which they will build piers for the future bridge. A trestle near West Virginia Route 2 follows.

Fall 2022: Following completion of the bridge’s 60-foot-wide deck and approaches on both sides of the river, the bridge is expected to be completed.

Photo by Joe Lovell
Information by Warren Scott
Graphic by Michael D. McElwain

Development of new bridge was a journey in itself

By **WARREN SCOTT**
Staff writer

WELLSBURG — Delivery of the 830-foot main span of the new Ohio River bridge to its piers between state Routes 2 and 7 occurred within 12 hours, but the journey to the project’s development involved many individuals who pushed and worked to make it a reality.

While there’s still more work to be done, with the span slated for completion in fall 2022, past and present local officials have been reflecting on the legwork that led up to this point.

“These are once-in-a-life-

time things,” said Mike Paprocki, executive director of the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission, who noted his children have grown since the bridge was made a top transportation goal by the regional planning commission.

Paprocki was a transportation study director under then executive director John Brown at the time.

“It’s the culmination of a lot of hard work,” said former Brooke County commissioner Norm Schwertfeger. He recalled Brown, soon after his hiring by BHJ in 1998, coming to the county commission to ask their priorities.

Schwertfeger said he and others suggested a bridge between the southern ends of Brooke and Jefferson counties, an idea that had been talked about for decades; and he was recruited to chair BHJ’s first committee to pursue it.

Paprocki said the project became timelier as the Market Street Bridge, built in 1905; the Fort Steuben Bridge, constructed in 1928; and even the Veterans Memorial Bridge, completed in 1991; at the time each underwent major repairs.

While the latter span was expected to stand for many more years, the possibility of

the next closest river crossings north or south being 25 miles away became very real, Paprocki said.

Paprocki noted the concerns later proved valid as the Fort Steuben Bridge was demolished in 2012, though the Market Street Bridge gained a new lease on life through major renovations in 2011.

Schwertfeger said response to the idea at the northern end of Brooke County was cool initially.

“It didn’t happen at a time when everybody was jumping up and down about a bridge,” he said.

Schwertfeger said it may have been because the

proposed new span was seen by some as a potential replacement for the Market Street Bridge.

But Paprocki said officials with the West Virginia and Ohio departments of transportation saw the benefits of another Ohio River bridge and their joint support helped to propel the project.

He noted both departments funded two studies commissioned by BHJ to determine the need for the bridge and identify the best locations for it years before they agreed to split the \$131 million cost for the span’s construction 65-35.

See **BRIDGE** Page 5A ➔

Mingo officials asking for patience during road work

By **ANDREW GRIMM**
Staff writer

MINGO JUNCTION — Work on village streets as part of the storm sewer separation project has drawn the ire of residents.

Early in Tuesday night’s council meeting, Mayor Ed Fithen informed council and village administrator Bob Smith that he has been receiving complaints about the condition of the streets being worked on as part of the project, both by phone and in-person around town.

“I get the calls,” Fithen said. “When I’m out and about, it’s everywhere you go. People are asking time frames.”

Smith asked residents to be patient while the work continues, noting he himself has experienced driving on the roads and understands the frustration.

“I know it’s an inconvenience,” he said. “I understand. I ask people to please be patient. This is part of what had to be done.”

The project is to separate the village’s storm sewer lines from sewer lines, which was mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency. It is funded by a zero-interest loan through the EPA.

Smith said the anticipated completion date is the end of May to beginning of June.

Fithen acknowledged the project is one that should have happened sooner and had to be done.

Smith told council the pavement that has been torn out cannot be replaced until the curbs are replaced, a process he said that was supposed to start last week.

He said asphalt was not available until April 12.

See **MINGO** Page 5A ➔

Bridge name, illegal dumping concern commissioners

By **WARREN SCOTT**
Staff writer

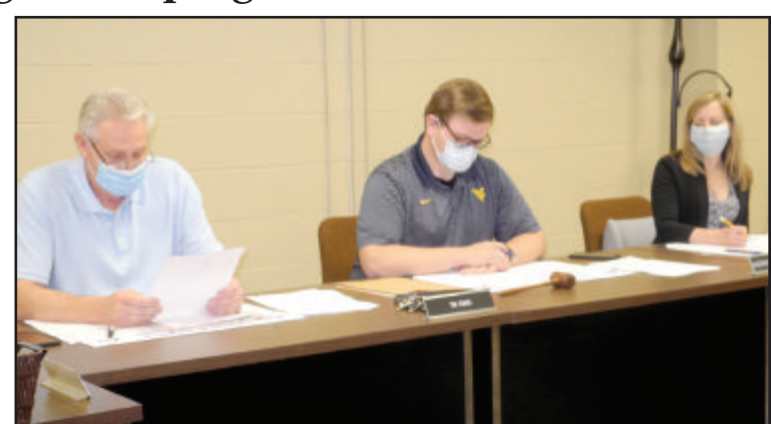
WELLSBURG — The Brooke County Commission turned its attention to a potential name for the new Ohio River bridge and the recurring problem of illegal dumping.

County Commissioner Tim Ennis said at Tuesday’s meeting that the recent transport of the future bridge’s main span to its piers between Brilliant and an area a mile south of Wellsburg inspired him to consider a name for the span.

While noting the name ultimately will be determined by the West Virginia Legislature, he suggested the span be dubbed the Pioneer Bridge.

Ennis acknowledged the bridge is slated to include a bicycle path that will lead to the Brooke County Pioneer Trail below, but he said that’s not the only motive to name it as such.

“What we saw yesterday was a pioneering marvel of engineering,” he said, alluding to a process in which the 4,100-ton main span was carried by four



Warren Scott

WHAT’S IN A NAME? — The Brooke County Commission discussed a possible name for the new Ohio River bridge on Tuesday, noting it will rest ultimately with the West Virginia Legislature.

barges and lifted onto the piers using hydraulic jacks.

But Ennis said that also isn’t the only reason behind the name.

He noted the definition of pioneer, as a verb, is “to develop or be first to use or apply a new method, area of knowledge or activity.”

Ennis and his fellow commissioners said the bridge can serve as inspiration to them

See **CONCERN** Page 5A ➔

COVID-19 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 coronavirus cases. The following symptoms may appear two to 14 days after exposure:

- **Fever**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath**

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, call your health care provider for medical advice.

CONFIRMED CASES

- **Jefferson County:** 5,425 (150 deaths)
- **Harrison County:** 1,079 (24 deaths)
- **Hancock County:** 2,735 (87 deaths)
- **Brooke County:** 2,143 (59 deaths)
- **Ohio:** 897,574 (19,188 deaths)
- **West Virginia:** 151,848 (2,662 deaths)

INSIDE TODAY



McKay tosses 13-strikeout perfect game

Page 1B

SOUND OFF

Today’s question is:
Did you fill out a U.S. Census form?

Tuesday’s question:

Did you watch the Wellsburg Bridge float down the Ohio River?

Yes ☒ 21%

No ☐ 79%

Log onto
heraldstaronline.com
before 9 p.m. today
to cast your vote.

INDEX

12 pages, 2 sections

Classified 5-6B
Police 3A
Lotteries 2A
Obituaries 3A
Opinion 4A
Sports 1-2B

Serving Steubenville and the Tri-State Area since 1806

