

FAQ's on becoming the Village of Williamstown

Q: Why did the Village of Kekoskee approach the Town of Williamstown in the first place?

A: The Village of Kekoskee was simply lacking resources and representation necessary to fulfill the required functions of a village. For example, no Kekoskee citizens came forward for election in 2017. The Village could not seat a full board. Combining resources made sense. Under the Cooperative Plan, the current Kekoskee Board members would step down, and the new Village of Williamstown Board would be filled with the current Town of Williamstown Board members.

Q: Why did the Village and Town decide to utilize an attachment plan now?

A: With Kekoskee unable to field a full Board and dissolution on the horizon, the Town Board felt that with the threat of future annexations and continuing extraterritorial land division issues, now was the time to work with Kekoskee on a solution that would empower both governments to the fullest extent while improving representation to all residents within both governments. Becoming a village meets that objective. Combining the municipalities into a successor village increases local control because villages have broad "home rule authority" to manage local affairs while towns do not. The City of Mayville will no longer have authority to object to land divisions within Williamstown, which the City had been doing to prevent land divisions and transactions that the Town had approved.

Q: Will the Kekoskee Sanitary debt require Williamstown resident payments?

A: Only those using the Joint Leroy/Kekoskee sanitary facilities will be responsible no matter which municipality you currently reside in.

Q: Will my taxes go up?

A: Taxes aren't based on the type of municipality; they're based on the expenses of that municipality. Combining governments could make service costs (expenses) even more efficient when spread out across an increased population base. In addition, because of the Landfill Permit payments, the property tax relief credit will continue for the new village keeping taxes at the current state.

Q: What about Kekoskee public parks and buildings?

A: Kekoskee created a fund with money from the Sequicentennial that was dedicated to Park improvements. Those funds will stay designated for park use. Village administration will be moved to the newer Town Hall. The Village Hall and other buildings/real estate will be inspected and decisions made on whether to sell or rehab.

Q: What about Kekoskee streets and sidewalks?

A: The State requires municipalities to rate their roads/streets and, like Williamstown, some are in better condition than others. The new Village will have about 26.5 miles of road vs. the Town's approximately 25 miles. Roads/streets will continue to be maintained as needed. The sidewalks need some major work and decisions will be made on whether to maintain or remove. Contrary to popular belief, WI Statutes DO NOT require villages to provide certain amenities like sidewalks, street lighting, parks and alike to ALL residents.

Q: What about police, ambulance and fire services?

A: It is the intent of the new village to maintain the current level of service received by the residents of both governments. Kekoskee and Williamstown use the same providers: Dodge County Sheriff's Department, City of Mayville Ambulance and the Kekoskee Fire Department. We expect those agreements to continue with any fees reflecting the merged population.

Q: What about building permits and zoning?

A: Building permits and inspections will be a contracted service, currently Kunkel Engineering. New construction and zoning will fall under the Williamstown Zoning Ordinance, which will be expanded to create a “Concentrated Mixed Use” District to reflect the diverse mix of properties in the original Kekoskee Village. The farmland preservation component of the ordinance will not change so those farmers receiving farmland preservation tax credits will continue to do so under village status.

Q: What about ordinances?

A: Per the Plan, ordinances from both governments will be merged into a single Code of Ordinances for the new village. Individual differences will be reviewed, amended and perhaps grandfathered where appropriate.

Q: Will the Kekoskee Dump Site remain available as a second option for dumping?

A: This is still under discussion and comments are welcome.

Q: Will Kekoskee residents need to change their addresses?

A: No. If the village had dissolved into Williamstown, then the County would have required that Kekoskee move to the county grid addressing system. Because of “home rule”, that is no longer the case. Kekoskee will continue to exist as a neighborhood with its current addresses within the new Village of Williamstown utilizing their current addresses. The new village will work closely with Dodge County Emergency Government and service providers so that they are aware of the conditions within the agreement.

Q: Will my school district change?

A: No.

Q: As a village, we can do annexations. How will that affect our border towns?

A: Since no one can foresee the future, there may be benefits to the adjacent Towns for such annexations. The new village will work with our neighboring Towns on agreements that would only allow future annexations if mutually agreed upon by both units of government.

Q: Will this stop Mayville from doing annexations?

A: Yes, but... As two municipalities with “home rule” authority, we can use a process called “detachments” to move property to Mayville after an agreement is finalized with the City. The key here is that we now have equal rights and are not forced to give up property as Towns are, or as Kekoskee would have been had they decided to dissolve into the Town of Williamstown.

Q: I went to the website (williamstown-wi.com) and read the proposed Cooperative Plan. In Section XXVIII, why does it say the planning period is 10 years?

A: While the planning period is ten years (the minimum allowed by statute), the boundary adjustment and most of the other substantive changes will take place much more quickly, likely within the first year. Once the consolidation occurs, it is permanent, regardless of the expiration of the planning period.