

Dear Mayor Merkes and Common Council,

The insistent push by Alderman Sevenich to re-open the Bridge Tower Museum, and the effort of others to physically open the doors, has been a good solid first step in bringing history and culture back into the forefront for Menasha. A properly organized museum, no matter its size, brings much needed visitors and a renewed interest in Menasha's heritage. The effort already put forth needs to be built upon each year to prevent the museum from becoming stale, and the best method of retaining interest is through a curator (whether paid or volunteer) who possesses the interest, knowledge, skill and time to best utilize the property for the betterment of the city.

Currently the Bridge Tower Museum resides in the land of Nod with no official home or guidance to assure displays and content are fresh and relevant to attract new visitors and entice repeat visits. The museum will struggle in the near future if the content within the walls resemble the written pages of a high school text book with accompanying photographs. Acquiring interesting artifacts and relics pertaining to Menasha's history and culture will be vital to the overall success and relevancy. It is perfectly natural to maintain a permanent portion of the museum relevant to the establishment history of Menasha along with the bridge construction itself; however, half of the display space should be dedicated to rotating subject matter which is refreshed each year. The displays need to incorporate tangible artifacts the public would have an interest in viewing, including themed subjects covering a broad portion of the area's historic culture.

There are several people within the city (including myself) who not only take interest in the city's heritage and culture, but personally collect tangible relics from Menasha's past and would graciously put our own time and money into building the proper and secure display cases to hold artifacts along with providing the relics for showcasing each year. Tapping into the individuals who have the ability and connections to make the Bridge Tower Museum a monumental success is needed and proper marketing in conjunction with spectacular displays are key factors to any long term success. The Landmarks Commission did a wonderful job of opening the Bridge Tower door, but the commission was not established to curate and run a museum, and it now needs the enthusiastic individuals within the city who possess the knowledge, marketing skills, research ability, museum quality artifacts and display material to turn the structure into an attraction for generations to come.

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