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# HERALD STATE RECORD

SPECIAL MONTHLY INSERT TO THE MONROE COUNTY HERALD

### THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2024 • PAGE 1

AMERICAN FAMIL

# County thoroughly assesses foreclosure properties

### **By KYLE EVANS** *Real Estate Record Editor*

Over the past several months, the Monroe County Property and Maintenance Committee has been learning about what they can and cannot do with foreclose-able properties. The conundrum surrounds the risk of taking on said properties that may be unsaleable, contaminated, road rightsof-way, etc.

In previous years, the county used to foreclose on every piece of property. But last year, they ran into a piece by the railroad track in Sparta that was contaminated and has a garage running through the parcel line. Since the county now owns it, it is now their obligation to clean up the contamination, costing taxpayers dollars.

With that, the committee decided to have a special meeting on May 21 to go through a list of around eighty different parcels of property. The meeting consisted of putting every parcel of land that is up for foreclosure on the projector in the board room.

Any piece of property that was homesteaded, the committee decided to foreclose on. Committee member Remy Gomez said, "we cannot just let people live in Monroe County without paying their property taxes. That would not send a good message."

Assistant Corporation Counsel, Kerry Sullivan-Flock added, "there may be quite a few resources and time being spent on some of these properties." There was a homestead property that was foreclosed on, that was a piece of land with a trailer home on it. Sullivan-Flock said, "that just adds another wrinkle as far as tracking down the title of the trailer or would we even own the trailer, because it's technically on wheels."

Either way, the committee went through each parcel methodically with the intent to not foreclose on property that would be unsaleable. There were many vacant parcels that the committee decided not to foreclose on as they were road rights-of-way, landlocked parcels, survey mishaps, etc. However, there were also many vacant parcels that the committee did decide to foreclose on.

Over the past few months, the committee has learned that the foreclosure process is not a money-making process. It takes many of the county employees time and resources to only get back, back-taxes and publication fees. Any dollar amount the county gets over that, they legally must seek out the last owner or their heirs to give them the additional funds. According to state law, counties cannot make money on foreclosure properties, but counties are the only power who can foreclose on properties.

Regardless, many properties will soon be listed for sale, with a minimum bid of the back-taxes.

# Selling a property in summer

### All the benefits you could wish for

### Contributed

Real estate transactions can happen at any time of the year, rain or shine. However, putting up your "for sale" sign in summer has unique benefits. If you plan to sell your home soon, you should know why summer is the ideal time.

Better lighting. Days are longer in the summer, which makes it easier to showcase the interior and exterior of your property. You can even arrange evening viewings, which isn't possible during winter when it gets dark early. Nicer weather. The warm summer weather generally puts people in a good mood. This can make them more inclined to take their time viewing your home and ask questions. The summer sun creates a holidaylike atmosphere, which is conducive to buying. Bonus points if you have a swimming pool! Showcase landscaping. Summer is the ideal season to highlight the beauty of your landscaping. Your flowerbeds, vegetable garden, hedges, patio and other features can attract prospective buyers who enjoy spending time outdoors. This could lead to more attractive offers. Serious buyers. Serious buyers tend to house hunt in summer, often while on vacation. They typically want to move before the start of the new school year, which motivates them to finalize the deal quickly. If you want to sell your house fast, summer is the perfect time. Contact a local real estate agent for a worry-free experience.



# A recipe for saving for your down payment

### Contributed

Buying a home is a process that takes time, energy and money. The larger your down payment, the better the interest rate on your mortgage. How can you save that kind of money quickly?

Gauge your financial situation: Start by making a list of your income, expenses and debts. This gives you a clear idea of your financial health and helps you determine how much you can save each month. Your debt-to-income ratio also plays a critical role in determining your borrowing capacity and, therefore, the amount required for your down payment. Consult a financial professional if you need help managing your savings or improving your credit rating. Review your lifestyle habits: Look for areas where you can cut back on your expenses. This could include eating out less, cancelling streaming subscriptions or not shopping as much. Small changes can add up over time and help you save more for your down payment. scheduled Set up withdrawals: One of the easiest ways to save money is to set up automatic transfers from your chequing account to your savings account. By doing this, you won't have to think about saving money each month, and you'll see the amount grow over time. This can be a great motivator to spend less and save more. Remember, every little bit counts when building up your down payment. Happy saving!



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# EDITORIAL

## **Foreclosed Properties of Monroe County**

#### By KYLE EVANS Real Estate Record Editor

n going to these county meetings on foreclosure properties, my mind runs to creating a business to help clean up these messy parcels. However, I can't figure out who would pay for it.

For instance, an odd parcel of land that is adjacent to your property that is unbuildable. The adjacent owners probably already use it as their land but it's technically not theirs. As I'm writing, I feel like this could be a state or federally funded project to get these cleaned up, but I highly doubt there's room in the state



budget.

Is it necessary to get these parcels cleaned up? I don't know, from a county perspective, we as taxpayers pay the county to have resources and their resources are being used on silly things like these, so in that sense I'd say yes, it's necessary.

In another sense though, most people don't really care, but I think they should

and here's why; if you have a landlocked parcel of, say 10 acres. The county now won't foreclose on it because it's an unsaleable piece of property. However, if it was sold to an adjacent property owner for a minimal dollar amount, then that parcel of land would be back on the tax roll, contributing more funds to the county's general fund.

I think there is a business model here of just connecting the adjacent property owners to the odd parcel landowners to clean up these parcels. If you have any ideas of how my new business can be funded, let me know.

Have a good month!

# **Six Tips When Buying A Home**

**GUEST COLUMN** 

### By the 1st Community Credit Union Lending Team

Taking the steps to buy a new home is a huge decision for many individuals. One of the most important steps in the home buying process is to get pre-qualified for a home loan. Qualifying for a home loan can sometimes be an intimidating task, especially for first-time homebuyers. Below are some of the key tips to help buyers work through the home loan pre-qualification process:

1. Check Your Credit Score: Lenders use credit scores to evaluate a borrower's creditworthiness. Before applying for a home loan, buyers should check their credit scores and ensure that they have a good credit history. A higher credit score can increase the chances of qualifying for a home loan at a favorable interest rate.

2. Improve Debt-to-Income Ratio: Lenders also

look at a borrower's debtto-income ratio to determine their ability to repay the loan. To improve their chances of qualifying for a home loan, buyers should focus on paying off existing debts.

3. Save for a Down Payment: A larger down payment can help buyers qualify for a home loan with better terms and lower interest rates. Buyers should start saving early and consider budgeting to increase their down payment amount.

4. Gather Required Documents: To qualify for a home loan, buyers will need to provide various documents, including proof of income, tax returns, bank statements, etc. Organizing these documents in advance can help streamline the loan application process.

5. Avoid Major Financial Changes: Before and during the home loan application process, buyers should avoid making major financial

changes, such as opening new debts or changing jobs. These changes can impact their ability to qualify for a home loan.

6. Work with a Knowledgeable Mortgage Loan Officer: Consulting with a knowledgeable local mortgage loan officer can help buyers understand their options, navigate the home loan process, and choose the right loan product for their needs. A mortgage loan officer can also provide valuable guidance and support throughout the home buying journey.

By following these tips and being proactive in preparing for the loan application, buyers can increase their chances of securing a home loan and achieving their dream of homeownership. It will only make the process and experience much smoother and more successful in the long run.

**BETH PENDLETON** 

**BROKER/OWNER** 

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### Monroe County Land Transfers 5/22–5/28

T. Hobson Revocable Trust

Town of Adrian Colleen Isensee, Diane Bever, & Keith Kennedy To Dkc, Llc - N/A -\$1,316,600 Town of Byron

Daniel W & Laura C Rozek To Kyle R & Angelica D Rozek - 28899 County Highway G - \$120,000 Town of Clifton Richard A Scheppa To Edna M & Eli M Borntreger -Cty Hwy W - \$250,000 Town of Glendale Glenda G. Huschka To Camilla & Charles A Huschka - 3606 Owl Ave. - \$41,958 Village of Kendall Nicholas Graewin & Shelly Brady To John D. And Patricia S. Sandquist - Bruce Avenue - \$15,000 Town of La Grnage William Jordan To Sandra S. Jordan - 11935 Forbes Road - \$189,300 Martin W. Hayes To Corey M. And Allyson M. Hayes -State Highway 21 - \$90,200 Scott F. And Oona L. Vollmer To Scott F. Vollmer And Oona L. Vollmer, Trustees Of The Vollmer Living Trust Dated May 3, 2024, And Any Amendments Thereto - 7754 Dixie Rd. - \$246,800 Town of Leon Donald L. And Florence A. Peters Revocable Trust To Donald L Peters - Near County Road Y - \$378,700 Town of Little Falls Kurt L. And Megan A. Knoll To Karl Thompson - 4364 Bedford Road - \$299,000 Town of Oakdale Calvin T Tappa To Calvin Tappa Ii - 14906 Grover Rd - \$125,000 Town of Portland Theodore Joseph And Lindsey Jo Hanson To Pan Springs Land & Timber Llc - Hwy #33 - \$385,000 City of Sparta Diana T Hobson To Diana

- 909 Depot Street, 410 S L Street, 1615 Linda Lane, 611 Douglas Street, & 906 Long Court - \$575,800 City Of Sparta, A Wisconsin Municipal Corporation To Anderson Moving And Storage, Inc. - South Side At End Of Theater Road, Sparta, Wi - \$19,740 Suzi B Perron To Brandon & Joshua Perron - 509 E. Montgomery - \$293,900 Town of Sparta Lisa L Erickson To Shane R Stark - 16966 Igloo Road -\$41,000 David K & Mary L Schwartz To Leroy U & Ruth A Borntreger - 4827 Iberia Ave Sparta Wi 54656 -\$346,440 Karen Klinkner To Scarlett & Jarrod Ladd - 17747 Icecap Rd Sparta Wi 54656 - \$365,000 Kevin L & Penny J Eddy To Michael D Krueger, Jr. -1511 S Water St Sparta Wi 54656 - \$130,000 City of Tomah Jeffrey And Lisa H. Noe To Shon D. And Pamela T. Vancleef - 1008 Kilbourn Avenue - \$250,000 Joshua & Sierra T. Reddeman F/K/A Sierra T. Flick To Jacob Julian Benish - 829 Hollister Avenue -\$175,000

Jacob R. And Mary Buswell To Hannah R. Kane & Jordan M. Hazel - 430 N. Lawrence Avenue -\$435,000 Keith Kennedy, Colleen Isensee, & Diane Bever To Dkc, Llc - 2010 Eaton Avenue - \$1,316,600 Robin R Olson To Carol M Stevens - 603 Mubarak St -\$350,000 Donald A Wagner To Lois A Wagner - 622 Packard Street - \$196,800 Town of Tomah Elaine D Nichols To Elaine Nichols Family Trust -15139 Herb Rd - \$155,300 Village of Warrens Roberta R Wilcox To Boyce E Wilcox Iii - 403 Railroad Street - \$74,400 George Senteney To Sukanya Senteney - 330 Hilltop Circle - \$59,850 Town of Wilton Scott And Oona Vollmer To So Vollmer, Llc, A Wisconsin Limited Liability Company - Killdeer Ave. - \$212,500 Jonas B. And Martha J. Miller To Michael J. And Katherine M. Olson - Kipper Avenue - \$32,500



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Home buyers must confront a host of variables in the best of times, but in recent years buyers have been forced to contend with a real estate market marked by a significant increase in home prices. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, the median home sales price in the third guarter of 2023 was \$431,000. That marks a significant increase since the start of 2020, when the median sales price was \$329,000. That 31 percent increase in a little less than four full years can be traced to a host of variables, not the least of which is the global COVID-19 pandemic, which officially earned that designation in early March 2020. But the rise in home prices is not as recent a phenomenon as some may think. In fact, data from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis indicates the median home sales price rose by 576 percent between 1980 and the third quarter of 2023.

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# **3 tips for first-time home buyers**

Real estate has garnered considerable attention since 2020, and for good reason. Though speculators and real estate professionals may point to a number of variables that have affected the market for homes in recent years, the pandemic certainly was among those factors. Real estate prices and mortgage interest rates increased significantly during

the pandemic and have remained well above pre-pandemic levels ever since.

following three tips can help such buyers successfully navigate the market as they look to purchase their first home.

1. Expect to move quickly. Inventory remains very low, which means buyers are in heated competition for the few homes that are on the market. In late 2023, NAR data indicated the rate of home sales were the lowest they had been in 13 years, so buyers will likely need to move quickly and make an offer if they see a home they like, as chances are the property won't be on the market too long before it's sold. In fact, the NAR noted that homes spent an average of just 23 days on the market in October 2023. 2. Apply for mortgage preapproval. The competitive nature of the market for buyers means it's in their best interests to arrange financing prior to beginning their home search. A mortgage preapproval can be a competitive advantage, as it indicates to sellers that buyers won't be denied a mortgage or lack financing after making an offer. The financial experts at NerdWallet note

that buyers will be asked to provide details about their employment, income, debt, and financial accounts when applying for mortgage preapproval. Gather this information and clear up any issues, such as credit disputes or delinquent accounts, prior to applying for preapproval.

3. Set a realistic budget and expect to offer over asking price. A financial planner and/

# **Buying rural or urban?** Know the differences

The decision to move is a very personal choice that is typically reached after considering a number of variables. Career opportunities, a better climate, superior schools, or a desire to be closer to family compel millions of people to move each year, and those factors underscore how unique each individual move can be.

No move is a small undertaking, and when such a move involves relocating to an entirely new setting, there are some things buyers should know. Here are some differences between purchasing a home in a rural or urban location.

#### URBAN

A vibrant lifestyle and proximity to employment draws many people to urban living. Home prices tend to be higher in cities than in other areas, and the cost of living in urban areas tends to be more expensive due to the conveniences associated with city life. Buyers may expect to pay more for contractors, food and transportation. Property taxes are another consideration for urban buyers. Taxes tend to be higher in urban neighborhoods than rural locales. Proximity to nightlife and restaurants attracts many people to live in cities. Urban buyers need to expect more congestion in cities than in rural areas. Having a car in the city may be a luxury instead of a necessity. In fact, many urban dwellers opt for public transportation rather than paying for parking or trying to find spots.



living closer together brings more noise and artifical light. Nature lovers may have to sacrifice proximity to wildlife and access to star-filled skies if they choose to live in cities. RURAL Being able to spread out systems. That requires usage of well water and having to do one's own water testing. It's also key to have a septic system tested to ensure it is in good working order. Rural residents may need to grow accustomed to slower repair times should electricity go out, so a backup generator might be necessary. Also, snow removal may fall on the homeowner, so buyers should look closely at driveway size and road access before buying. Nature and vast starry skies draw some to live in rural areas. Sitting outdoors enjoying the sounds and smells of nature can be intoxicating. But homeowners must consider that insects and animals may be frequent companions in these areas. Those accustomed to urban living may be unacquainted with animals living so close to their homes. Both rural and urban areas can be great places to live. Individuals should consider the pros and cons of each before buying a new home.

The spike in home prices and interest rates has had a significant impact on young home buyers, some of whom feel as though their dream of home ownership may never be realized. And data from the National Association of Realtors indicates the median age of home buyers is now significantly higher than it was two decades ago. In 2023, the median age of buyers was 49, which marked an increase of 10 years compared to the average buyer age 20 years ago.

First-time home buyers may face a more challenging real estate market than they would have encountered just a half decade ago. The or real estate professional can help first-time buyers determine how much they should be spending on a home. In the current market, buyers should know that they will likely need to pay more than asking price for a home. For example, the NAR reports that 28 percent of homes sold for above list price in October 2023. With that in mind, firsttime buyers may do well to look for homes that are under budget in anticipation of offering more than list price after seeing a property.

The real estate market remains competitive for buyers. First-time buyers can utilize three strategies to increase their chances of realizing their dream of home ownership.

Noise may be another thing to think about. More people

and enjoy private property is a major advantage of living in the country. Rural living comes with much larger home footprints at more affordable prices.

The Real Estate Council of Ontario says that potential buyers will need to account for distance to jobs and stores when opting to live in rural areas. Commute times can eat into fuel budgets. Those who work from home may need to investigate if there is reliable internet service where a home is located, as some rural locales still have spotty mobile service and internet coverage.

Additional things to think about involve the maintenance on the home and utilities. Some rural homes are not connected to municipal water

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# For a buyer, what are the determining factors or features in a home?

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Top priorities for today's buyers include price and location. With current market conditions, competition, and limited inventory, buyers may end up having to be flexible with location. Next on the list includes the number of beds and baths. Depending on family size, the number of bedrooms can be flexible, but most buyers prefer at least two bathrooms.

Many of our 50+ buyers prefer a one-story home or a home that has a bedroom and bathroom on the main level. For families with younger children the priority is to have all the bedrooms on the same level for safety reasons, as well as at least one bathtub. Lot size and garage spaces seem to be features that buyers can work around.

Due to higher interest rates and cost of materials and labor, buyers are often thrilled to find homes that are well maintained and updated to keep their costs down when first moving in. Not having to worry about a new roof, furnace, AC, water heater, windows, or enduring inconveniences during renovations is a bonus after making a downpayment and moving expenses.

#### DIANE SIMONSON Simonson Real Estate & Auction Service

Every buyer has a different set of search criteria but two of the most common/important parameters are price and location. Many buyers are also looking for a certain number of bedrooms, bathrooms or garage spaces. It's a major bonus if the property is "move-in ready" and

# **ASK THE EXPERTS**

has nice, modern updates in the kitchen and bath areas.

### BETH PENDLETON Assist2Sell

Determining factors or features in a home vary from buyer to buyer. Price, of course is a primary issue as well as location. Apart from that, buyers often are impressed with recent updates such as newer kitchens, baths, flooring, even something as simple as paint.

Having been in real estate for 20 years, I can testify that pretty sells. A home starts making an impression from the street. A well-kept yard, pretty landscaping & a nice front door set the stage. Buyers love uncluttered spaces where they can imagine placement of their own furniture and personal belongings. Bad smells and barking dogs are a turn off to even the most animal loving buyers.

Buyers appreciate when a house clearly has been kept up and cared for by the previous owner and most of all, buyers love clean, clean, clean!

### THANK YOU FOR READING THE HERALD'S LOCAL REAL ESTATE RECORD

Please send questions you'd like answered by the experts to kyle@monroecountyherald.com

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In the past 3 years Weiss Realty closed over 700 transactions, which is equivalent to over \$300,000,000 in sales volume totaling just over 48,000 acres sold.

# How to manage multiple offers: Don't rely solely on price!

Have you recently put your house up for sale? Are offers pouring in? That's a good problem to have! Now you must choose one. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Here are a few tips to help you sort through the options and select the person for whom you'll hand over the keys.

Of course, you want to get the best price for your home. However, other factors could come into play if you receive two equivalent offers. Here are a few things you should

### THE FINANCING SITUATION

For example, has the buyer been pre-approved for a mortgage?

### YOUR PERSONAL VALUES

...such as if you want to sell to a family rather than someone who wants to renovate your house and flip it for a profit.

### 

It can take a few weeks or several months. The date the evaluate each offer in detail and, if necessary, create a counteroffer.



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### consider before deciding:

THE CONDITIONS all The more conditions there are, the longer the process ta will likely take.

bill of sale was signed can also impact the timeline. If you need help deciding, talk to your real estate agent. They'll help you

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on a spacious 3.3-acre lot, the property offers ample room for creativity and expansion. The house features three bedrooms and one bath, providing a solid foundation for a cozy family residence. A detached garage adds convenience and potential for additional storage or workspace. This property is in need of TLC, making it an ideal project for those with a vision and a knack for renovation. Bring your tools and transform this hidden gem into your personal sanctuary. Listed by:

Ina Acuca 414-441-4301, A Way Home Real Estate Agency Source: WIREX MLS,MLS#: 1876434

