



MICHIANA

VILLAGE HALL SURVEY RESULTS

December 2023

Background:

A survey was conducted in the Village of Michiana to gather feedback and perspectives from residents regarding the upcoming renovation of the Village Hall space located at the Village Building on Cherokee Drive. The survey was initiated in early November 2023 and remained open for approximately three weeks. It was extensively promoted on the Village website through a prominent top banner on the homepage, accompanied by two email reminders sent to all Village residents by Anne Heygood.

As the renovation project progresses, with exciting enhancements such as the installation of new windows and doors, we have been eager to actively involve our valued residents in shaping the future of The Village Hall. We sought their input and insights on how to optimize this space to meet the diverse needs of our community.

This report presents the findings of the survey and outlines the actionable steps that will follow based on the feedback received

Response Rate and Questions:

We are thrilled to have received 86 responses to the Village Hall Survey. This enthusiastic participation reflects the strong interest and dedication of our community to collaboratively enhance this cherished space for the benefit of all residents. Below you will find a summary of the responses for all 9 questions. A full list of the responses can be found in the appendix.

Question #1

The first open-ended question “What improvements would you like to see in the Village Hall?” are summarized below.

Based on the responses from residents about improvements they would like to see in the Village Hall, here are the most common priorities in descending order:

1. **Bathroom Update:** Several residents mentioned the need for bathroom renovations.
2. **New Lighting and Flooring:** Many respondents expressed a desire for improved lighting and flooring.
3. **Main Meeting Room Renovation:** The main room, where village meetings are held, received a significant number of comments suggesting it needs renovation, including improvements in comfort, temperature control, seating, and AV quality.
4. **Total Renovation and Modernization:** Some residents called for a complete overhaul of the Village Hall, including features like living room-like seating, high-speed internet, a bar with a TV, improved bathrooms, and more.
5. **Maintaining the Rustic Charm:** A portion of respondents emphasized the importance of preserving the rustic look and feel of the hall while making necessary upgrades.
6. **Kitchen and Lounge Improvements:** Upgrading the kitchen and lounge facilities was also mentioned.
7. **Windows and Doors Upgrades:** Many residents suggested modernizing windows and doors for energy efficiency.
8. **Improved HVAC and Insulation:** Better heating, ventilation, and insulation were identified as necessary upgrades.
9. **Additional Meeting Rooms:** Some respondents called for more smaller rooms for meetings and rentals.
10. **Comfortable Seating and Furniture:** Creating a welcoming and cozy environment with comfortable seating and updated furniture was a common theme.
11. **Security Enhancements:** Improving security with doors and windows was mentioned by a few.
12. **Audio Improvements:** Enhancing audio for meetings was highlighted by a subset of respondents.
13. **Multi-Use Facility:** Some residents suggested making the hall a multi-use facility for various events and groups.
14. **Storage for Office Documents:** Secure storage for office documents and files was mentioned by one respondent.
15. **Game Tables and Card Chairs:** Adding game tables and ensuring an adequate supply of card chairs for community use was brought up.
16. **Maintaining Casual Atmosphere:** Several residents expressed a desire for updates while preserving a casual, rustic atmosphere.

It's clear that there is a range of opinions on how the Village Hall should be improved, with some residents favoring extensive renovations and others preferring to maintain its historical character while addressing essential upgrades.

Question #2

The second question was “What activities would you like to see hosted in the Village Hall?” Based on the responses regarding the types of activities residents would like to see in the Village Hall, here are the most common priorities in descending order:

1. **Community Gatherings and Social Events:** Residents expressed a strong desire for various community gatherings, including social events, coffee hours, breakfast clubs, and happy hours, to foster neighborly interactions and unity.
2. **Meetings and Workshops:** Village meetings, educational workshops, and town hall meetings were mentioned as important activities.
3. **Recreational Activities:** Several respondents mentioned recreational activities such as game nights, card games, bingo, and line dancing.
4. **Cultural and Arts Events:** Activities like wine and whisky tastings, concerts, art classes, and book clubs were also favored.
5. **Family-Friendly Events:** Residents supported events suitable for families, including day camp activities, children's events, and family gatherings.
6. **Rentals for Private Events:** Some residents suggested making the hall available for private parties and gatherings, such as weddings and private events.
7. **Lectures and Speakers:** A few mentioned interest in lectures, guest speakers, and informational sessions.
8. **Fitness and Exercise Classes:** Yoga and exercise classes were suggested.
9. **Movie Nights:** Movie nights with discussions were also mentioned.
10. **Culinary Events:** Events involving food and beverages, such as wine tastings, coffee and bakery gatherings, and food nights with local restaurants, were popular ideas.
11. **Arts and Crafts:** Residents expressed interest in art classes and craft-related activities.
12. **Open Mic and Music Events:** Some mentioned open mic nights, music events, and jazz nights.
13. **Holiday and Seasonal Events:** Holiday celebrations, themed parties, and seasonal gatherings were proposed.
14. **Public Access and Socializing:** Some residents emphasized the importance of making the Village Hall a place for residents to meet informally and socialize.
15. **Youth and Teen Activities:** Activities for teenagers and youth, such as dances and club meetings, were mentioned.
16. **Special Interest Groups:** Residents showed interest in special interest groups related to topics like gardening, local history, and geology.

It's evident that the primary focus is on creating a community hub where residents can connect, socialize, and engage in various activities that cater to a wide range of interests and age groups. Additionally, there is support for renting the hall for private events, but with certain conditions and considerations.

Question #3

The third question was about amenities or features that are desired. Based on the responses regarding specific amenities or features residents would like to have in the Village Hall, here are the most common priorities in descending order:

1. **Working Fireplace with Comfy Seating:** Many residents expressed a desire for a working fireplace in the Village Hall, along with comfortable seating around it.
2. **Improved Internet and Connectivity:** Residents highlighted the importance of better internet access and connectivity within the hall.
3. **Kitchen and Bar Facilities:** Some respondents suggested the inclusion of a catering kitchen, service bar, and possibly a bar area for events.
4. **Meeting Rooms and Seating:** There was a call for various seating options, including communal and individual seating, card tables, and cozy furniture. Meeting rooms were also mentioned.
5. **AV and Entertainment:** Several respondents indicated the need for AV equipment, including a large projection screen, decent sound system, and TV. Entertainment options such as a grand piano and game tables were also mentioned.
6. **Front Porch Remodel:** Some residents proposed remodeling the front porch and improving the lighting on it.
7. **Historical Artwork:** A few respondents suggested incorporating historical artwork or preserving the vintage and historic feel of the hall.
8. **Safety Features:** Safety features like handicap access, emergency facilities, and dependable internet access during outages were mentioned.
9. **Environmental Efficiency:** There was a general call for environmentally efficient features in the hall.
10. **Storage and Lockers:** Lockers and storage options were suggested by a couple of residents.
11. **Reading Corner:** A children's reading corner was proposed, with the donation of books.
12. **Vending Machines:** A few mentioned the possibility of vending machines for beverages and snacks.
13. **Community Garden:** While it was considered a fantasy by one respondent, the idea of a community garden on the hall's grounds was mentioned.
14. **Dimmable Lighting System:** A dimmable lighting system was suggested for the hall.
15. **Stage Area:** Responses were mixed on the stage. Most don't want it and deemed it unsafe. Some have supported the preservation of the stage, often citing its importance for the Michiana Day Camp.
16. **Water and Cups:** A simple amenity request was for water and cups to be available.
17. **Community-Focused Features:** Some respondents emphasized that the hall should prioritize features that benefit the community, such as resident dinners with plates, silverware, and a bar.

It's clear that residents have diverse preferences, with the majority advocating for modern amenities like high-speed internet and AV equipment, while others prioritize preserving the historic character of the hall. The inclusion of a working fireplace and comfortable seating was a common theme throughout the responses.

Question #4

The next question was centered around how often the residents visit the Village Hall.

Based on the responses regarding how often residents visit the Village Hall, here is a summary with approximate percentages:

- **Regularly (Visit Frequently):** Approximately 20-25% of respondents indicated that they visit the Village Hall on a regular basis.
- **Occasionally (Visit Occasionally):** Approximately 40-45% of respondents mentioned visiting the Village Hall from time to time, but not on a regular basis.
- **Rarely (Visit Infrequently):** Approximately 30-35% of respondents stated that they rarely visit the Village Hall, suggesting infrequent or very limited visits.

Overall, the responses show a mix of visitation patterns, with a significant portion visiting occasionally, a smaller but substantial group visiting regularly, and another group who rarely visit the Village Hall. The exact percentages are approximate due to the qualitative nature of the responses.

Question #5

The next question is centered around favorite aspects of the existing Village Hall condition. Based on the responses regarding residents' favorite aspects of the Village Hall, here are the priorities in descending order along with perspective:

1. **Charm and Rustic Feel:** Many residents appreciate the charming and rustic atmosphere of the Village Hall. They value its nostalgic and vintage character, which reminds them of Michiana's history and their own experiences.
2. **Location:** The Hall's location, near the park and in the heart of Michiana, is highly regarded. It's seen as a convenient and central gathering place for the community.
3. **Potential for Community Use:** Several respondents mentioned their favorite aspect as the potential for the Village Hall to be used by the community for various gatherings, events, and meetings. They value its versatility.
4. **Front Porch:** The front porch with its cozy atmosphere, rocking chairs, and flowers is appreciated by some residents. They view it as a welcoming and pleasant space.
5. **Historical and Vintage Appearance:** Many respondents like the historical and vintage appearance of the Hall, including its high ceiling, wooden decor, and fireplace.
6. **Connection to Michiana's History:** The Hall's connection to Michiana's history, especially as a hub for the community and Michiana Day Camp, is highly regarded by some residents.
7. **Community and Gathering Place:** Several respondents see the Village Hall as a vital gathering place for the community, where people can come together and socialize.
8. **Proximity and Convenience:** For some, the convenience of having the Village Hall within walking distance is a favorite aspect.
9. **Nostalgia and Sentiment:** Nostalgia and sentimentality for the Hall's appearance and its role in their personal history were mentioned by a few residents.
10. **Village Staff Friendliness:** Some residents appreciate the friendliness of the village staff who work at the Hall.
11. **Open and Flexible Space:** The open and flexible nature of the Hall's interior space, which can accommodate various needs, is valued by a few respondents.
12. **Camp-Like Environment:** The camp-like environment, especially related to the Day Camp, is seen as a positive aspect by some. But some find it to be monopolizing during the summer and hinders some residents from enjoying the Village Hall area.

Overall, residents have diverse perspectives on their favorite aspects of the Village Hall, with many emphasizing its charm, historical significance, and potential as a community gathering place.

Question #6

The next question was based on the responses regarding residents' least favorite aspects of the Village Hall, here are the priorities in descending order along with perspective:

1. **Outdated Appearance:** Many residents express dissatisfaction with the outdated appearance of the Village Hall. They mention issues such as outdated decor, lighting, flooring, and a general feeling that it needs modernization.
2. **Stage:** The stage is a prominent concern for several respondents. They consider it dangerous, unsightly, and believe it should be addressed.
3. **Kitchen and Bathrooms:** The kitchen and bathroom facilities are mentioned as areas that need updating and renovation.
4. **Limited Hours of Operation:** Some residents find the limited hours of operation to be a drawback, particularly on Saturdays when more residents are present.
5. **Noise and HVAC:** The noise from the HVAC system is a concern for a few residents. They find it disruptive or too loud.
6. **Underutilization:** A few respondents express disappointment in the underutilization of the Village Hall. They believe it could serve more purposes and the current state is uninviting.
7. **Lack of Lighting:** Lighting issues, particularly in stairwells, are mentioned as a concern.
8. **Cats:** The presence of stray cats in or around the Hall is a concern for a couple of residents.
9. **Controversy and Vision:** Some residents express frustration with the controversy surrounding the Hall and competing visions for its use.
10. **Pickleball:** A few respondents mention that non-residents, particularly those playing pickleball, sometimes dominate the Hall.
11. **Hours of Operation:** A few residents find the current hours of operation inconvenient.
12. **Commute:** Some residents mention that they have never been to the Hall or don't know how to access it, indicating a lack of familiarity.
13. **Maintenance and Tax Concerns:** A few respondents express concerns about the potential increase in taxes to cover maintenance and improvements they consider less necessary.
14. **Appearance and Decor:** Residents highlight the dated decor, dark and uninviting atmosphere, and a mix of styles in lighting fixtures as issues.
15. **Lack of Activities:** Some residents would like to see more activities or events that bring the community together.
16. **Safety Concerns:** Safety concerns related to the stage and plumbing are mentioned by a few residents.
17. **Noise and Sound:** Issues related to being able to hear speakers and the sound of the HVAC system are raised by a couple of respondents.

Overall, while many residents appreciate the charm and history of the Village Hall, there are concerns about its outdated appearance, usability, and maintenance issues that need to be addressed.

Question #7

The next question was based on the responses regarding residents' interest in attending workshops or classes held in the Village Hall, here are the percentages and perspective:

- **Yes (69.5%):** The majority of respondents are interested in attending workshops or classes in the Village Hall. They see value in such activities.
- **Maybe (23.1%):** A significant portion of respondents are open to the idea but may have some reservations or conditions that would influence their decision.
- **No (7.4%):** A small minority of respondents are not interested in attending workshops or classes in the Village Hall.

Overall, there is a notable interest in utilizing the Village Hall for educational and community-building activities, with the majority expressing a positive outlook on the idea.

Question #8

The next question was based on the responses regarding the current condition of the Village Hall, here are the percentages and perspective:

- **Good (35.1%):** A portion of respondents view the current condition of the Village Hall as good, indicating that they believe it is in relatively good shape.
- **Fair (46.5%):** The majority of the respondents consider the condition of the Village Hall as fair, suggesting that there are significant areas that need improvement.
- **Poor (18.4%):** Almost 20% of respondents rate the current condition of the Village Hall as poor, indicating that they believe it needs significant improvements or renovations.

Overall, the majority (over 2/3) of respondents rate the Village Hall's current condition as fair or poor, with some acknowledging the need for improvements in various areas. Roughly 1/3 see the Village Hall in good shape in its current state.

Question #9

Our final question was open-ended and we asked residents if they had any other comments to share. Below are common themes from the responses, along with some additional perspective:

1. **Support for Renovation:** Several respondents express support for a full renovation of the Village Hall to make it more modern, inviting, and versatile.
2. **Concerns About Becoming a Rental Venue:** Some residents are concerned that the renovation might turn the Village Hall into a rental venue for events, potentially increasing traffic and noise in the community.
3. **Community Involvement:** There is a call for increased community involvement in the renovation project, with the belief that more residents' opinions and ideas should be considered.
4. **Transparency and Budget:** Residents want transparency regarding the project's budget and costs. They want all costs itemized and discussed with the community.
5. **Environmental Concerns:** A few respondents suggest prioritizing spending on environmental needs and nature trails over renovating the Village Hall.
6. **Preserving Historic Charm:** Some residents emphasize the importance of preserving the vintage and historic ambiance of the Village Hall, avoiding overly modern renovations.
7. **Multiple Use Cases:** Respondents call for considering various use cases for the Hall, not just one or two specific visions, to ensure it remains a versatile space for multiple purposes.
8. **Camp-Friendly Atmosphere:** There's a desire to maintain a camp-friendly atmosphere at the Village Hall, recognizing the importance of the Day Camp to the community.
9. **Security Concerns:** Some residents express security concerns if the Hall were to become a public party venue for outsiders.
10. **Maintain Existing Services:** There's a call to continue offering current services, like bathrooms when pickleball courts are open, and to maintain the Hall for residents.
11. **Avoid Raising Taxes:** Some respondents emphasize the importance of not raising taxes or imposing hidden assessments for the renovation.
12. **Community Gathering Place:** Residents want the Hall to remain a gathering place with a positive and welcoming atmosphere.
13. **Flexible Space:** There's a suggestion to make the space flexible and adaptable to various community needs.
14. **Safety and Insurance:** Some residents request detailed reports on the safety of the building, including foundation and fire protection, as well as information about insurance coverage.
15. **Workshops and Classes:** There's interest in attending workshops or classes in the Village Hall, and the suggestion that the Committee should lead this effort.
16. **Communication and Unity:** Residents express a desire for more positive and unifying communication within the village, highlighting the need for clear and unbiased news sources.

These themes reflect a range of perspectives and concerns regarding the renovation project for the Village Hall. Full list of the comments can be found in the appendix.

Summary of Findings:

The survey results strongly support the need for the renovation of the Village Hall, with a significant number of respondents advocating for modernized amenities. Notably, over two-thirds of the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of the Village Hall, rating it as poor or fair.

There is substantial interest in the Village coordinating various activities and events to be hosted in the Village Hall on a frequent basis. Approximately 70% of respondents expressed a willingness to attend such events and activities.

While the majority of respondents only occasionally or rarely visit the Village Hall currently, there is an opportunity to increase resident engagement by implementing a well-orchestrated renovation plan and a curated schedule of events and activities that align with the needs of the Villagers.

The current direction and design aesthetic of the renovation plan are generally in line with the feedback received from the majority of respondents.