

## **Ordinance would restrict donation boxes**

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN  
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### **Concerns with growing number of collection facilities prompt village to consider regulating their use, size and location**

Concerned about a growing number of donation boxes in the village, Grafton officials are poised to take steps to regulate the collection facilities.

The Plan Commission is scheduled on April 24 to consider a proposed ordinance calling for restrictions on the size, location and use of unattended donation boxes.

The ordinance would prohibit such boxes in most areas of the village. The exceptions would be for properties zoned institutional — such as churches, schools, medical facilities, libraries and nursing homes — as well as for nonprofit agencies whose mission is to help needy people.

Boxes would only be allowed with written permission from the property owner and after the village approves a site plan that includes the location, dimensions and design of each box.

Village Administrator Darrell Hofland said the proposed ordinance was drafted in response to complaints from property owners and residents.

“The village received several complaints. Often the boxes were placed in parking lots without the permission of the owners,” he said. “Some of the concerns were because the boxes were put up by for-profit businesses.”

Hofland estimated that there are at least six donation boxes in the village, most of which are on commercial properties. “Up until a year and a half ago, there were none,” he said.

Most of the boxes are used to collect clothes, toys and household items.

The proposed ordinance calls for the permit applicant to maintain the box and remove it when requested by the property owner. Boxes could not be higher than six feet or larger than 216 cubic feet, would have to be painted or stained in neutral or earth-tone colors and would have to be mounted on a hard surface such as asphalt or concrete.

Signs would be allowed on three sides of a box, but the total area of all signs could not exceed three square feet. No more than two boxes would be allowed on each property.

Boxes would have to be free of debris and be cleared of their contents at least once every two weeks.

Failure to meet the requirements could result in a municipal citation.

In a report to the commission last month, Village Planning Director Mike Rambousek said the village currently has no laws regulating donation boxes.

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“While the Planning and Development Department supports charitable causes, the unregulated placement of these donation boxes can have unintended negative consequences such as traffic safety issues, unsightliness and vandalism,” Rambousek said.

Several village officials have voiced support for the ordinance.

Hofland said the ordinance would not apply to drop-off facilities at nonprofit businesses such as Family Sharing of Ozaukee County and a Goodwill store that is scheduled to open in the former Sears store building in June.

A public hearing on the proposed ordinance will be held at the April 24 commission meeting. Following a recommendation from the commission, the Village Board could consider adopting the ordinance as early as May 2.