MEMO

Engineering Department

To:	Common Council
From:	John Neumeier, Director of Public Works/City Engineer
Date:	11/17/2026
Re:	Request to establish a philanthropic community improvement program in cooperation with KASD

Background information:
As part of the city 2024-2026 Strategic Plan, a key objective was to Create a Community of Choice. One specific goal identified was to establish a philanthropic community improvement program. A similar program we identified was the "Future Neenah" program; background from that program is attached or available at https://futureneenah.org/

The Kaukauna High School Civic Engagement class recently approached city staff to inquire if we would help them form a 501(c)(3) to be able to apply for grants for city improvement projects. We noted that this was a part of the city long term goals and would like to discuss bigger picture with Council and Kaukauna Area School District to determine a plan of action.

Strategic Plan:
Create a community of choice. Collaboration. Service. Innovation. Financial Responsibility.

Budget: Staff time to investigate and develop framework along KASD and community leaders.

Staff Recommended Action:
Direct staff to work with KASD to develop a framework of a philanthropic community improvement program and bring back for Council consideration.



About Future Neenah

From Downtown Spark to Citywide Shine

Our Story

Back in 1983, a group of passionate Neenah residents had a bold idea: let's give our downtown the attention it deserves. With that spark, Future Neenah was born—created as a nonprofit civic development organization focused solely on revitalizing our historic downtown.

And wow—did it take off.

From One Street to Every Street

At first, our work centered on breathing new life into the heart of the city: preserving our history, supporting local shops, and making downtown a place people wanted to gather. It worked—and people noticed.

By the early 1990s, our board of directors made a strategic, exciting decision: Let's take what we've learned and expand our mission to serve the entire Neenah community.

Since then, Future Neenah has grown into a citywide force for connection, celebration, and economic vitality—but we've never lost our hometown soul.

Built By Community, For Community

Today, Future Neenah is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit supported by donors, volunteers, partners, and neighbors who care deeply about this place we all call home. We've stayed true to our roots, while reaching toward a future that includes:

- Downtown development and beautification
- Community-wide partnerships and projects
- Signature events that bring people together
- Support for local businesses and entrepreneurs

Through it all, one thing has never changed: we believe in Neenah—its people, its potential, and its power to grow stronger when we work together.

WHY OUR HISTORY MATTERS

Every block we've helped build, every mural, every sidewalk sale, every summer concert, and every new neighbor welcomed—it's all part of our story. And yours.

Because Future Neenah isn't just about programs and projects—it's about creating a community where everyone feels like they belong. Where young families, longtime residents, and weekend visitors alike can share in the charm, the pride, and the forward motion of a place that keeps getting better.

What Comes Next?

We're proud of where we've been—but even more excited about where we're going. With every project and every partnership, we're planting seeds for the next generation of Neenah families, dreamers, and doers.

And you? You're a key ingredient in what comes next.
We'd love for you to be part of our ongoing story.