

In September 2011, the For Bare Feet sock factory in Helmsburg was damaged in a fire and subsequently relocated. The owner of the factory, Sharon Rivenbark, cared about the Helmsburg community and knew that the loss of the business would have a significant economic impact on the town. So, she decided that the property would be donated to the county to sell, under the condition that the profits go back to Helmsburg. Those profits ended up being around \$200,000.

Around 2016, a small group of citizens began meeting to discuss ways they might improve and revitalize Helmsburg. With help from the Brown County Redevelopment Commission, the group quickly gained members and momentum, established a board and by-laws, filed articles of incorporation, and was granted 501c3 status in 2018 as the Helmsburg Community Development Corporation.

We have since held monthly meetings, organized yearly community cleanup days, obtained "Welcome to Helmsburg" signs (2 on State Rd. 45, 1 on Helmsburg Rd.), helped the Brown County Community Church send Christmas gifts to children in underprivileged countries, welcomed two new Habitat for Humanity homes (and will soon be gaining a third), and obtained grants for the complete repair and replacement of the stormwater drain system throughout the town, as well as boosted the overall morale and pride in our small community.

Other ideas and needs that have been discussed include installing new streetlights, replacing and adding more sidewalks, building a community park, creating a community garden, and obtaining an emergency siren, but we are limited by our current funding.

Sharon Rivenbark shared her dream with Helmsburg years ago, and the HCD appreciates the past and ongoing support of the County Council, the Commissioners, and the Brown County RDC.

The Helmsburg Community Development group has proven to be worthy, responsible advocates, and we take our fiduciary responsibility very seriously. We request the funds that were earmarked for Helmsburg now be released to the HCD, so that we may continue to benefit the families we serve.

We thank you for your time and commitment to the County Council, and for including us on tonight's agenda to consider our request.

Respectfully,  
Helmsburg Community Development Corporation