

Madam Chair Peggy Clayton  
20356 Wendigo Park Road  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
Phone 218-259-1551

# Harris Township

SINCE 1909



NEIGHBORS, SHORES & MORE

Supervisor/VC Mike Schack 340-8852  
Supervisor Ryan Davies 929-0610  
Supervisor Dan Gilbert 259-4967  
Supervisor Jim Kelley 327-0317  
Treasurer Nancy Kopacek 398-3497  
Clerk Vacant 244-1811

[harristownshipclerk@gmail.com](mailto:harristownshipclerk@gmail.com)

**Mission Statement:**  
The Harris Town Board strives  
to enhance the quality of life,  
protect the environment,  
and maintain economic stability  
for the residents of their community.

[www.harristownshipmn.org](http://www.harristownshipmn.org)

## REGULAR BOARD MEETING JULY 13, 2022 MINUTES

**Present:** Madam Chair Clayton, Vice Chair Schack, Supervisor Kelley and Supervisor Gilbert;  
Treasurer Kopacek

**Absent:** Supervisors Davies

**Pledge to the Flag** was conducted, followed by the reading of the township mission statement.

### Approve Minutes

#### Minutes of June 8, 2022 Regular Board Meeting

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Kelley to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2022 Regular Board Meeting. Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

#### Minutes of the June 23, 2022 Work Sessions Re: Boat Landings, Land Sale, ARPA, City of Grand Rapids, Blandin Grant; and Community Plan Review

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2022 Work Sessions Re: Boat Landings, Land Sale, ARPA, City of Grand Rapids, Blandin Grant; and Community Plan Review. Ayes- 4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

#### Minutes of the June 22, 2022, 2021 Audit Review Work Session

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2022, 2021 Audit Review Work Session. Ayes- 4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

### Additions and Corrections

Supervisor Kelley requested to add Woodtick Landing, and SEH Misc. Expenses, to the agenda under Recreation as 7C and 7D, respectively.

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Schack to approve the additions of Woodtick Landing (7C), and SEH Misc. Expenses (7D) to the agenda, and approve the rest of the Regular Agenda. Absent-Supervisors Davies and Gilbert. Ayes-3; Nays-0. Motion carried.

## **Business from the Floor Rowe Funeral Home**

Tim ————— with Rowe Funeral Home came before the board regarding the Cemetery Policy. Tim stated he had discussions with Chair Clayton about Harris not allowing the use of grave liners for burials. After researching conducted by the Chair, it was his understanding that the policy would be changed to remove the language on grave liners, and replace with language allowing concrete outer burial containers. Chair Clayton stated that the cemetery policy was updated and the language on grave liners was removed, and the language on allowing concrete outer burial containers, was added, and is on the agenda, item 9B, for board discussion and approval. Tim thanked the Chair.

Samantha Hayes, one of the members of the Hafar family, spoke about the death of her father, Robert Hafar, on June 22, 2022, and that because of the discrepancies with the burial sites/block of the Hafar family, and the family feeling that the Harris Board has prevented that burial, they have retained an attorney and filed a lawsuit against the board.

Chair Clayton addressed Samantha and family members by stating that it was not now or not ever the intention of the board to cause undue stress or duress for the Hafar family, and that the board wanted to resolve this matter and was hopeful this could take place at this meeting.

Chair Clayton pointed out that the Declaration of the Harris Town Cemetery was signed in July 1926. The map of the cemetery at that time showed the ROW, which cut off the Blocks 19 and 33 in Section 2, and Block 10 (Hafar Block) in Section 1, therefore, those 3 blocks were never full blocks (32 sites). A full Block has 4 lots, with each lot having 8 burial sites, for a total of 32 sites. Blocks 19, 33, and 10 were never full Blocks in 1926, nor are they full Blocks today. These Blocks have 2 lots each (2 and 3), as lots 1 and 4 do not exist due to the ROW.

Chair Clayton further provided a history of discussions which were held in 2015 regarding "discrepancies in the number of cemetery sites sold to Don Hafar, Section 1, Block 10, where half of the Block was in the platted River Road ROW." These discussions took place in 2015, and were tabled at board meetings held on April 8<sup>th</sup>, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, May 27<sup>th</sup>, June 24<sup>th</sup>, and July 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was finally at the August 26, 2015 Board Meeting where Supervisor Kortekaas reported the discrepancy in sites had been resolved as he talked with maintenance and by rights the "sites should not have been sold due to their location in platted River Road ROW". He did further state that maintenance flagged the 4 corners of Section 1, Block 10 and that there was enough accessible space to use all 32 sites- including the 4 sites thought previously to be unusable. The Hafar family had been notified, and were satisfied with the results.

Chair Clayton added that even though Supervisor Kortekaas (in 2015) had maintenance flag the 4 corners, the Board never had maintenance move the markers, nor was anything surveyed or sites plotted. Had the 2015 Board followed through, our Board would not be dealing with this today. Chair Clayton did share with the family, the sites which are available now (7), and that maintenance will be able to open 3 sites by moving a corner marker in lot 2, allowing 7 available sites. Derrick Martilla, Maintenance, also spoke on behalf of that specific Block as he was one of the maintenance employees (in 2015) who flagged the corners and concurred with the Chair that the Block was not and still is not a full Block, as lots 1 and 4 do not exist.

Diane Kortekaas spoke and stated that she was not aware of those conversations, and no communications were held between herself and the Chair regarding burial sites. Further (tense) discussions were held (with Diane and other family members), It was shared that the current Block has 7 sites which are open, but the Hafar family wants to bury Robert in lot 4, which still shows as being in the platted River Road ROW.

The Kortekaas/Hafar family produced two cemetery deeds denoting Don Hafar purchased a full Block (32) sites in 1961. Question arose as to how a full Block was sold in 1961, (also questioned in 2015 discussions) when a full Block did not exist then, nor exists today.

After considerable amount of time was spent, the Board, in trying to get this resolved, moved forward with the following motion:

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to contact SEH regarding locating corner markers, and getting the rest of Block 10 (potential lots 1 and 4) surveyed.

Discussion held by the Board on the potential of it not being able to be surveyed, if a portion still belonged to the State, and advised the Kortekaas/Hafar family of this possibility. The family will move forward with the lawsuit if there is no survey, as they have the cemetery deeds showing they have the entire Block.

The motion moved forward. Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

Supervisor Kelley will expedite the survey request with SEH, and as soon as a survey date and information has been established, Chair Clayton will advise the attorney for the family, which will then be relayed to the family from their attorney.

### **Consent Agenda**

No items were on the consent agenda.

### **Roads**

#### **Road Update**

Supervisor Kelley stated that roads are looking good. There are still some issues with Metzenhuber Road, which maintenance continues to work on. Short discussion followed,

#### **LRIP Update**

Supervisor Kelley reviewed the LRIP Grant information with the board.

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Clayton to approve and sign "Exhibit E for Grant Agreement to State Transportation Fund, Local Road Improvement Program, Grant Terms and Conditions, Sunny Beach Road" (Harris Resolution 2022-017). Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve and sign "Local Road Improvement Program (LRIP) Grant Agreement". Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

#### **Culverts (Root Road & Wendigo Park Road)**

Supervisor Kelley stated that Mediacom replaced and moved the cabling from the culvert, on Wendigo Park Road.

Supervisor Kelley reported that the culvert on Root Road is rusted and will more than likely need to be replaced. He will obtain prices for replacement, and will bring (pricing) back to the Board.

#### **Stoney Point & Gary Drive Tree Removals**

Supervisor Kelley reported that the pine tree(s) on Gary Drive will need to be removed by fall.

Supervisor Kelley stated that tree removal on Stoney Point was projected to cost approx. \$800.

A motion was made by Chair Clayton and seconded by Supervisor Schack to table tree removals to the July 27, 2022 P and D Meeting, Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

#### **Isleview Road**

Chair Clayton stated that the "Joint Resolution of the City of Grand Rapids and the Town of Harris for Detachment of certain Land Pursuant to MS 414.06", is before the board for approval and signing. The number of acres in the property for detachment is 120.4, and the number and character of

buildings on said property is 16 dwelling units and 18 out buildings, with 40 persons (information based on 16 dwellings x 2.5 persons per).

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Schack to approve and sign the "Joint Resolution of the City of Grand Rapids and the Town of Harris for Detachment of Certain Land". Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

Chair Clayton will get the resolution to Attorney Any Shaw.

### **Storm Damage Report**

Supervisor Schack gave a brief overview of the report submitted to FEMA on the storm damages of May 30, 2022. The State will reimburse 25%, and federal will reimburse 75%.

Supervisor Schack will work on the storm damages of June 20-24, 2022. Short discussion followed,

### **Bargen Seal Coat Quote**

Supervisor Schack reviewed prices received from Bargen for crack and gap repairs. There is an overall budget of \$60,000 for crack sealing. Discussion held on completing gap repair on some of the roads. The roads included were, but not limited to: (Wood Pine, Little Crystal Lane, Tolerick, Woodland Park, Robinson, Lakeview Drive, Wendigo Park Road, Sunny Beach, Birch Hills Drive, East Harris, Mishawaka, Verde Lane, and Wesleyan Drive)

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Kelley to add the crack seal information to the work session to be scheduled for landings, etc, (later on the agenda). Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried. (NOTE: this item was added to the scheduled work session to be held on July 22, 2022 at 6:00 pm)

### **Recreation**

#### **LaPlant Landing**

Supervisor Kelley reported that the DNR put in a new ramp and realigned (ramp) at the landing and fixed the blow hole at the bottom. Chair Clayton will update FB with this information.

### **Schedule Work Session**

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack to schedule a work session on July 22, 2022 at 6:00 pm at the Town Hall re: boat landings, land sale, ARPA, Isleview Road, Blandin Grant, crack sealing, and cemetery. Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

Chair Clayton will post the work session.

### **Woodtick Landing**

Supervisor Kelley reported that SEH has placed designated stakes at the landing. There will be room to clear the area for "4 spots" vs. 5 (originally) spots. The Board was in agreement with this information.

### **SEH Misc Expenses**

Supervisor Kelley reported that the misc. expenses previously set aside for SEH work at the landings has been capped, and the board will need to approve additional funds of \$5,000.00 (for Mishawaka and Woodtick).

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve \$5,000.00 in additional funds for SEH boat landings (Mishawaka and Woodtick). Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

**Old Business**  
**Cemetery Policy**

Chair Clayton stated that in her discussions with maintenance, and Rowe Funeral Home, it was suggested and decided to remove the language on grave liners, and add the language on concrete outer burial containers, to the cemetery policy.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack to approve the updated cement policy (remove the language in grave liners, and add the language on concrete outer burial containers). Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

The updated cemetery policy will be provided to the Sexton, who, in turn, will forward onto the funeral homes in Itasca County.

**New Business**  
**Conditional Use Permit**

Chair Clayton updated the board on the conditional use permit public hearing, and viewing of the site off of Hwy. 169/Co. Rd 17. The Planning Commission did approve the conditional use permit of Brandon Jahn, for commercial for small office space and shop/storage building for contracting business, at the Public Hearing at 1:00 pm.

Brandan Jahn briefly spoke on his project and stated that there is already access to Hwy 169 and if he moves forward with access off of County Road 17, a minimum buffer of 20 ft will be needed.

Chair Clayton told the board that "findings of fact" will need to be conducted and turned it as the final step will be approval of the Itasca County Board.

1. Is the use consistent with the Harris Township Comprehensive Plan? Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies.
2. Is the conditional use compatible with the existing neighborhood? Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies. Comments: there would be no retail business. A small office space, and shop/storage building. Other businesses in the area have more traffic.
3. Have environmental concerns or precautions been addressed? Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies. Comments: just a small office space and shop/storage building are needed.
4. Does the site have sufficient vehicle access in and out of the property? Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies.
5. Is there adequate parking space? Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies. Comments: there is no retail and there will be enough parking for the employees, with access off of Hwy. 169, and if need be, additional access will be forthcoming off of County Rd 17, with buffer conditions.
6. Is there adequate water supply and sewage treatment for the request? Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies. Comments: sewer and water will be needed and permits will be obtained.
7. Have potential unsafe or unhealthy conditions been addressed? Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies. Comments: there is no retail; just office space and shop/storage building.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to recommend the County Board approve the Brandan Jahn conditional use permit. Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

**Resolution 2022-016 Election Judges**

Chair Clayton read Resolution 2022-016 Election Judges, in its entirety. Chair Clayton stated that the hourly rate for election judges, and head election judge may need to be changed, to be in alignment with other townships.

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve Resolution 2022-016 Election Judges. Ayes-4; Nays-0, absent Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

**Audit Recap**

Treasurer Kopacek reviewed the 2021 Audit results. The board was in receipt of the following documents from Clifton, Larson, Allen, Township audit firm: Town of Harris Financial Statements and Supplementary Information for the year ended December 31, 2021, Signed Governance Communication Letter, Signed Internal Control Communications and Mgmt. letter, and Exit Presentation Report.

Harris is utilizing CTAS, in all areas, and it is a good accounting program. All Government funds expenditures and all government fund revenues, fire fund, capital improvement fund, road and bridge fund, the general fund, and the general revenue fund were also reviewed.

The 2021 audit financials, need to be published within 30 days of the Township receiving and reviewing the audit results, as per M.S. The 2021 audit financials will also be uploaded to the Harris Township website.

**Minnesota Association of Townships Insurance Trust**

Treasurer Kopacek reviewed the changes in the Minnesota Association of Townships Insurance Trust. Effective July 1, 2022 MATIT severed its reliance on its long time service partner, Meadowbrook. Going forward, MATIT will electronically gather, store, access and share information needed for its operations. To accomplish that, they have developed and will premier their own website this summer and will provide a point of communication between MATIT and its members. Further information will be provided by MATIT, and the township will move forward with those changes.

**2022 Comprehensive Plan**

Chair Clayton presented the 2022 Comprehensive Plan. The board held two public community planning workshops, and several constituents of the township were in attendance. Information was gleaned from these meetings and changes were made to the Comprehensive Plan as needed and necessary.

Chair Clayton thanked those who were in attendance at these public workshops, and CEDA for their work on this plan!

The board did not have any further changes in the 2022 Comprehensive Plan.

A motion was made by Supervisor Gilbert and seconded by Supervisor Kelley to approve the 2022 Comprehensive Plan. Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

Chair Clayton will contact Sarah Weese with CEDA, so she can send this plan to print and provide to the township board.

**Newsletter**

Chair Clayton reviewed the July 2022 Newsletter. The board did not have any changes. Chair Clayton thanked our volunteer, Cyndy Martin, once again, for pulling the newsletter together.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack to approve the Newsletter, send it to print and authorize a check to Rapids Printing for postage. Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

**Posting/Publishing Supervisor Filing**

Chair Clayton reviewed the "Notice of Filing for Harris Township Office." The offices which are up for election are: Supervisor A, Supervisor D, and Supervisor E. All three offices serve a 4-year elected term, which would expire on December 2026.

Filing would begin Tuesday, August 2, 2022 until Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at 5 PM. The Town hall office, located at 21998 Airport Rd., Grand Rapids will be open from 1 PM until 5 PM for filing on Tuesday, August 16, 2022 which is the last day of the filing. Those interested can also call the township interim Clerk to make arrangements to file prior to August 16. She can be reached via email at harristownshipclerk@gmail.com or via phone at 218-259-1551.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to approve and authorize the posting and publishing of the "Notice of Filing for Harris Town Offices." Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried

The interim Clerk will get this posted, and published in the Grand Rapids Herald Review.

**Treasurer's Report**

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley and seconded by Supervisor Schack to approve the June 1 2022 Treasurers Report in the amount of \$2,102,465.31. Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

**Payment of Bills**

A motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Chair Clayton to approve the claims list, claims # 20584 through 20591, 50592 through 20601, 20602 through 20613, along with EFTs 71322012 through 7132209, and EFT6302201 and 6302202 in the amount of \$21,219.75. Ayes-4; Nays-0. Absent-Supervisor Davies. Motion carried.

**Public Input**

No public input.

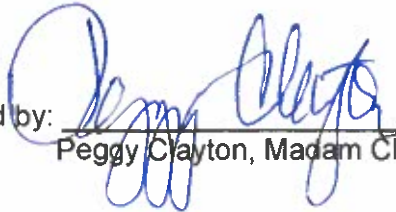
**UPCOMING Events/Meetings**

July 22, 2022	Work Session Re: Landings, Land Sale, Isleview Rd, ARPA, Blandin Grant, Bargaen Crack Sealing, and Cemetery	6:00 pm Town Hall
July 27, 2022	P and D Board Meeting	7:30 pm Town Hall
August 9, 2022	Primary Election	7:00am-8:00pm T. Hall
August 10, 2022	Regular Board Meeting	7:30 pm Town Hall
August 24, 2022	P and D Board Meeting	7:30 pm Town Hall

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before the Harris Town Board, a motion was made by Supervisor Schack and seconded by Supervisor Gilbert to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 PM.

Prepared by:   
Peggy Clayton, Interim Clerk

Signed by:   
Peggy Clayton, Madam Chair

