

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting  
Harris Township Board  
Wednesday, October 27, 2010 at 7:30pm**

The P&D Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, October 27, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Dennis Kortekaas, Gary Rosato, and Larry Key, Clerk Michele Smith, and Treasurer John Jokela. Absent: None.

Also at tonight's meeting: Julie Kennedy – township Road Engineer from SEH, Ben Otto, Rashid Dewberry, and Phil McDonald – ICC Engineering Student interns, and Chris Reyerson – Habitat for Humanity.

**1. Pledge to the flag**

**2. Habitat for Humanity - ReStore – Chris Reyerson**

Chris Reyerson, Manager of the Habitat for Humanity ReStore was invited to come to tonight's meeting by Supervisor Rosato, regarding deconstruction of the Blaine home that was recently purchased by the township. This is the process where a home is taken apart, and all salvageable items are sold at the Restore as a fund raiser for building low income homes in Itasca County.

Mr. Reyerson explained that they look for usable windows, doors, siding, cabinets, tubs/sinks, beams, etc. There would be no cost to the township for this service, and the volunteers are insured by Habitat for Humanity (\$250,000 workman's compensation). It was noted that they do not deconstruct the entire building – they do not remove roofs. With the colder temperatures approaching, the inside could be deconstructed first, while the windows are still in place. Then, once all the doors and windows are taken out, the volunteers would then cover all openings with plywood.

The board discussed that they could contact the Restore when the Blaine home is vacated in about another month, so that someone could come out and do an inventory of the home. Mr. Reyerson thought they could have the home deconstructed in about 2 weeks. They can provide heat and electricity if needed, but board has already contacted Ferrell gas to continue to heat the home.

***Supervisor Rosato made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Key, to have Habitat for Humanity/Restore deconstruct the building(s) at the recently purchased Blaine property for all salvageable materials when vacated. Upon roll call, the motion carried by a unanimous vote.***

**3. Service Center concept plan update - ICC Engineering Students (Ben, Rashid, Phil)**

The engineering student interns showed the board a PowerPoint presentation (and packet of the slides, which will be attached to these minutes), with an overview of maintenance facility specs, town hall options, columbariums and green burials, and cemetery platting. Some noted points of discussion were as follows:

- **Town Hall:** Interior options – the board liked the idea of the kitchen being distanced away from the meeting room (for noise), but would want a kitchenette and serving counter connected to the meeting room.
- **Columbarium** for the storage of cremains. There are different types of material available, as well as various sizes, and types. A main advantage is that you can get a lot more niches per footprint of land. It also may be appealing to those who do not like the idea of being “underground”. With a columbarium, a person actually purchases the niche just as they would a cemetery site. Disadvantages were the potential vandalism, and damage. The board agreed that asking our township residents via a survey if they'd like a columbarium may be in order.
- **Green Burials** where a biodegradable casket is used but no embalming fluid is used: These type of burials are cheaper, and they are buried using natural forestation, like amongst trees/forest or a prairie setting. Markers are often field stones, which go with the

natural setting. The green burial dedicated area would still be platted, with lot and block, but it would not look like a normal cemetery. Since people seem to like to plant shrub/trees in honor of their loved ones, this could satisfy that request, currently prohibited by our cemetery policy. The Board wondered about ground water drainage. Also, the township cemetery policy would need to be revised as it currently requires a vault. Another question was the option to scatter cremation ashes in the trees of a green burial area. The interns agreed to research these concerns/questions.

- **Cemetery expansion:** There is currently room for 4,545 new sites in the area cleared from the back of section 3 to Wendigo Park Road. There is also space to do a memorial garden, columbarium, green burial area, etc. Our current cemetery, sections 1-2-3, have approximately 2,500 sites. Clerk Smith agreed to verify how many cemetery sites are still for sale, but she and Supervisor Key thought about 50% of section 3 was available – or apx 500 sites.

**Items for the next P&D meetings:** The interns agreed to check into the following, and report back to the board at the November 17<sup>th</sup> P&D meeting:

- Green burials and environmental concerns with ground water. And options for the scattering ashes.
- Maintenance building details
- Town hall options as discussed

#### 4. Business from the Floor

None

#### 5. Roads

- Consider approval of MasTec buried telephone wire – Qwest job #MO1002854 (Verde Lane)  
After reviewing the information and map received from MasTec, the board had no questions or concerns.

***Supervisor Key made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Rosato to approve the Qwest job #MO1002854 application for buried telephone wire. Upon roll call, motion carried.***

- Updates by Julie Kennedy – SEH
  - 1.) **Ron Nelson/Bob Troumbly proposed minor subdivision plat update (Bayview):** A shoreland alteration permit from September 2009 was found to have been issued, to clear trees (copy attached to these minutes). However, no road permit was issued. Nelson/Troumbly are proposing 3 lots, and building a road just for those 3 lots. Technically, they can do that. However, since access would be off a township road (Bayview Place), the board needs to be involved to protect the integrity of their road.

A site inspection is being set up with the County, and the County has asked if the town board wants to be involved. The board's involvement is only the use of our township road for whatever Nelson/Troumbly are doing, and how it would affect the road. One concern voiced was potential water running off from the new road onto Bayview. Residents of Bayview Place have also expressed concern to board officers. The board agreed to appoint Julie Kennedy to be at the site inspection, along with one board member.

- 2.) **Email from Tom Pagel on Mornes Road:** A copy of the emailed letter to Supervisor Key was found and forwarded to Julie via email upon request. The undated letter was sent to notify the town board that County Board action taken November 28, 2007, effective December 1, 2007, stating that the Mornes Road will become a County Road. This action was part of a County Road Turnback Agreement between the County and the City of Grand Rapids. The county (Dave Christy – Highway Engineer) stated in the letter that they had not yet received the signed documents from the County Board, but as soon as they did, they would send the township board copies. And since Grand Rapids Township paid for the snowplowing of the Mornes

Road, the township's 2007/2008 annual maintenance agreement with the county would not be affected.

The board noted that the letter did not state if they were talking about the north or south side of Mornes Road – just “Mornes Road. (Grand Rapids Township, annexed by the City of Grand Rapids, had jurisdiction over the south side of the road, while Harris Township had jurisdiction over the north side.

The email from Tom Pagel went on to say that because the south half of the road is located in Harris Township, the City cannot designate it as a Municipal Sate Aid Street (MSAS). Pagel stated he would like the Harris Town Board to consider an annexation agreement that would give the city a 33 foot wide strip of property along Mornes Road so that the entire road would be in the City of Grand Rapids. City staff would be willing to prepare all necessary documents, sit down with the affected residents, work with the assessor's office so that the residents would not be levied city taxes on the 33 foot strip, and anything else necessary to complete the transaction. The residents in Harris Township would not be specially assessed when the City reconstructs or overlays Mornes Road, because the city cannot legally assess them.

The reason the city wants to do this is because by having Davis and Mornes Road an MSAS route, it will provide the City with additional money to maintain and reconstruct both roads.

Julie Kennedy requested permission to discuss the city's request with township attorney Andy Shaw, so she can verify her understanding of MN statute 164.14 “Road on Line Between Town and City” before talking to Tom Pagel City of Grand Rapids. As it currently stands, ½ of Mornes Road still belongs to Harris Township. In the best of our residents, the Town Board wants to understand this issue thoroughly. It's believed that if granted, the requested 33' would be in the city's jurisdiction, but not city owned. An easement would be purchased...not the property...and would require an annexation agreement.

***A motion was made by Supervisor Rosato, seconded by Supervisor Key, to approve that Julie Kennedy meet with Attorney Shaw on this annexation request by the City of Grand Rapids, and report back to the board after meeting with city staff. Upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.***

- 3.) **Road sign on Casper Landing** – Julie will check to see if the township can put up the corrected road name sign. Treasurer Jokela was not sure if the check was cashed yet, paid when processing the name change request.
- 4) **Casper graded our roads**, but didn't know where the end of Wagon Wheel Road was. As a result, they graded the entire road – not just the township portion. Supervisor Key will have an “end of Township Maintenance” sign put up at the “T”, to indicate where the end is for grading/plowing.

Also, Casper did not grade the intersection of Sunny Lane and Sunset Lane, nor the cul del sac. Supervisor Rosato received a complaint as well. He noted it was squishy, with no place for water to go due to ridges left along the side of road. Casper was not as attentive to their work as Key hoped for. Julie will mention these concerns to Casper.

## 5. Recreation

- Mike Hendricks, Recreational Advisor for the township, will be at the November 17<sup>th</sup> P&D meeting.

## 6. Town Hall Report

Upon review of the town hall report, as submitted by the Town Hall Caretaker, there were no concerns. There had been 13 rentals and \$475 collected. No accidents/damages were reported.

## 7. Maintenance Report

- New cell phones were purchased and delivered today to the two full time maintenance guys, through a government contract with Verizon, with no activation fee. The office in Duluth handles all government contracts, and so is now our representative. Dan and Derrick's numbers will not change.

## 8. Old Business

- Newsletter draft is ready – the board was asked to please proof, and get back to Clerk Smith by the end of the week. She will then send to Treasure Bay for printing and mailing.
- Consider proposed meeting date with Grand Rapids City staff: Tues. Nov 30<sup>th</sup>, 7:15pm, @ the Blandin Foundation. Everyone was in agreement with this date, time and place.
- Grave Heater: Supervisor Key found a portable diesel generator, needed to run the ground heater, would cost approximately \$1,000 at L&M, with electric start. It has a good warranty, but it has to be ordered. It would hold 70 gallons of fuel, and should run through a weekend.

***Supervisor Rosato made a motion to have Supervisor Key order and purchase the generator needed for the grave heater. Supervisor Kortekaas seconded the motion, and upon roll call, passed by a unanimous vote.***

- Shelly Johnson's property, on the corner of Harris Town Road and River Road (adjoins the Harris Cemetery/Service Center properties): The estimated market value was shared with the landowner (Shelly Johnson), which was \$95,400 for two parcels. However, Ms. Johnson said she would have to start her asking price at \$170,000. The board agreed that they could only counter offer up to \$101,000 – the same proportion as we paid over market value on the Blaine Property. **The board asked that Supervisor Key extend an offer of \$101,000**, and explain that this was the highest we - a government entity - could go.

## 9. New Business

- Discuss request to meet with the City of Grand Rapids regarding their comprehensive plan  
Supervisor Rosato received a call on behalf of Rob Mattei of the City of Grand Rapids, requesting representatives from all bordering/adjoining areas to discuss future development with regards to the City revising their comprehensive plan. Julie Kennedy would like to be a part of this, on behalf of Twp, and attend with one town board member. Supervisor Rosato will call the city, to verify if they are meeting with Harris Township separately, or if it is all surrounding boards together.

***A motion to participate the focus group meetings with the City of Grand Rapids, regarding their Comprehensive Plan updates, was made by Supervisor Rosato; one board member and Julie Kennedy would attend the meetings on behalf of the board. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Key, and upon roll call, passed by a unanimous vote.***

## 10. Adjourn

***Supervisor Key made a motion to adjourn tonight's P&D meeting at 9:55 pm. Upon a second from Supervisor Rosato, the meeting was adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Clerk of Harris Township