

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, August 26, 2009 at 7:30pm**

The P&D Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, August 26, 2009. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas and Larry Key, and Clerk Michele Smith. Absent: Treasurer John Jokela.

Also in attendance: Julie Kennedy – SEH Township Engineer, resident Ron Nelson, and Greg Carlson, a representative from Paul Bunyan Telephone.

1. Pledge to the flag

2. Variance Application by Itasca Driftskipper Snowmobile Club-Owner for Paul Bunyan Agent

This variance would allow the applicant to establish and maintain essential services to serve the area south of Pokegama Lake. The construction of a utility building (18' x 22') is for the service provider within Qwest exchange (Paul Bunyan Telephone) to establish and maintain cable routes of having high speed internet, TV and phone to make technology expansion feasible for residents. Due to the creation of a small nonconforming parcel (50' x 118' and apx 14 acres), not intended for residential use, but for a utility building, a variance is required.

Greg Carlson, from Paul Bunyan, was in attendance for tonight's meeting. He explained that Paul Bunyan wants to purchase a small parcel of land from the DriftSkippers snowmobile club to build a utility building. The building would be a block structure with a normal roof, on a slab and will contain electronic equipment. The size of the building would be 18' x 22'. Carlson further explained that these types of buildings need to be built before a cable route is established. A map of the cable routes planned by Paul Bunyan was shared by Carlson; it showed where the feeder lines will go. The idea is to build with a plan that people along route could get service. Pokegama Lake has already been designed for stakes. The natural progression is to then have the building built before service is offered.

With regards to the Board's question of Paul Bunyan coming into Harris Township, and talks about a franchise agreement, Carlson stated that Gary Thompson of Paul Bunyan has contacted the township's attorney, A. Shaw, and they have set up a meeting discuss service issues.

The Harris Township "Facts of Findings" form was reviewed by the board with regards to this variance application. All five questions were answered affirmatively. There were no other comments or questions by the Board.

Supervisor Rosato made a motion to recommend approval of the variance application submitted by the Itasca Driftskipper property owner, to sell Paul Bunyan a small piece of property to build an electronics building on, to aid in serving the South side of Pokegama Lake. Supervisor Kortekaas seconded the motion and upon roll call, motion carried.

September 8th is the site viewing, with the public hearing on September 9th at the County Board room. Supervisor Key agreed to attend both meetings.

3. Business from the Floor

- Ron Nelson – plans for a minor subdivision – 8 lots – off of Bayview Place

Ron Nelson (in attendance), and his partner, Bob Trombly, had Northern Lights Surveying draw up the plat they are designing. It will be located at the end of Bayview Place. The draft plat drawing was shared with the Board. Nelson noted that Lot 2 is not big enough to meet County specs (it's only 126' & the county requires 150'), so they're trying to purchase a strip of unbuildable property to the south in order to increase its size. A road is also planned, and it will go into the center of the plat. Nelson mentioned that they may eventually ask the township to take over the road; he was advised that the township does have their own road specs that must be met before taking over a road.

Ron came to the meeting tonight to flush out any red flags before it goes to the county. One question was, "Does it fit our comprehensive plan?" Julie commented that our Comp Plan does encourage 'conservation subdivisions', but it's not mandated. Julie added that it would be tough to do it in this particular area anyway. The Town Board also would like to see a lake access lot, but again it's not mandated.

The overall concerns by the Board were that 1.) Bayview is a substandard road, with little area for improvement. The additional traffic from large equipment building the subdivision and subsequent homes was a concern. And 2.) Proper drainage is a concern, especially to lot #5 (wetlands).

Nelson commented that they hoped to start construction yet this year.

The Harris Town Board approved Julie to look at the area of plat, and to investigate if there is any room within the ROW for road improvement. Julie also agreed to send Ron the township road specs.

4. Roads

- Sunny Beach Rd - Discuss Palmquist transfer of land for a subsurface septic system

Back in October 2008, the Board reviewed a variance application for Walter/Patty Mester. They wanted to bring their septic system into compliance. An option discussed was putting in a new septic tank in on the west side of Sunny Beach road (where the home was), but then pumping waste under the road to the east side, where a new drain field would be created. Doing so required the Mesters to acquire property for the drain field from Palmquists.

Before this process was completed, the Mester property was sold to Jeffrey and Debbie Gemmill. Gemmills are now in the process of purchasing the land needed for a drain field from Palmquists, and are requesting an easement from the township to run their septic system under Sunny Beach Road.

A copy of the survey deed from Palmquists to Gemmills was received, as well as a copy of the certificate of survey, showing where the drain field would be in reference to the Sunny Beach Road (Barbara Avenue) and lot 15 of the Sunny Beach plat. However, a design drawing of the septic system was *not* included, nor were any details regarding how deep the boring under the road will be, or how they plan to install it. This was of concern to the board.

Another concern was that realtor Patty Gould mentions in an email that Gemmill's know that SEH must look at the plan along with the county, yet Julie Kennedy (SEH) has not yet seen the plan. In addition, the draft Township Right-Of-Way (ROW) Easement states that the project will be overseen by the Township Engineer. Because neither Kennedy, nor the Board, have received a septic system plan, the Board was not yet comfortable signing the easement as prepared by Andy Shaw.

Kennedy agreed to call Don Dewy to find out if they have a sanitation permit and if so, to request a copy of the drawing.

A motion was made by Supervisor Rosato to authorize the Harris Town Board Chair to sign the ROW easements for Gemmills, contingent upon review and approval of the sanitation permit and drawing by both the board chair, and the township road engineer. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, and upon roll call, motion carried unanimously.

Kennedy and Key set a meeting date for Monday, Aug 31 at 2pm to review the septic plan.

- Wendigo Park Road - Application from Lake Country Power for line crossing sights

Julie Kennedy was given maps of Wendigo Park Road for board approval, showing where the new Lake County Power lines will cross the roadway. No other information was provided.

The Board noted that the lines cross road a lot. Kennedy was told that this was in keeping with how lines are currently aligned. The board didn't understand why the line had to cross so many times, but did not request any changes in design. A copy of the map will be placed in the Wendigo Park Road file, for future reference.

Julie recommended that after reviewing the map, the Board approve it contingent on only directional borings being used for the power line installation. She was told verbally that this would be done, but would prefer it in writing.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas to approve the map/application from Lake Country Power of where new replacement power lines will cross Wendigo Park Road, contingent on confirmation that borings will be directional only. Motion was seconded by Supervisor Rosato, and upon roll call, motion passed.

It will also be noted that the Board requests advance notice of any future projects by LCP involving Harris Township. The late communication on this project was unacceptable.

- Airport Road - Complaint about AMK property owners building berm around building

Supervisor Key has received calls from residents, complaining about a dike/berm being built around the AMK Magnetics building, They are located along Airport Road, just south of the Harris Town Hall (between the two ninety degree corners). There is concern that the dike will cause even more flooding than usual along the Airport Road and Pineridge Lane. No permits were issued to AMK for this project, but none were needed. However, the county is looking into the project and flooding potential, since the Airport is a county road.
- Wendigo Park Road - Salo's driveway

The board asked Julie Kennedy if she knew the status of fixing the large dip in Salo's driveway, which occurred when the Wendigo Park Road was overlaid last fall. His driveway did not get tapered enough. Julie assured the Board it would get fixed.
- Wendigo Park Road - Culvert request by Craig McNeil

Supervisor Key received a culvert request from Craig McNeil, who was thought to have recently purchased the Francisco place on Wendigo Park Road, McNeil wants to add a driveway to the back acreage where he plans to build a pole building. Key instructed McNeil, that in accordance to the township's culvert policy, he would need to purchase a culvert from the township.
- Wagon wheel - getting rough

It was reported that Wagon Wheel is holding up, after the addition of Class V, but is getting bumpy, and needs to be graded. Supervisor Key will have the maintenance guys take care of this.
- Mishawaka Road – Tree down

Supervisor Key received a call over the weekend that a tree blew down on Mishawaka Road. Key took care of the safety issues and moved the downed tree.
- Mishawaka Road - Drainage concerns

The board discussed the lack of drainage and the resulting problems along Mishawaka Road near T&M Marine. There are major safety issues in the spring with the flooding of the road. Two people have recently brought it up to Julie, and other residents have brought their concerns before the board earlier this summer. The board is trying to decide what they can do yet in 2009 to remedy the concern before the spring thaw in 2010.

Before the board can make a decision on what they can afford for Mishawaka, they need to decide what they are going to do with Underwood Road and the turn around. At the board's request, Julie will get an estimate to fill in the cracks on Underwood by Commercial Asphalt Repair. Julie will also have reconstruction prices in time for the September Regular Meeting on Sept 9, 2009. Both items will be reviewed at that time.
- Underwood Road update

The easement is currently being reviewed by Doug Gunderson. It will then go back to attorney Andy Shaw. Julie did not anticipate getting the turn around constructed this year, due to the lateness of the season and the construction schedule. The Board agreed with waiting on this project.
- Car/motorcycle accident E. Harris/River/Harris Town Road this morning.

Supervisor Rosato shared with the Board that there was a car/motorcycle accident this morning near the corner of East Harris and Harris Town Road. The motorcyclist died.

This is an offset intersection and our comprehensive plan addresses that it should be aligned. Problems occur when people go from East Harris to Harris Town Road (or vice versa). Also, the hill from the cemetery is a factor. Julie recommended working with the county on this, as both River Road and Harris Town Road are county roads.

Because these two roads used to be aligned perfectly, Julie also recommended that the Board request accident reports to see if they've had more accidents since the off-set realignment. Traffic counts would also be good. If it's considered a "high traffic" area, it should not have an offset intersection.

Supervisor Rosato agreed to look into Julie recommendations.

5. Recreation

- Quote to fix fence damage at Crystal Park

Supervisor Key received a quote from Keller Fence of \$325 to remove & replace the chain link fence at Crystal Park that was recently damaged during vandalism of the portable bathroom.

Supervisor Rosato made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, to approve getting the Crystal Park fence fixed by Keller Fence as quote. It was noted that this bill should be submitted to the township insurance company for the vandalism damage claim. Upon roll call, motion carried.

- Public Access on Robinson Road

Improvement to the public boat access on Robinson Road has been completed. Supervisor Kortekaas commented that there's a dock down there, but Key noted it does not belong to the township. Also, a new sign for the access has been ordered.

6. Town Hall Report

- Discuss if this report is still needed

Because a town hall report has not been received for several months, the Clerk asked the Board to discuss if the report was still necessary. The caretaker does provide the treasurer with a report of rentals and money coming in, so Smith wondered if a report for the board also needed. The board confirmed that, yes, it was necessary.

Supervisor Key shared that the caretaker has been busy with her dad, who is in the hospital, and that may be the reason town hall reports have not been submitted.

7. Maintenance Report

The maintenance report was reviewed, as submitted by the maintenance guys. Supervisor Key noted and that we've had a lot of weekend burials this summer...almost every Saturday during July and August, and may were cremain burials.

8. Old Business

- Consider approval of resolution #2009-007, A Resolution Approving Replacement Cost Coverage

Clerk Smith explained that this resolution was drafted in accordance the MN Association of Township's Insurance Trust template, to move from "fixed cost" benefit coverage to 'replacement cost' coverage. This was prompted when the township buildings were assessed by MATIT for adequate coverage, and several buildings were found to be significantly under insured.

After reviewing the resolution, Supervisor Kortekaas made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Rosato, to approve Resolution #2009-007 as presented, to approve the change to 'replacement cost coverage' for the township's property. Upon roll call, motion carried unanimously.

- Update on Paul Bunyan

An email was received from Andy Shaw, stating that Paul Bunyan had contacted him, and he is meeting with them on 9/2/09 to discuss service options for coming into Harris Township.

- New posting box at town hall being built

Supervisor Key said that a new posting box is being built for the town hall as the old one was falling apart. Rosato noted that the placement of the new box looks to be back a bit further off the parking lot edge than the previous one, and stated that the path up to the box should be kept clear in the winter time – for the Clerk, doing postings, and for the public, viewing what's on it.

- Update on firewood being cut at the Service Center / waiver form

Supervisor Key reported that the waiver form being used for cutting dead trees at the Service Center was lacking in several areas. And that the ad in the paper should be more restrictive next time. Key is getting way too many calls for the amount of people who can safely be cutting wood at the same time. He's currently only allowing five people to cut wood, but has a stack of about 15 more names of people who were interested.

Also, the people cutting wood are from all over, including Cohasset, Blackberry and even as far as Northhome. He would have preferred that we restricted takers to Harris Township residents initially, and then opening it up to the public after that.

Another problem is that there is no date/time limit on the current waiver form. Currently, the waiver would allow a person to cut wood for an unlimited time period. Key suggested adding a 5

day limit, and listing these dates on the waiver. This would allow more people to take advantage of this opportunity, while also monitoring numbers for safety.

With regards to the location for cutting, Key stated that the maintenance guys cannot find the property boundary lines. No one's gotten close to cutting outside the Service Center's property limits, but they may. It was agreed that cutting be stopped until property lines could be identified and marked. Then, after reopening, the effective dates would be put on the waiver form.

Supervisor Rosato made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas, to allow current people who are cutting, to cut until Aug 31, 2009. Then, it would be closed effective Sept 1, 2009 until a survey was completed to identify the northern property line of the Service Center (by Johnson's and Blaine's property). Upon roll call, motion passed.

Julie will get the survey ordered, and Clerk Smith will forward the waiver form electronically to the maintenance guys so that it can be modified as instructed by Supervisor Key.

9. New Business

- Review bids for Township History Book

Two proposals were solicited by Clerk Smith, for the history book project as started by former Treasurer Peggy Bishop. After reviewing both bids, the following motion was made:

Supervisor Rosato made a motion to award the project of creating the pictorial Harris Township History book to Britta Arendt, based on her proposal and \$5,000 bid. His reasons were these: 1.) She grew up in Harris Township, and continues to reside in Harris, 2.) Britta wrote a wonderful centennial piece on Harris Township for the Grand Rapids Herald Review and so the board is familiar with her work, 3.) She has a close working relationship with the Itasca County Historical Society, and 4.) Britta understands our time frame (to be completed by early November 2009 – in time for Christmas giving.) The motion to award the project to Britta was seconded by Supervisor Kortekaas and upon roll call, motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Smith will contact both people who submitted bids, and advise them of the Board's decision.

- Adopt-a-highway (a Harris Township Road) by ICC Engineering Students

Julie Kennedy told the board that ICC Engineering students need to do a certain number of hours for community service as a part of their program requirements. She was asked to see if the Harris Town Board would pay for an "Adopt a Highway" sign if the students adopted a township road for clean up. They currently already clean up Harris Town Road.

The board agreed to make a decision on this request by the next board meeting on September 9, 2009.

10. Adjourn

A motion by Supervisor Rosato was made at 10:00pm to adjourn the meeting. Upon a second by Supervisor Kortekaas, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Clerk