

**Harris Town Board
ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION
with the Staff of Grand Rapids
Monday, June 20, 2011, 7:15pm**

The Harris Town Board met on Wednesday, June 20, 2011 at 7:15 p.m., at the Blandin Foundation, with the following members present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, and Larry Key, and Clerk Michele Smith. Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams and Township Engineer, Julie Kennedy

Present from Grand Rapids: Tom Pagel - City Engineer, and Rob Mattei - Community Development Director.

The purpose of tonight's round table was to continue dialog between the township and the city staff (not the city council) on upcoming improvement projects on shared roadways and anything else of common interest.

GIS systems

The city staff asked if the township was still interested in the GIS system used by the city; the township board agreed they were. Pagel and Mattei said that they'd be happy to show the group how the GIS system is used with their cemetery and suggested that they do that at the next round table with the township – in August – at their city chambers.

Comprehensive Plan Updates

The City of Grand Rapids is in their final stages of updating their comprehensive plan; it's been about 18 months since starting the process. They have completed the planned public input meetings with exception of the final one with the Grand Rapids City Council. It was noted that no one showed up to the public meeting on the comp plan after the draft recommendations were made.

Pagel shared that there shouldn't be any surprises for Harris Township regarding the areas where the city boundaries meet up with the township boundaries.

Overall, the city's land use areas didn't change. There was a stronger focus on environmental use of land than with the previous comprehensive plan. When reviewed, the city looked at the sensitive areas such as the wet lands, the steep slopes, and areas that had the highest chance of ground/well water being contaminated. Good land use maps are included in the plan as well. A draft of the city's updated comprehensive plan is available for review on the city's website; Mattei also left a copy of the plan with the township board for their review.

Pagel discussed that he has asked the State of MN to look at adding a center turn lane from Harris Town Road to 13th (McDonalds intersection) in 2015, as there's some concerns with speed and lack of center turn lanes. He cc'd Julie Kennedy in on his email to the State. Pagel also suggested that when the township reviews their comprehensive plan, they may want to consider adding a safety issue concern for the road near the Pump House with regards to adding a center turn lane. This may influence MnDOT and what they plan for that area of the highway in 2015. Also, for new businesses, the township may want to require a larger set back than is required – to allow for possible frontage roads

Supervisor Rosato said that the town board is still planning to review the township's comprehensive plan this fall or winter – after the city had completed their plan updates.

Horseshoe/Isleview Road Improvement Project update

The city staff shared a map of Horseshoe Lake and Isleview roads, which indicated where they'll be reclaiming and overlaying, as noted by a pink hi-lite. (A copy will be attached to these minutes.) They also noted that this is where an 8' wide pedestrian trail will be built. The township is not planning on adding a

walking trail but, at the city's suggestion, did discuss adding a bike/walking trail on the township's Cottage Grove easement, that runs parallel to the township's north/south portion of the Mishawaka Road.

Pagel noted that the city will be restricting the weight limit of Mishawaka Road to 4 ton per axle, but that they cannot have this same restriction on Horseshoe Lake Road / Isleview Road as these are not state aid highways (they don't get any gas tax money for these roads, so therefore, they so can't restrict their weight limit). The Township board would also like to post their portion of Mishawaka Road to 4 tons/axle as well, but it's still unclear if this is an option. Julie Kennedy noted previously that she had some questions about this, and was researching what was allowed and enforceable.

The city shared that 35 permanent easements are needed for their project, and that they are still in the process of purchasing these from landowners.

City road residents will be assessed for the road improvements in their neighborhoods but not for the walkway – as they can only assess for roads – not walkways.

The city is hoping to open bids in mid August and start construction in 2012 - possibly going into 2013. The township is planning on reconstructing their portion of Mishawaka Road in mid July, 2011.

Mornes Road Easements - update

Several months ago, the Township agreed to allow the city to annex the 33' ROW on the southern side of Mornes Road, so that the city could have the entire road in their jurisdiction (instead of just the northern half) and claim it as a MSAS road. In doing this, the city promised to secure easements from the road residents. The city is still in the process of completing these purchases but do have a few more to complete. In addition to being busy with the Mishawaka/Isle View road project, some of the easements are taking time due to a "trust" that the property is involved in. With these situations, the city needs signatures from *all* parties in the trust to write a check for the easement, and that takes time.

Airport Road – county portion update

Supervisor Rosato asked Pagel and Mattei if they'd heard anything on the county's portion of the Airport Road regarding the county's previously proposed reconstruction of the two 90 degree corners – to make them more gradual 40mph corners. The city had not heard anything about this project moving forward.

Fairground issues - updates

The township board asked for an update on the road issue at the Fairgrounds, as the township donates every year to the Fair Board. Pagel explained that the Grand Rapids City Council has set a priority to fix the road issue with the Fair Board within 2 years. Thus, the debate about rerouting the road through the midway area for easier and safer access between the high school and middle school will come to a head in the next year.

With no further projects to discuss, the round table between the Harris Township Board and the Grand Rapids city staff adjourned at 8:25pm. Another meeting will be set up in the next few months.

Respectfully submitted,
Michele Smith - Clerk