

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, October 24, 2012 at 7:30pm**

The Planning and Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, October 24, 2012. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Larry Key, Gary Rosato, and Dennis Kortekaas, Clerk Michele Smith, and Treasurer Becky Adams. Absent: None.

Also in attendance: Julie Kennedy – Twp Road Engineer from SEH, Allie Jurvelin – ICC Engineering intern, Dan Butterfield & Judy Myers – township residents.

1. Pledge to the flag

2. Business from the Floor

- Judy Myers reported that the bottom of the entrance ramp to the town hall is unlevel with the parking lot surface, and thus creates a significant step. Because this area of the walkway is not well lit, it's unsafe and could be the cause of someone tripping and falling. This was an immediate concern for the busy election night coming up. Myers requested that some sort of lighting be installed to illuminate this area of the walkway. Supervisor Key agreed that ramp needs to be redone – but the timing is tough with all the rentals. However, he and the board agreed that some solar lights could be installed right away, for safety and liability reasons.
- Dan Butterfield reported on an Itasca County meeting he watched, regarding their nursing home (Grand Village); he noticed comments made during the meeting regarding the city, and the road they want built through the fairgrounds.

3. Roads

- Julie Kennedy – SEH Road Engineer / Project updates
 - Shoulders – Mishawaka

Julie reported that the shoulder repair work on Mishawaka Road is done. The board thought the repair work (which included includes millings) was acceptable – since nothing could be done with the ditches, due to the expense. The new shouldering seems to holding okay, but it is not ideal. Julie will take a look at the work, and is hopeful that the repair will settle over the winter and go through a freeze/thaw cycle. Julie reported that the repair project will be under budget; the cost was approximately \$1,500.
 - Payment for speed humps repair on Mishawaka

Julie received a call from Hawkinson, stating that they had not yet received payment for the speed hump repair on Mishawaka Road for apx \$2,000. Treasurer Adams and Julie will check into this, to find if a payment request for this work was submitted / discussed / approved.
- Other road issues/projects:
 - Commercial Asphalt

Supervisor Key reported that Commercial Asphalt has not come back yet do crack fill Southwood Road. This is the last of the roads the board hoped to get done this year. Key hopes they will finish up whatever project they're working on before it gets too cold for the repair of Southwood.
 - Allie Jurvelin – Cemetery GIS database update

Allie gave a presentation to the board, explaining what she's been doing during her internship with the new GIS cemetery database. Overall, she has been manually entering deceased people's information into the database, and verifying it's accuracy against the township records and disposition permits. She is also checking on several conflicting placement records, and comparing them to the actual cemetery headstone and paper records.

There are approximately 930 records in the database thus far, which is through 2009; she estimated that there would be close to 1,000 records included when she is done.

Within the database, key information such as date of birth, date of death, site information and site description are included. Grave stone pictures are also available, and eventually obituaries will be included – and a GIS location. Overall, this new database will provide a great deal of information for research. Allie's final job with this project will be to walk the cemetery and verify placement information against all the information in the database – to make sure it's as accurate as possible.

Supervisor Key commented that it might be good to add the monument company used for any headstone, for warranty information. However, he recognized that this might be tough to do. Clerk Smith asked if the "notes" field for this, but Allie commented that it may get crowded with other 'info' in that field. However, this may be a field that could be easily added to the database by Mike LeClaire. Allie will check on, if the board would like to pursue.

Overall, the Board was very impressed with Allie's work, and was happy to hear that she plans to stay on as an intern until in spring – and could work in the summer if needed.

4. Recreation

Nothing reported.

5. Town Hall Report

Clerk Smith gave a recap of the report submitted by the town hall caretaker with checks from rentals: \$425 was collected, and there were 15 rentals from Sept 12, 2012 to October 6, 2012.

Smith noted that on the rental listing, there were 2 days of *free* rental by the Star of the North Humane Society. She also shared with the board that on the Humane Society's website for their spay/neutering clinic, it states that on every 3rd Thursday/Friday of the month, animals can be dropped off/picked up during certain hours at the Harris Town Hall. Smith also said there is a video on the website that shows the town *hall* and garage are being utilized by staff and customers, as well as the parking lot. However, in looking back through the minutes, Smith could only find that on July 27, 2011, a motion was made to give the Humane Society permission to use the parking lot on August 24 and 25, 2011 for their program, and that no rental fee would be charged as no town hall key would be provided.

The board agreed that their intention was to waive the rental fee only one time, for the dates specified in the minutes, and that the town hall was *not* to be used. And while the board thought the neuter/spay service is very valuable for the township and surrounding communities, they discussed that allowing the Humane Society to reserve and use the town hall free of charge for 2 days every month, they are setting a precedent for other non profits to request the waiver of rental fees as well – which is against the current town hall policy.

Another question of the board was if the town hall was booked for use on the drop-off day, after the Humane Society leaves (around 10am), was the town hall cleaned in between the two bookings? And are there issues with double booking the hall?

Supervisor Key agreed to check into the arrangement further, and report back to the board.

6. Maintenance Report – September 2012

Clerk Smith reported that she did not receive a Maintenance Report for September.

7. Old Business

- HSEM / FEMA completed application – for Wind Damage from July 2, 2012

Clerk Smith provided the board with a copy of the completed application that was submitted via email to the Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) on Oct 20th, requesting reimbursement for \$1,170 in labor hours for the maintenance crew to remove downed trees from public road right, and \$1,000 from Plackner Tree removal. This report was due 10/25/12, so it was sent it plenty of time. However, Smith is still waiting for confirmation that this was received.

- County Comp Plan Meeting – Oct 16th

The county's recreation and transportation goals were reviewed; Dan was there and brought up comments and concerns about a proposed road through the fair grounds. He requested that language be put in the county comp plan to keep the fairgrounds as is – in its entirety - without a road through the middle. Also, Dan noted that the county does reference the Hwy 169 causeway walkway in their comp plan now, under "recreation / trails".

On November 14th at 5pm, the group will meet to review the draft revised comp plan. However, this is same night as the Harris Town Board's regular meeting that begins at 7:30pm. Supervisor Rosato will attend the comp plan meeting as long as possible. It was noted that the Itasca County Board of Commissioners will have final say on the approval of the revised comp plan.

- Local Government Collaboration Meeting

Supervisor Rosato reported on the latest local government collaboration meeting, which he and Julie Kennedy attend on their own time. He explained that some cities and townships are seeking help from City of Grand Rapids with various financial duties. These duties include utility billing, payroll administration, etc. Shawn Gillen, the city's administrator, wants to meet with Rosato and Julie to discuss if Harris Twp can benefit from any of their services. The cost of any requested services can be estimated by Shirley Miller, the city's finance director. Rosato noted that there are also private vendors who also can offer services in addition to the City of GR.

The board then inquired if the clerk or treasurer could think of anything that could be taken off their plates, by the city or an outside vendor, which would free up their time to focus on other things. Smith and Adams agreed that having any of the township's financial duties outsourced did not seem like a good idea, due to the township's size and complexity. However, using the city when a deputy clerk or treasurer is needed, or training a new clerk, treasurer or supervisor would be helpful – though the need for that would be sporadic.

Rosato will bring this information to Gillen, and agreed to use caution as a representative of the board.

- Upper Mississippi Flood Mitigation Task Force

Supervisor Key mentioned that the next meeting of the Upper Mississippi Flood Mitigation Task Force is tomorrow night. He attended their last meeting in Walker, and it went well. An Aitkin County Commissioner agreed to join the task force. The task force hopes to discuss water management practices with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, especially a diversion ditch created in Aitkin County in the 1950s to move water more rapidly downstream. They plan to invite Coronel Price to their Nov 30, 2012 task force meeting, which will be held at Blandin Foundation

- Additional bill for October 2012

Treasurer Adams presented a bill for payment that was not on the October bill list, as it was in with her receipts from the town hall caretaker. Adams later realized that it was a receipt for reimbursement to the caretaker. When a rental check was made out for \$75 instead of \$50, the caretaker paid the renter back out of her own money. She also bought a book of stamps. The total of the payment due to the caretaker for reimbursement was \$34.00.

A motion was made by Supervisor Rosato, second by Supervisor Kortekaas, to approve the bill payment to Bonnie Key for \$34.00. Upon roll call, the motion carried by a unanimous vote.

An updated bill list will be prepared by Treasurer to include this payment, as well as the payment to Dan Martin for the snowplow that was approved at the Regular meeting.

- New cell phones - update

Supervisor Key reported that the new iPhones that were supposedly "in the mail" at the time of the Regular meeting, still had not been received by the maintenance crew. Treasurer Adams agreed to follow up with her Verizon contact person, and request a tracking number for the phones.

8. New Business

- Insurance renewal: Life and Health

Treasurer Adams reported that the maintenance crew's health and life insurance will be renewed Nov 1st, 2012. The premium will go up \$1/month, and the plan changes were minimal. Adams will meet with the guys to advise them of any changes, and to ask how the plan is working for them. If there are major concerns, Adams will suggest that the board shop around for insurance before next November. Adams will also go over the credit card policy with the guys at that time as well.

- Discussed option to change annual employee reviews from April, to November

Because their insurance renews in April, Clerk Smith asked if there was any reason that the employee reviews are done in April rather than October, as it would be nice to have the two coincide in case changes in coverage are requested. Plus, April is a very busy time for the board and the crew, where November is much less busy for both. Neither the board nor the treasurer knew why reviews had always been done in April, other than that's when the township's books are balanced for the year prior, in preparation for the annual meeting. The board and treasurer were asked to think about the pros and cons of changing the annual review month to October, and she will put it on an agenda for a future meeting.

9. Adjourn

A motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas to adjourn tonight's meeting at 9:09pm. Upon a second by Supervisor Rosato, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith - Clerk