

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting  
Harris Township Board  
Wednesday, May 23, 2012 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled P&D Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, May 23, 2012. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Key, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, and Larry Key, Clerk Michele Smith, and Treasurer Becky Adams. *Absent:* None.

Also in attendance: Attorney Andy Shaw, John Powers from Applied Insights, and residents Judy Myers, Dan Butterfield, and Ray Nikkel.

**1. Pledge to the flag**

**2. Munzer Lake Cartway** (*Attorney Andrew Shaw*)

Ray Nikkel contacted the town board at their last meeting on May 9th, as the land he owns on Munzer Lake is landlocked, with the only way to get to it being over state owned school trust property, which is under DNR jurisdiction. And, only a unit of government can enter into easement agreement with the DNR.

Nikkel also met with the township attorney, Andy Shaw, regarding Nikkel's desire to obtain legal access to his property on the east side of Munzer Lake. Shaw understood that an old township road extends south from the LaPlant Road to the northern boundary of the southwest quarter of section 21. From that point, there is apparently a trail that crosses across State of MN land, to Nikkel's property. It was Shaw's further understanding that this is school trust land, administered by the DNR and as such the only means to obtain access across it would be for the Township to apply for a right-of-way on behalf of the resident, as a private individual cannot do so.

Shaw advised Nikkel, and the board, that all costs associating with the proceeding will be Nikkel's responsibility, and payment by Nikkel would be held in escrow by the town until the process had been completed.

Shaw advised the board that the township, should they be granted the easement, would *not* be responsible for anything regarding the easement as it's not a town road. It would be a public easement – and not a private road.

Shaw shared resolution #2012-005 with the board, entitled "*Resolution Authorizing Submittal of an Application to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Seeking a Permanent Easement Across State Trust Fund Land*" outlining that landlocked property situation of Mr. Nikkel, and resolving the solution of a permanent easement that the town is applying for, on behalf of Nikkel.

***After reviewing the resolution, and with no questions, a motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas to adopt resolution #2012-005 "Authorizing Submittal of an Application to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Seeking a Permanent Easement Across State Trust Fund Land"; Supervisor Rosato seconded the motion, and upon roll motion passed by a unanimous vote.***

(A copy of the resolution and related exhibits will be attached to these minutes.)

### 3. Review Draft Comprehensive Plan (*Applied Insights – John Powers*)

John Powers walked the Board through the draft comprehensive plan (*a copy was included in the board agenda packet*), page by page, and made notes of any corrections, suggestions, and changes. These included adding the Service Center to 'Community Places', changing the name from 'Troop Town' to 'Casper Landing', adding 'county government enforcement' to government controls, and adding the desire to restripe Hwy 169 to include a center turn lane and right hand turn lanes where appropriate (ex. near pump house/Hollywood) for safety reasons.

Powers noted that annexation paragraph in the revised comprehensive plan had changed, and now included a discussion about how residents on the border of the township and city may request to be annexed – especially if a developer or business owner. However, it is still stated that the intent of the township is *not* to be annexed.

A second & third map will be added for potential connector/relief roads.

It was noted that a lot of new language appears in chapter 5, "Action Plan" based on the public meetings held.

Powers will make changes as discussed tonight and get together with Julie Kennedy regarding map changes and adjustments. The board was reminded that the goal is to have the County adopt the Township's revised comprehensive plan as a part of their (County's) updated comp plan, which will be reviewed later this year, or next year.

The public input/Q&A session on the revised Township Comprehensive Plan will be held on June 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm-7:30pm – just prior to the Regular Meeting at 7:30pm. The township newsletter coming out next week will feature a front page story about the meeting, and serve as the invite (in lieu of a postcard). Notice will also be posted at the town hall, put on the website, and in the newspaper via a news release.

Powers hopes to submit the final comprehensive plan for adoption by the board at the June P&D meeting.

### 4. Business from the Floor

- None

### 5. Roads

- Discuss roads for crack fill in 2012 by Commercial Asphalt

Key suggested that the following roads be considered for crack fill this summer: Norberg Road, Birch Hills Drive, East Harris Road, Southwood Road, Aspen Drive, Key View Drive, Pine Landing, Harbor Heights, and Gary Drive. Key needs to meet with Commercial Asphalt to find out which roads need to be grouted and which ones can be sprayed. He'd like to proceed to get a quote from Commercial Asphalt, and bring back to the board. **The board approved his request.** Treasurer Adams noted that the budget for rubberized crack fill in 2012 is \$30,000; it goes down to \$10,000 in 2013.

## 6. Recreation

- Discuss 2012-2022 Itasca County Recreational Resource plan survey completion

Mike Hendricks was asked if he would be willing to complete the county's recreational survey, but he is currently unavailable; however, he said he could probably do it, as it's not due until the end of June. Otherwise, Key noted that township resident Byron Snowden is on the recreation committee and could be asked to complete the survey if needed.

- Park Maintenance Inspections

Key noted that when Mike Hendricks gets back, they will make their annual inspections of the parks and report their findings back to the board.

## 7. Town Hall Report

The report prepared by the Town Hall Caretaker was reviewed by the board; there were 20 rentals; no accidents or injuries, and \$350 collected.

## 8. Maintenance Report for April 2012

There were no comments or concerns by the board upon review of the Maintenance Report as prepared by the maintenance crew.

## 9. Old Business

- Review information from MN Assoc. of Townships on optional five person town board format

Upon request of resident Judy Myers, Clerk Smith brought information back information to the board the process involved for a standard three person board to change to an alternate five person board. The information was found on the MN Association of Township website.

In short, the decision to pursue an optional five supervisor board can be initiated either by board motion or by elector petition. In either case, the question of whether to adopt the option is submitted to the electors by ballot at the next annual town election. If the option passes, the board must follow the statutory procedure to implement the option.

The petition must be signed by electors equal in number to at least 15% of the electors voting at the previous town election. The form of the petition must comply with the rules established by the Secretary of State's Office (SOS), who will supply an example upon request. Electors interested in obtaining a sample need to contact the Election Division of the SOS office. Completed petitions need to be filed with the county auditor, and not with the town clerk. County auditors are required to provide the person who delivers the petition a receipt and then has 10 days in which to inspect the petition to verify the signatures are proper, and that the petition complies with applicable statutory requirements. Once the county auditor verifies the petition, it can then be delivered to the town clerk for presentation to the town board.

If a proper petition is brought with at least the minimum number of signatures, the board is required to place the petitioned for question on the ballot.

If the option is adopted, as urban town, the town board must hold a special election to fill the newly created supervisor positions.

Clerk Smith also asked one of the MAT attorneys for a list of advantages/disadvantages for moving to a five person board. Mr. Hartnett replied that the main advantage of a five supervisor board is it allows two supervisors to talk with each other about township business without violating the open meeting law. It also provides more people to be available to serve township functions. Some also believe it is beneficial to have more representation per capita if the township's population is larger. A five supervisor board would also enable you to have meetings if two supervisors are unable to attend.

The biggest disadvantage would be the township would have to find two more people to serve on the board. This can be difficult in some areas. Also, the township would have to spend more in meeting fees, wages, benefits, etc. with two more supervisors.

Treasurer Adams commented that salaries for 2 additional supervisors would be at least \$14,000 a year; this was the minimum amount that costs would increase as it did *not* include the hourly fees, training fees, benefits, additional copies costs, etc..

Supervisor Rosato thanked Clerk Smith for the information, and Rosato agreed to put this topic on the agenda for an upcoming Itasca County Association of Townships meeting to get feedback from other townships – especially those who'd had a five person board, but then went back to a three person board.

- Discuss representative for IRRRB Residential Redevelopment Program Coordinator  
Dan Butterfield was in attendance and announced that he would agreed to accept the position of IRRRB Residential Redevelopment Program Coordinator on a volunteer basis as nominated by the board at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting. Butterfield talked to Jim Plummer, the IRRRB staff referenced on the application, and the job sounded doable. Now, information about the program needs to get out.

**Dan Butterfield was duly designated by the Harris Town Board to serve as the IRRRB Residential Redevelopment Program Coordinator for Harris Township.**

## 10. New Business

- Cable Commission Meeting  
Treasurer Adams attended the Cable Commission's quarterly meeting in May. Representatives from Mediacom were there to talk about what is going on with the cable. Mediacom talked about what they've done around the city to improve services, including cable access during power outages and additional channel options/prices tiers. ICTV announced that they are looking at the needs of townships and county regarding their services. A town board supervisor is requested to attend the Sept 10<sup>th</sup> Cable Commission meeting with Becky.

Regarding internet available at the town hall, Becky has still not been able to talk to a live person at Mediacom. When she tries the main phone number, they refer her to a "business" line (non residential), yet she has been unsuccessful in getting to talk to anyone at that number, or receive a call back.

- Intergovernmental Collaboration Meetings  
Supervisor Rosato shared information with the board about the Intergovernmental Collaboration Meetings that he's been attending for a few months. The group is made up of 6-

7 community leaders and an outside consultant. The group talks about how to share services and save money, but not lose their identity. For example, there are two fire departments working together to form one department for their area. Representatives come from Harris Township, Arbo Township, and the cities of LaPrairie, Marble, Calumet, and Grand Rapids. Julie Kennedy from SEH also attends at no charge. An article will be coming out soon, to get the word out about the group. There is also no cost to belong to the collaboration group, and they've been meeting at Grand Rapids State Bank about once a month.

## **11. Adjourn**

***A motion to adjourn tonight's meeting was made by Supervisor Kortekaas at 9:59pm; upon a second by Superior Rosato, the meeting was adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith - Clerk