

**Minutes of the June 13, 2012  
Harris Town Board Work Session  
Public Input Discussion of Draft Comprehensive Plan  
6:30pm – 7:30pm**

The Harris Town Board met on Wednesday, June 13, 2012 for a work session to review hear public input on the draft updated Comprehensive Plan for Harris Township. **The purpose of the work session was:**

- To provide residents the opportunity to comment on the proposed update to the Harris Township Comprehensive Plan

Officers of the Harris Board in attendance were: Supervisors Larry Key, Gary Rosato & Dennis Kortekaas (arrived 7:15pm), and Clerk Michele Smith. Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams.

Also in attendance were: John Powers – Applied Insights, and Julie Kennedy – Twp Road Engineer from SEH.

Approximately 17 residents and guests were in attendance (*see copy of sign in sheet, attached*).

The work session began at 6:30pm at the Harris Town Hall. All township residents (apx 1,400 households) were invited via the front page of the Township Newsletter, received just prior to Memorial Day weekend. Notice was also posted at the Town Hall, and was published in the Herald Review Newspaper.

Chairman Key opened the work session, and then turned it over to John Powers to facilitate. (*An agenda and an updated draft comprehensive plan will be attached to these minutes.*) John recapped the areas focused on during the comprehensive plan review and update, including the Community Center Complex and the Highway169 corridor; public meetings were held on these topics. Other areas of the plan stayed pretty much the same, per Powers.

- Community Center Complex (including a new town hall): The plan outlined that the board would only design a ‘master plan’ for the Community Center property, and only implement it if needed. The first priority would be a consolidated maintenance garage, followed by plans for the cemetery. The last priority would be a new town hall – with that decision to be made later in the future. This means that the township would keep their current town hall until there is a need to remodel or relocate. The master plan would include a building layout and plans, with an area designated for a hall and parking.
- Hwy 169 Corridor: The basic feeling was that people liked the level of development that is in this area today. Expansion is *not* desired, especially south of lake. Same for north of the lake – but with a sense of inevitability that the southern border of City of Grand Rapids will be developed some day. And that someone on the northern border of the township may then request to be annexed by the city – and not the other way around. The plan outlined that the board will want to work with city to request that they not accept requests for annexation by Harris Twp residents. Also, the plan will indicate a desire for the county to accept an overlay district in Harris Township, whereby county standards of development are made clear so that it does not harm rest of residential areas.
- Road projects: Mishawaka Road bypass project is new to the comprehensive plan – and a map will be included. A new road would be parallel to the existing Mishawaka Road, using an easement that the township has - called “Cottage Grove”. Also, the “relief road” – between Harris Town Road and Sunny Beach Road - is still in the comp plan, such that desires can be discussed with developers of this area in the future, so the township doesn’t lose the option having a road in this area.

*John opened up for public discussion/input and what’s missing:*

- Q: Town Hall – Was there a clause in the deed that requires the property and town hall be given back to the original owner if sold (as the township was given the property from the Flyway Club)?

A: Supervisor Key confirmed that he examined the deed, and that there is *no* such clause that states it would go back to the original owner if sold.

- Q: Can there be a clause about grandfathered gravel pits, and doing away with that concept – and instead have them use a conditional use permit? This way, they would have to abide by current restrictions and regulations.

A: We may be able to state in the comp plan that if any new regulations are developed/modified, that things should be reviewed and determined if they need to adhere to them – grandfathered in or not. John will come up with some language around this, for board review.

- Q: Sunny Beach Road - Any talk of upgrading the culvert by Woodtick landing – or a small bridge? It used to be a turnaround area – when the road was a dead end there.

A: Board not aware of this. It may have been back in 1904, per another resident, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers put in the culvert, which connected Hale Lake and Woodtick/Pokegama Lake. It's a township road, but not a township lake. Culvert will eventually fail. Could monitor it, and consider a larger culvert. Perhaps the township could have DNR evaluate the area.

- Trails – Any plans to connect to Harris Township to Grand Rapids- perhaps from the causeway to the city? We need new/more trails for tourism. Motorized trails (for ATV & snowmobile) and non motorized trails would be nice – but we especially need motorized ones because if you don't give motorized vehicles a place to play, they will make their own areas – which may be on township or private property. If trails aren't good, people don't come, and major tourism dollars are spent here by snowmobilers especially.

A: May need to increase trail information and desires in the comp plan.

Next steps:

John Powers will come up with a list of potential changes for the board to review and consider at the June 27<sup>th</sup> P&D meeting. The board will then review the comp plan as proposed, along with each revised section for consideration to be added (or not).

Tonight's work session adjourned at 7:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Harris Township Clerk