

Comprehensive Plan Update Work Session
HARRIS TOWN BOARD
Wednesday, April 18, 2012, 7:30pm

The Harris Town Board met at 7:30pm on Wednesday, April 18, 2012 at the Harris Town Hall for a Comprehensive Plan work session. The following officers of the board were present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas and Larry Key, and Clerk Michele Smith. Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams

Also in attendance: John Powers – Applied Insights, Julie Kennedy – SEH, Allie Jervelin and Jacque Edwards – ICC engineering interns, and residents Dan Butterfield and Judy Myers.

Purpose of tonight’s work session as posted:

- **Comprehensive Plan**: Meet with Applied Insights (John Powers) to continue discussions regarding the process of updating the Harris Township Comprehensive Plan.

The work session began at 7:30pm. John Powers facilitated the meeting, according to the agenda he’d prepared; overall comments by the board are noted. *(A copy of the agenda will be attached to these minutes.)*

1. What’s happened since the public meeting (for input on the Highway 169 Corridor area)?
 - Board: No comments
2. Review *major components* of the updated draft plan: *(copy to be attached to these minutes)*
 - a) Community Facilities (formerly called a ‘Community Complex’)
John’s implementation suggestions discussed, including:
 - Create a master site plan for the new location, showing a new town hall, expanded cemetery and consolidated maintenance facilities.
 - Expand and enhance cemetery as per master site plan
 - Consolidate maintenance facilities as per master site plan
 - Decision to build a new hall or remodel existing one will be made at a later date
 - Set aside funds for new facilities
 - The comp plan will contain an appendix with some info on the site plan so as to archive the thoughts for future use

John: Are these still the desire of the board?

Board: First priority would be the maintenance facility enhancement and consolidation. That would be phase I. Then the cemetery, as Phase II.

- b) Highway 169 Corridor
John’s implementation of “Immediate Action” suggestions discussed, including:
 - Negotiate short-term “no annexation” agreement with Grand Rapids
 - Work with County to adopt a “South of GR entrance” overlay district *(It could be requested that the County adopt this as a part of their updated comprehensive plan.)*
 - Initiate study of incorporation as a city, to gain information specific to Harris Twp (i.e. extent of services needed, administration, costs, etc.) – not to decide to incorporate. *(Would have to hire someone to do this, other than John due to all the legal requirements.)*
 - Work with state township association to amend “annexation by ordinance” legislature to provide legal recourse for townships

‘Subsequent Actions’ were also discussed *(see section on attached handout)*, which laid out options for 4 different outcome combinations of the above immediate action items. It covered almost

every possibility of what could happen, and laid out the *options* for future boards consideration...not a direction.

John: If this feels right, he will draft up language for the new comprehensive plan, recapping what the desires of the township are for the Highway 169 corridor are (to remain rural, resist annexation, etc.) and then under actions, the 4 immediate actions would be laid out.

Board: Approved

c) General

Discussed the "Relief / connector corridor road", and if it was still an issue/option. A feasibility study was done back in 2006, when the comprehensive plan was first developed. If the road is still a possibility, John advised that the board would want to work with the county to keep developments out of that area where a relief road could go. Putting it in the updated comprehensive plan would be a guide for the town board when developments come to the township, in that area.

John: Would like to see the updated plan more 'useable' by the board, and something they can use every time a conditional use or variance comes before the board.

John: Any other major road issues coming up?

Board: Yes -

- The ROW behind/to the east of, Mishawaka Road (see Cottage Grove plat), which could be used for placement of another road, to provide relief to Mishawaka. Discussed that perhaps this could be done as a collaborative effort with the county, state, and township, as it would be a very expensive project (over a million dollars). Board agreed this should be a part of the updated comp plan, so future boards know about it.
- The "S" curve on Hwy 169, needs turn lanes (center lane, when headed south, and right turn lane, when headed north). The City of GR had indicated that this could be a striping project in the next few years, to add safety to that area.
- Concern of safety at intersection Harris Town Road and Hwy 169
- Continued concern of Harris Town Road and East Harris / River Road; this is noted in the current comp plan and the board asked that it remain.

Other items discussed:

- Walkway along Hwy 169 Corridor: maintenance, landscaping, and clean up. This was built by MnDOT, and therefore should be maintained by MnDOT. Perhaps could strike up an arrangement with MnDOT, to have a 3rd party take care of the walkway. Board and John decided it should *not* be in the plan, since it's not under the jurisdiction of the township.
- Lake Pokegama Septic Issue: (see page 25 of current comp plan)
County has done some initial work; the township comp plan could address some potential options for action: Encourage the County to continue their waste water district development. Pursue a township district with a certain trigger. Resist centralized sewer (long pipe to Grand Rapids sewer system) which could trigger annexation. However, if a "no annexation" agreement could be agreed to by the city, should the township hook up to their sewer, then it could be considered as an option.

Education of landowners on current sewer system regulations and responsibilities of septic systems owners was something that should be done – starting now. Also, the board could encourage the County to enforce the rules, to prevent septic systems from failing. Also, the board will continue to encourage cluster septic system within new developments.

John will use a lot of basic language from the original plan with regards to what we value. He will expand the appendix to house important data and supporting documents.

3. Set Next meetings

- a) Board review of draft plan – John recommend that the board review the draft plan first, prior to a public meeting. **Board agreed to review/discuss at the May 23rd at P&D Meeting.** PDF will be sent to Michele, who can distribute to anyone interested.

- b) Community review of draft – Board agreed to do this in **June, on the 13th just prior to the Regular Meeting, on June 13th at 6:30pm with Q&A with audience.** Will announce that PDF will be available on website, or from the clerk, and note the meeting date & time in the upcoming newsletter. This will replace the need to do a separate postcard invite.

4. Other business

- Request to put something in the plan about the gravel pit issues.

5. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn tonight's work sessions was made by Supervisor Key at 9:20 pm; Supervisor Rosato seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Clerk