

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting  
Harris Township Board  
Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at 7:30pm**

The Planning and Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, November 20, 2013. (This was a week earlier than normal, due to Thanksgiving falling on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month.) The meeting was called to order at 7:38pm by Chairman Kortekaas at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Larry Key, Gary Rosato & Dennis Kortekaas, and Clerk Michele Smith. *Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams.*

There was no one else in attendance at tonight's meeting.

**1. Pledge to the flag**, followed by the reading of the Harris Township Mission Statement

**2. Business from the Floor**

**3. Roads**

- Culvert Policy:

A substandard sized culvert has been installed by resident near Hale Lake. Supervisor Key will take a photo of it, and bring back to share with the board. However, he wondered what the board should do when something like this happens. The backwash could affect the integrity of the road if it floods. The board agreed that the township would not be responsible for road damage caused by a substandard culvert that plugs up, and floods the road; the resident would be responsible.

Another substandard culvert off Sunny Beach Road has also been installed; it's a bigger plastic culvert but is a thin wall culvert and so is considered substandard; it should be metal. Supervisor Key will get an address and take a photo as well and bring to the board.

The board agreed a letter should be sent to both residents with substandard culverts.

The board also agreed that the township's culvert policy should add a line that states if a township supplied culvert fails, the township will repair or replace it.

Supervisor Rosato was able to obtain a copy of the County's driveway permit application that he'd like to have the board review to consider adding something similar to the township's policy. However, he did not have it with him, so the review of the culvert policy will be tabled until a future P&D meeting.

- MnDOT Highway 169 project for 2015

After board discussion at the November 13<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting, Supervisor Rosato replied to MnDOT's ( Jeff Tillman) email request for township input on the south Highway 169 road construction project scheduled for 2015. Rosato's email said that the Harris board agreed to the following suggestions for consideration:

- At this time no upcoming townships projects came to mind in this area; if this changes he would be in contact with MnDOT.
- Reduced speed limit from Pokegama causeway to the city limits, especially in the "S" curve area.
- Road stripping to lessen the confusion of the intersection at Harris Town road and 169, where the transfer of two lanes into four occur.
- Possibility of a left turn lane through this entire section would be beneficial.
- Utilize the large right of way to enhance a trail system from City limits to the Pokegama causeway that MNDOT built without consideration of connecting to other trails.
- Address the steep grade problem of our township (hill) on Lakeview drive where it connects to Highway 169.
- Stop signs or perhaps traffic signal at Harris Town Road and 169 was also mentioned.

Tillman thanked Rosato for sharing the Board's comments/suggestions – and they were much appreciated, and will be taken into consideration. He further stated that:

*“The proposed project in 2015 is not a road reconstruction project; but is a pavement rehabilitation project (basically removing the top layer of existing blacktop, and repaving it). Therefore we are restricted on what enhancements we will be adding to the project. Our District Traffic Engineer (Rob Ege) is currently reviewing accident data and that information will be used to direct any possible changes to pavement marking, lighting, or intersection control. Thanks again for your input – and I'll be sure to let you know what additions/changes we may be including w/the project when we decide later this winter.”*

#### 4. Recreation

- Clerk Smith is in the process of getting a 2013-2014 Rate Agreement from Express Professionals for the hiring of rink attendants. She hopes to have by the December 11<sup>th</sup> 2013 Regular meeting
- Supervisor Key will be meeting with Mike Hendricks soon, to decide on a proposal for Wendigo Picnic park improvements. They will share the proposal with the board once completed, to get their input on the proposed project.

#### 5. Town Hall Report

- The board reviewed the Town Hall report as submitted by the Caretaker. In the month of Oct 13 to Nov 12, 2013, there were no accidents or damages to the hall.

#### 6. Maintenance Report – Oct 2013

- The board reviewed the maintenance report, as prepared by the maintenance crew. There were no accidents or injuries to report, and no concerns by the board.

#### 7. Old Business

- Mishawaka Boat Landing  
The board discussed that they'd like to remove the center dirt area at Mishawaka Boat Landing, to create more room for parking. Supervisor Key offered to have a contractor come look at the area, and get 2 price estimates – one to remove the trees, and one for dirt removal. The board thanked Key for doing this.
- Phone line at the town hall  
The public wall phone near the kitchen at the town hall has a rotary dial sound when dialing the push button phone. The board wondered if the phone *line* was still a rotary line, rather than a touch tone line. Clerk Smith said she or Treasurer Adams will check with Century Link about this issue.
- Internet at the town hall  
Supervisor Rosato suggested looking into *satellite* internet service for the town hall, since there is no cable or phone company willing to connect to the hall; Treasurer Adams has contacted Mediacom and Century Link, as well as Paul Bunyan. None will service a business in the location of the town hall.

Wild Blue was mentioned as possible satellite internet option, and the board agreed it may be worth a try. Rosato agreed to look available options and report back to the board.

- GIS Cemetery Database  
Supervisor Key has been encouraging the Maintenance Crew with regards to the new GIS database, and the problems they and the Clerk have been having. The crew discovered that there were icons for the database on their desktop that didn't work – but that a 4<sup>th</sup> one they recently discovered *did* work.

Clerk Smith said she is meeting with Julie Kennedy of the City of Grand Rapids on December 4<sup>th</sup>, as she is now in charge of the GIS database project with Harris Township, and other local governments who also

bought into the city's database. Smith will show Kennedy the issues she's having when dialing into the system on the maintenance crew's computer.

Supervisor Key noted that he got a call from a woman from the Minnesota Department of Resources (DNR), Itasca County office. She told Key that she helps governments in Itasca County with their GIS systems. Key could not recall the woman's name, but her number was 218-999-7948 (Sherry Wasson). He was also unsure if she charged for her services.

Smith would like to give Kennedy a chance to help get the current GIS database program up and running, but was not opposed to looking at other options if needed – including Pontem Software used by Hibbing Cemetery, or eCIMs used by Mt. Zion Cemetery in St. Paul. The data in the database that Allie (ICC Intern) worked so long to gather and input does belong to the township – not the city – so that legwork would be done, should programs need to be changed.

- 5 person board question on 2014 township ballot

The board discussed the upcoming question that will be on the township's March 2014 ballot, asking if voters want to move from a 3 person to a 5 person Township Board of Supervisors. The request for a 5 person board came via petition, and thus must be placed on the township election ballot.

The clerk shared information she'd found on the MN Association of Townships website about the mechanics of moving to a 5 person board, if it was voter approved. A special election will be needed between 30-60 days after the election, to fill the two additional positions. And, because Harris Township is an *urban* township, waiting to fill the vacancies until the March 2015 election is not an option.

## 8. New Business

- Cemetery site issue

Supervisor Key discussed an issue with a site at Harris Cemetery that was recently discovered by the maintenance crew: A purchased, but unoccupied, cemetery site can no longer be used for a casket/vault burial because there are caskets ends sticking into the empty site from both the head end, and from the foot end. Thus, the space in between the two encroaching casket ends is no longer large not enough for placement of a vault. There is room, however, for 1-4 cremation urns.

The owner of this site also owns a second site next to the problem site (side by side); it too is currently unoccupied - but has *no* issues with encroaching caskets. If the owner is planning on cremations, there is no problem. However, if they are planning for 2 casket burials, this will be a problem.

The board asked Clerk Smith to seek the advice of the attorneys at the MN Association of Townships, and report directly back to Key. If needed, the board will get involved. Key will also check with the City of Grand Rapids, to see if this has ever happened to them.

## 9. Public Input

- None

## 10. Adjourn

***A motion was made at 8:38 p.m. by Supervisor Key. Upon a second by Rosato, the meeting was adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk