

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, July 24, 2013 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled P&D Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, July 24, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Kortekaas at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Dennis Kortekaas, Larry Key, and Clerk Michele Smith. *Absent: Treasurer, Becky Adams*

Also in attendance: Glen Hodgson – SEH Road Engineer, Mike Hendricks – Township Recreational Advisor, Mary Ann Miels - Grand Rapids Realty, and residents Dan Butterfield, Judy Myers, and Barney & Jan Bignall.

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

2. Business from the Floor

- Mary Ann from Grand Rapids Realty

Realtor Mary Ann Miels came to the board on behalf of Lavaliers, who owns an 11 acre parcel of land on the east side of Highway 169, between Lease Landscaping and Ron's Mini Storage (just south of Figgins Trucking). This property is zoned residential, despite the commercial businesses surrounding it, and has been for sale by owner for several years. Miels – a realtor now working with Lavalier– wondered about the possibility of rezoning this parcel to commercial - to help it sell. Because the county looks to the township for a recommendation, Miels wanted to know the boards' thoughts on rezoning before her client pays the \$475 filing fee to the county to request a change.

Supervisor Key explained that he had talked to Miels on the phone, and suggested she come to a meeting to find out the board's feelings on whether or not they would recommend a rezone for approval to the county.

Supervisor Rosato reviewed the township's comprehensive plan, particularly page 11 and the overlay district information on page 26. There were questions regarding the setback requirements for commercial zoning. Overall, the board agreed they needed more time to consider the request and its ramifications. They were nervous that if rezoned, they would not have knowledge nor input on what type of business would go in there. There was also a concern about not having a center turn lane in front of the property, which could be an issue with certain types of businesses. Also, depending on the business, they may need city sewer & water – which could lead to an annexation request. And anyone living within 1,000 feet of the business may not appreciate it.

Other commercial businesses have come in under conditional use permits so the board knew what type of business was going in. The board also commented that they needed to find out what types of businesses are allowed for each type of zoning option (commercial, light industrial, etc.).

Mary Ann Miels understood the board's hesitation, and thanked them for their input. She agreed to come back at the Aug 14th Regular meeting, when the board will reconvene and have more feedback for her.

3. Roads

- Glen Hodgson – SEH Road Engineer:

- a. Southwood Road pre-paving change order for French drain – Southwood Road

As requested by the board, Hodgson presented a proposal for a French drain, as was recommended to be installed on the north side of Southwood Road, just west of the easterly intersection of Pine Landing Drive. The proposal from Schwartz Excavating was for \$5,381.40, and Glen recommended moving forward with an approval of the change order. The drain will reduce the amount of runoff into Bignall's yard – but will not eliminate *all* runoff.

A motion was then made by Supervisor Rosato to approve the change order for a French drain on Southwood Road, to be installed by Swartz Excavating in the amount of \$5,381.40. Supervisor Key seconded the motion, and upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

The change order was then signed.

b. Update on pre-paving road work

- Robinson road: 3 culverts have been replaced.
- Stony Point Road: This road's work will be next – should be Monday of next week.

• Other road issues / concerns

- LCP Application for utility permit in road right-of-way: Schmidt Road.

Board reviewed application & map submitted by Lake Country Power (LCP). Supervisor Key talked to LCP about the project; everything will be on the north side. There were no concerns by the board.

A motion was made by Supervisor Key to approve the Lake Country Power Application for Utility Permit to place, construct, and maintain an underground power line on the north side of Schmidt Road as shown. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Rosato and upon roll call, motion carried.

4. Recreation

- Mike Hendricks: Update on tennis court repairs

Hendricks reported to the board that the contractor for the tennis court repairs is way behind schedule due to weather and due to his foreman having had an accident. The contractor said he could schedule the projects in September – and they would take 2 weeks to complete, weather permitting.

Hendricks and Key discussed this option but both agreed they'd prefer to wait until spring of 2014, as they felt the project wouldn't cure well enough if done in September. The contractor had some apprehension.

The contractor agreed to maintain cost by keeping his quoted prices the same – and that the township projects would be number one his priority list to do in the spring of 2014. Hendricks therefore recommended cancelling the tennis court repair projects for this year (2013) and reschedule for spring 2014.

The Board agreed; Hendricks will get a letter of commitment from the contractor to formalize the postponement of the tennis court repairs until spring 2014.

5. Town Hall Report

The board reviewed the town hall report as prepared by the Town Hall Caretaker, for the period of June 12 to July 10, 2013. There were no accidents or damages, nor any renter requests.

6. Maintenance Report for June 2013

The board reviewed the maintenance report as prepared by the Maintenance Crew. No concerns or questions from the board.

7. Old Business

- Consider appointment of resident John Howrey and vice-chair Gary Rosato, along with the Township Board Chair - Dennis Kortekaas - to the Joint Powers Board (with the City of Grand Rapids) to regulate utility rates of Northwest Gas (tabled from July 10, 2013 Regular Meeting)

John Howrey was in attendance, and had some questions about the Joint Powers Board, including how much time commitment is involved. He also wanted to let the board know that he carries with him the perspective that when a private business joins with government, they should not make a large profit/return; a reasonable return on capital is fine – but excessive profit is not okay in his eyes. He noted that he was not requesting a salary to serve on the Joint Powers Board for Northwest Gas but may request reimbursement of expenses if needed. He also noted that he does not live in the area where Northwest Gas is being installed – in case the board would prefer someone who has their services to be on the board.

The board did not have any problem with Howrey's comments and appreciated the information; they also liked his accountant background, and were excited he was willing to serve.

Upon review of the Joint Powers Board resolution, the board found where it talked about meeting at least annually. They also discussed that there is some state regulations that prohibit an excessive profit – like the electric company.

Supervisor Key then made a motion to appoint John Howrey, and Vice Town Board Chairman Gary Rosato, along with Chairman Dennis Kortekaas to be the Harris Township representatives for the Northwest Gas Joint Power Board. Upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Clerk Smith will advise Mike Gorham – owner / operator of Northwest Gas – of the board member appointments.

- Status of speed limit sign for Southwood Road

Bignall's were in the audience, and asked the board for a status update on a 30 mph speed limit sign for westbound traffic on Southwood Road as previously discussed. Supervisor Key responded that they were lined up – and will be installed after the dirt work is done on Southwood Road.

Bignall also asked the board about the safety and liability issue with "Jim Christiansen's" hill; he said the neighbors in the area still have concerns with people coming over the hill too fast, and being a danger to those entering Southwood Road from Pine Landing Drive. Glen Hodgson – SEH Road Engineer - commented that legally this is a 30 mph speed zone, and therefore if a speed limit sign is up, the people going that speed are not a safety hazard. However, if the sign is up and people are going *faster* than 30 mph, the township is *not* liable. The key is to get the speed limit sign up. A blind intersection sign would also appropriate per Hodgson – and Key agreed, noting this sign is lined up as well.

As a note of interest, it was brought to the board's attention that Pine Landing development was approved in 1975 – before the current board's time. The previous board approved the plat and thus the road. Back then, there were no road specs – and so it was not built to current township road specifications.

8. New Business

- Supervisor Key noted there will be a burial on Saturday, August 3rd and therefore the maintenance crew will incur overtime costs. The rest of the board did not have a problem with this.

9. Public Input

- John Howrey commented that Glen Hodgson is doing a good job on Robinson Road; everything looks good.
- Dan Butterfield shared information regarding an email he'd sent to the Grand Rapids City Planner, Rob Mattei, about the new Hammerlund building at the old Potlatch plant (formerly Blandex property).
- Judy Myers asked about costs to bury cremains in Harris Cemetery.

10. Adjourn

A motion was made by Supervisor Key to adjourn tonight's meeting at 8:48pm. Motion was seconded by Supervisor Rosato, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Harris Township Clerk