

MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, January 22, 2014 at 7:30pm

The Planning and Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, January 22, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Kortekaas at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Larry Key, Gary Rosato & Dennis Kortekaas, Clerk Michele Smith and Treasurer Becky Adams. *Absent:* None.

Others in attendance: Mike Hendricks – township Recreational Advisor, and resident Judy Myers

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

2. Business from the Floor

- None

3. Roads

- None

4. Recreation

- Mike Hendricks – Township Recreational Advisor:

Hendricks came to update the town board about recreational area projects, and to provide information for upcoming budgeting meeting consideration.

Current projects:

- *Tennis courts refurbishing at Wendigo & Crystal Parks, and basketball court at Crystal*

The quote previously approved by the board at the May 8, 2013 Regular Meeting for \$25,200 is still valid, per contractor (Lee Sports Surfacing). Hendricks has communicated that as soon as the weather permits, the board wants the project done. This is estimated to be completed in May/June as temperature does make a difference. It was noted that the board agreed that the funds for these projects will come out of the Capital Improvement Fund (non dedicated).

Future projects, for budget consideration:

- *Replacing hard surface at Wendigo*

The project to replace the basketball and game court at Wendigo has been discussed the past couple years. The surface is 40-45 years old, worn out, and will soon become a safety hazard. The estimated cost for a new pad is apx \$7,000 – including installation. A basketball standard – like that at Crystal - is apx \$300.

- *Playground at town hall:*

Improvements to the playground at the town hall have been requested by renters, and have been discussed by the board. Hendricks commented that the existing swing set at the hall could be saved with new seating. A play structure for 5-12 yr olds would cost apx \$25,000; that would include the equipment, installation, and ground surface material. A walkway may be needed to meet ADA requirements, which would cost apx \$2,000. The structure recommended by Hendricks is certified as a heavy duty playground, necessary for liability purposes on a public playground.

- *Blacktop the parking lot at Wendigo Park:*

Paving the Wendigo Park parking lot has been discussed previously, as the current parking lot is a maintenance headache for crew. A budget amount for this project, however, is hard to know; Hendricks recommended getting some engineering estimates. He also noted that some trees could be damaged in the process.

- *Wendigo Picnic Park area improvement:*

In response to resident request, Hendricks was asked for input on improving the current picnic area, which has walk-in lake access. Hendricks commented that this is not an easy project, given there is a full

park within walking distance of Wendigo Picnic Park. It currently has a small parking lot, for about 5 cars. Overall, it's apx 1 acre in size. The lake access is very, very shallow (knee high water), from shore to 250 – 300 feet out. There is also a lot of aquatic growth, which limits what can be done. A motorized boat landing is not practical – especially with Troop Town (Casper) Landing so close.

Some ideas Hendricks suggested were to do selective brushing along the bank and redo the timber walkway down to the lake. The existing cement picnic tables needs to be taken out and replaced with wooden ones. Installing a sand volleyball court would be an option, and a small game court. Also, a fishing dock could be installed – and might be a good area for one – but the township would need to work with DNR on it. Hendricks thought the township maintenance crew could do much of the initial work.

Overall, Hendricks felt that more thought and brainstorming is needed for the Wendigo Picnic Park before a recommendation or proposal could be made. He also noted that this was a piece of property the board would consider selling if the could – but they can't, based on terms specified when the land was given to the township.

- *Renewal of his contract*

Hendricks would like to submit a renewal proposal for his contract with Creative Services at the Feb P&D meeting. The board agreed this was a good idea as they have been very pleased with Hedrick's work and expertise in parks and recreation. They stated he'd been a real asset to the township, and they appreciate how Hendricks recommends and coordinates construction management of the parks, and solicits proposals quotes and bids for board to review.

- Skating Rinks at Wendigo & Crystal Parks

Supervisor Key reported that the rinks were closed today at both parks due to the cold weather – and that they will probably be closed tomorrow too. It's been a tough year with weather, when policy requires the rinks close when its 10 below or colder.

5. Town Hall Reports (2): For Nov 13 – Dec 6, 2013, and for Dec 11, 2013 – Jan 4, 2014

- The board reviewed the 2 Town Hall reports as submitted by the Caretaker. There were no accidents or injuries reported to the hall.
- Damages: Clerk Smith reported that all the legal notices she'd posted in the town hall posting box have been removed twice in the past month. A lock on the door to the posting box was requested to prevent this from happening again, as it serves as a legally required posting site for township meeting and event notices. Supervisor Key agreed to take care of this.

6. Maintenance Reports (2): For November and December, 2013

- The board reviewed the 2 maintenance reports, as prepared by the maintenance crew. There were no accidents or injuries to report, and no concerns by the board.

7. Old Business

- Review Itasca County's Permanent Driveway Approach Permit Policy and application process
The board reviewed the county policy, as shared in their agenda packet.

- Review Harris Township's current Culvert Policy | Resolution 2008-006; discuss possible updates.

After reviewing the township policy briefly, the board discussed the situation with the Sunny Beach Road resident, and the undersized culvert they are installing. The resident contacted Supervisor Key and said he cannot afford a larger culvert and is willing to sign a release for all liability that may result. However, the township does not have such a release. The Clerk questioned how the township would administratively handle something like that. Unlike the county, the township is not in the business to issue/maintain permits or releases. She suggested getting some legal advice from the MN Twp Association to determine what the township's rights/responsibility are, when a culvert is in the ROW. It may be that the township is responsible regardless of any releases.

Rosato wondered if it would be better to give away a second culvert than risk road damage caused by an undersized culvert. Key commented that if the township started that (giving away a second culvert for a second

driveway into a parcel), that everyone would want one. The cost of a metal culvert is apx \$500. The cost of a thick wall plastic one is also costly.

Overall, the board determined there were too many questions to move forward with a revision to the township's culvert policy. The Clerk agreed to contact the MAT attorney to determine what our liability/authorities are for such a policy. Supervisor Key agreed to talk to county's district maintenance foreman as well.

Another concern about the current policy, per Key, is that many times the township furnishes a culvert, but then a home is never built. Also, because the township doesn't supply a culvert for a second driveways, residents often do not install a culvert, or put in a substandard one.

A recent change made by the county is that anyone applying for a building permit will be told to contact the township (Supervisor Key) about the culvert policy.

- Internet at town hall options:

The board discussed the variety of options for getting internet access at the town hall, including satellite – pros & cons, hot spot options (via cell phone, or a portable hot spot), Verizon "Home Fusion" broad band, and Mediacom internet via cable. Overall, there were two options considered:

1. Mediacom

Supervisor Rosato contacted Mediacom and was told that yes – internet could be installed at the town hall. The costs for a 1 year business contract would be \$100/month, or \$70/month for a 3 year contract. Installation of lines would be needed, and cost would be \$100. Also, a Mediacom representative would need to come out and check the place out prior to installation. Rosato got the representative's name, direct phone number, and email address - should the board wish to pursue.

2. Verizon hotspot

Treasurer Adams talked to Verizon, and found that Supervisor Key's phone current can be used as a hot spot now, for free.

There is also the option of a portable hotspot – which would allow up to 10 computers to connect wirelessly to it. There are two different systems available, but the device itself would be free; the monthly usage fee would be \$39.99/month. This would be for unlimited data, using cellular internet service. There would be no contract, as Verizon would just add a line to the current contract. Adams also thought the township could try it out on a trial basis.

Based on cost, ease of installation, and unlimited data, the Board agreed to try out the Verizon portable hotspot.

A motion was made by Supervisor Rosato try out MiFi 4620 LE or 5510 L portable hotspot for the town hall from Verizon, on a trial basis for \$39.99/mo. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Key, and upon roll call, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- Historical Society Donations paid in 2013

Treasurer Adams reported that in going through budget to actual reports for 2013, one thing that flagged was a payment to the historical society in both July and December. She is checking into why we received two invoices from them in 2013.

- 2013 Fire Contract – second half payment due

Another item that flagged for Adams when reviewing the budget to actual for 2013 was that only the first half of the 2013 fire contract was paid (in July). There should have also been a payment paid in December for the second half. Therefore, Adams requested board approval to write a check to pay the remaining contract amount in January for \$40,914.50.

A motion was made by Supervisor Rosato, seconded by Supervisor Key, to pay the second half of the fire contract in the amount of \$40,914.50 that was due in December 2013. Upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

- Life Insurance premium for maintenance workers

Adams explained to the board that the life insurance premium for the two maintenance workers is due in January. However, the information needed for the payment was not received in time for the regular meeting & bill list. (Statements are mailed directly to guys.) Adams requested the board approve a check be issued tonight

to pay the annual life insurance premium for the guys in the amount of \$436.00 (\$218/employee) in order to meet the Jan 31st due date.

Supervisor Key made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Rosato, to pay the 2014 life insurance annual premium for Dan/Derrick, in the amount of \$436.00 (\$218/ee). Upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote

Adams noted that both this check, and the one for the Fire Fund, will be put on a revised January 2013 bill list.

8. New Business

- Consider RBA #1 - Clerk's Recommendation of Election Judges for the Mar. 2014 Township Election

Motion by Key, second by Rosato, to approve the Request for Board Action #1 as presented by the Clerk, to approve the list of elections judges for the Township Election to be held March 11, 2014, at the rates noted for election day work hours and mileage for work related travel. Upon roll call, motion carried.

- Consider approval of Resolution #2014-002: Appointing the Absentee Ballot Board for 2014 Twp Election

Motion by Rosato, second by Key, to approve resolution #2014-002 as presented, to appoint all election judges in RBA #1 to the Absentee Ballot Board for the 2014 township election. Upon roll call, motion carried.

- W2s are ready

Treasurer Adams announced that 2013 W2 were ready, and would be handed out to the board after the meeting, and provided to the employees as well.

- ICTV open house – January 30th

An open house invitation was received from ICTV, inviting the town board to a sneak peak of their updated “set”. Adams explained that the Cable Commission gives ICTV money for various project, from the franchise agreement payments, which are passed through from the townships and the city to ICTV. One thing they updated recently was the lighting and different backgrounds. There is an open house for town boards who donate on Thursday, the 30th of January from 4-6pm at their new facility (across from Treasure Bay Printing).

- T&M Marine

As an FYI, Supervisor Rosato shared that he talked to the county's Environmental Services people, as he was notified that T&M marine is looking at moving their sales office from Grand Rapids to the current Mishawaka Road location in Harris Township. It would be a legal and legitimate move, but there may be some questions around having enough room for a sewer system and parking lot. If they move, T&M plans to abandon their Golf Course Road location. The board would like to encourage T&M to move to their southern most location, due to lots of open space, but the buildings at the Mishawaka location are more conducive to what T&M wants. If they move, it would likely be this spring. T&M will need a building permit from county – and meet all set back & ADA requirements.

9. Public Input

- Judy Meyers talked about a new type of septic system she'd heard about, that didn't take up land – as no drain field is needed. Rosato asked Myers to let the board know if she can find out more about such a system, as none of the supervisors had heard of it.

10. Adjourn

A motion was made at 9:03 p.m. by Supervisor Key. Upon a second by Rosato, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk