

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting  
Harris Township Board  
Wednesday, September 22, 2010 at 7:30pm**

The P&D Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, September 22, 2010. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm, at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Dennis Kortekaas, Gary Rosato, and Larry Key, Clerk Michele Smith, and Treasurer John Jokela. Absent: None.

Also at tonight's meeting: Julie Kennedy – township road engineer from SEH, Ben Otto, Rashid Dewberry, and Phil McDonald – ICC Engineering Student interns, Jennifer Utecht (and son Sam), and several other township residents, including Jane Bymark, Sam Johnson, and Rich Libby.

**1. Pledge to the flag**

**2. Walkway under the Pokegama Lake Bridge – Jennifer Utecht**

Jennifer Utecht, resident of Harris Township, gave a presentation on her concerns regarding the walkway along, and under, the Pokegama Lake Bridge. She adopted the walkway this spring as it's well used, but not well maintained. During her presentation, Jennifer shared some pictures with the board of the dying plants/bushes, dying tree tops, graffiti, rolled boulders, weeds, sand and woodchips on walkway, garbage, etc.

In her search to find who's responsible for maintenance of the walkway, Jennifer has been in touch with several people at MnDOT over the past 3 years. They have finally agreed to do several things to help out, but she wonders how long they will support the project. As a result, Jennifer has been seeking out assistance from many other organization, including Jeff Davis from the City of Grand Rapids, the County Sheriff's Department (for extra patrol – especially during volleyball games at Zorbaz) the Fire Dept (to discuss a controlled burn), and the Pokegama Lake Association (Jennifer is on the agenda for their next meeting on October 25<sup>th</sup>). She has also been in contact with a landscaper, and just received the walkway's plans – to know what plants are in there.

The Board commended Jennifer on her efforts, and very thorough research. They recommended trying to simplify the landscape, noting that prairie grasses would be a good choice, as they don't need much watering. They also suggested that Jennifer should contact Itasca County Soil and Water, to get recommendations for a hearty shrub.

The Trails Task Force was another resource recommended to Jennifer, as were the ICC engineering students, who were often looking for opportunities to provide community service.

Jennifer asked if there was anything Harris Township would be willing to do, to help out with this project. The board agreed to discuss options, and let her know if there was something they could do. One suggestion was offering her some 'airtime', to request community help by putting an article in the next Harris Township newsletter

**3. Service Center concept plan update - ICC Engineering Students**

Ben Otto, Rashid Dewberry, and Phil McDonald shared a PowerPoint presentation with the Board, including introductions of themselves. Ben and Rashid worked with the township board last year, on developing a concept plan for the Service Center properties; this will be Phil's first year with the group.

The students gave a review of what was accomplished last year including land use regulations, and autoCAD/GIS drawings of buildings and parking lot layout options within the property (to scale) as well as the plans for the future cemetery size.

For this year, the interns would like to get into the maintenance facility details, cemetery expansion layout, town hall interior, landscape/aesthetics, and concept plan layouts.

The interns will attend the next P&D meeting in October, and will bring some proposed floor plan options for a new maintenance facility, based on suggestions/requests by the board. They will also bring diagrams of the of cemetery platting. The board agreed that these projects were the top two priorities and the first of several phases of the overall project development. It was noted that when needed, the township would need to work with the county on a Conditional Use permit for the public maintenance garage, as it's currently not allowed on publicly zoned land.

Regarding the cemetery, the board asked the interns to consider a columbarium and green burials (where there is no casket, no chemicals used). They would like to see the cemetery extended all the way to Wendigo Park Road, and plans for roads through the cemetery. Also, a Memorial Day celebration area (hard surface for the color guard) would be nice. And finally, a north/south permanent windbreak / tree barrier should be considered.

And finally, the board asked the interns to consider different intersection options, using the township's property. The interns will provide layouts in packet form at the next P&D mtg.

#### 4. Business from the Floor

- None

#### 5. Roads

- Consider adoption of Resolution #2010-001 "Resolution for Abandonment of Town Road"

As instructed by Attorney Shaw, the board was instructed to review this resolution for adoption at the same time that the Gunderson's grant the right of way needed for the turn around. The portion being abandoned is the part of the Underwood Road ROW that goes through Doug Gunderson's house, and is approximately 1,320 feet long.

***A motion to approve Resolution #2010-001, "Resolution for Abandonment of Town Road" (part of the Underwood Road right of way) was made by Supervisor Key, and seconded by Supervisor Rosato. Upon roll call, motion carried unanimously.***

- Updates by Julie Kennedy – SEH
  - Underwood Road: The turnaround project is about 90% complete. They had to lower two Qwest lines, but the utilities company came out yesterday and got the lines taken care of. It's now ready for paving – perhaps as early as next week. Julie did talk to Hawkinson about correcting the tapering of Salo's driveway, which occurred when Wendigo Park Road was resurfaced. Hawkinson's has agreed to fix it.  
  
Julie relayed that 3 residents have thanked her for the patching that was done on the cracks of the Underwood Road.
  - Stony Point Road – Rock has been placed in the washed out area, along the hill just off of main road. Julie said there needs to be a ditch put in this area, as water is pulling gravel from underneath the road. A telephone pole is in the way, but a small ditch is planned, with some rock, for the north side of Stony Point Road in this area.
  - Bear Creek: Julie is waiting on the completion of a preliminary design for a turn around on Bear Creek, so that she can share this with the residents at the end of the road. The project should be done late this fall.

## 6. Recreation

- Herbicide has been applied to both parks, town hall, and cemetery, as previously agreed to by the town board.

## 7. Town Hall Report

- The board reviewed the town hall report, as submitted by the Town Hall Caretaker. There were 10 rentals in the last month, and \$200.00 collected. There were no damages or injuries to report.

## 8. Maintenance Report

- The board reviewed the monthly Maintenance report, as completed for August 2010 by the maintenance crew.
- Supervisor Key added that the **cemetery ground heater did arrive**; Key is happy with it so far – as it's very compact, and seems to work well. It was noted that the heater will need a generator, to operate the boiler furnace.

## 9. Old Business

- Wendigo Park Property – The closing to purchase this property from Christopher and Maise Blaine was scheduled for September 24, 2010. However, Clerk Smith recently received an email from Attorney Andy Shaw, who said that it has been rescheduled for Wednesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, at the Abstract Service Company at 3:30pm. Clerk Smith and Chairman Dennis Kortekaas will attend the closing, as will Attorney Shaw.
- Verde Lane / Gravel Pit – Supervisor Key was invited to a meeting at Verde Lane on Sunday, regarding various concerns about the adjacent gravel pit operations. Key went as a concerned citizen, but not as a Supervisor. Peter Lotti, one of the residents at the end of Verde Lane, had contacted the board back on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010, and requested a letter of support from the Township to support his concerns which included the pit operating outside permitted hours and various environmental concerns. The board agreed to write a letter in support of the county enforcing their policies for extractive uses as they apply to the gravel pit. This would be in keeping with the township's mission statement of "...enhancing the quality of life and protecting the environment for their residents. However, the letter did not get written as intended. Lotti told Key that it's not too late for the letter, as they have a meeting with Itasca County on September 27<sup>th</sup> and he would still like to have it. Julie Kennedy, Supervisor Rosato and Clerk Smith agreed to work on this again. Lotti is representing several residents who have concerns and complaints about the pit, including that they are now encroaching on city property.
- Roadside clean up - This will occur on Friday, October 8<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm, along the 2 mile section of the River Road, as designated for "Adopt a Highway". Supervisor Rosato and Treasurer Jokela agreed to do the clean up, using their 4-wheelers again this year. Supervisor Kortekaas will join them if possible, and Supervisor Key will do "his area" that morning.
- Next newsletter - The last newsletter was issued in May, 2010 – in time to remind residents about the Memorial Day celebration at Harris Cemetery. Putting out another one this fall was agreed to, and officers (and Julie) were encouraged to write about a topic of their choosing. They were asked to get their articles to Clerk Smith by Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Round table with city staff - Julie will check with the city, and try to find a night that will work for Harris Township to get together with the city staff, to discuss roads of common interest and progress on their comprehensive plan updates. The Board agreed that the third week in October would be good for them (Oct 18 or 19).
- Work session for comprehensive plan - Julie will review the information that the City of Grand Rapids is working on, to determine when the board may want to start reviewing the township's comprehensive plan.
- New computer – The Maintenance crew reported to Supervisor Key that the new laptop computer is working great for them, at the Service Center.

## 10. New Business

- Audit 2010 proposal, from Eikill & Schilling (John)  
Deborah Medlin, who performed the Township 2009 audit, sent Treasurer Jokela a proposal for auditing the township's 2010 financials. The proposed cost would be \$5,200. She'd like the information from the township in February 2011. Jokela brought this before the board for their feedback/recommendations. **The board, and Clerk Smith, all agreed that they would like Eikill & Schilling (Deborah Medlin) perform the 2010 township audit**, though the date to have information ready for her will likely have to be pushed out a bit, until after the Annual Meeting in March.
- Business at the end of Birch Hills Drive  
Supervisor Rosato received a call from a concerned resident of Birch Hills Drive, regarding an unknown business and additional night traffic at the end of the road. Rosato talked with Itasca County Zoning, and found that the business is an adult foster care, with four residents, and employees working various shifts to provide 24 hour care. The business was found to be in compliance with all county zoning regulations. Rosato agreed to report his findings back to the Birch Hills Drive resident.

## 11. Adjourn

***A motion was made at 9:43 p.m. by Supervisor Key, to adjourn the Sept 22, 2010 P&D meeting of the Harris Town Board. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Rosato, and thus the meeting was adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith, Harris Twp Clerk