

**Minutes of the
Harris Town Board Work Session
November 30, 2011
Comprehensive Plan Update**

The Harris Town Board met on Wednesday, November 30th, 2011 for a work session. The purpose of this work session was to:

- Meet with the Applied Insights representative (John Powers) to discuss, and begin the process of, updating the Harris Township Comprehensive Plan, originally adopted in 2006.

The work session began at 7:30pm at the Harris Town Hall. This meeting was open to the public. Officers of the Harris Board in attendance were: Supervisors Larry Key, Gary Rosato, & Dennis Kortekaas, and Clerk Michele Smith. Absent: Becky Adams

Also in attendance were John Powers – Applied Insights, Julie Kennedy – Twp Road Engineer from SEH, and Dan Butterfield, Marvin Figgins, and Cecil Beorge (sp?) - township residents and members of the Airport Road Neighborhood Association.

Chairman Rosato opened the work session, and then turned it over to John Powers to facilitate, who was hired by the Township to lead the board through the comprehensive plan update process. (It was noted that Power was also the person who helped the board develop their first plan in 2006.)

Powers started out by clarifying some ‘housekeeping’ items:

- Email was approved as the main way for Powers to contact the board and provide meeting information. Clerk Smith will supply Powers with the board officers email addresses, plus that of the township Attorney, Andrew Shaw.
- Julie Kennedy will be Power’s first point of contact if something needs to be addressed right away, as she is best versed in the comprehensive plan.
- Since Rosato will not be running for re-election in March 2012 – which is mid-stream of the comprehensive plan update process, John recommended that once the filing period is closed (in mid January), that all candidates should be invited to attend the upcoming comprehensive plan meetings.

Powers continued by explaining that tonight’s session was a kick off for updating the Township’s Comprehensive Plan. Powers reviewed the reasons why the board expressed a need to revise the plan:

- A general review – it’s time! The current plan is 5 years old, and is very ‘general’ in nature.
- The proposed “community center complex” and cemetery expansion & GIS mapping are all new since the original comp plan was developed in 2006. This would be a good time to implement those into the updated comp plan. The design and a schedule of development should be included.
- The Hwy 169 corridor – particularly its continued development and road alignment – needs to be revisited. Maps from the lake north, and from lake south, should be included.
- Discuss the request received for detachment from City of Grand Rapids and request to join Harris Township
- Trail systems - the township’s thoughts and plans should be reviewed
- Improved traffic control – including the addition of a center turn lane on the “S” curve of Hwy 169 near Hollywood Pizza / Pump House, for safety & accident reduction reasons.
- Land use conflicts (in particular, between gravel pits and residential areas)
- Want to work with City of Grand Rapids on road expansion locations

Powers intends to be done with the planning process for the updated comprehensive plan in June 2012. Meetings will include an input session in January for the Community Center Complex, where the community will be invited to provide input/ask questions. Regarding the Hwy 169 Corridor, Powers is planning for 3 meetings, starting in February, but the number of meetings will depend on the interest shown. Another meeting will be to address the northern boundary of the township. All meetings will be in the evening.

It was acknowledged by Powers that a good comprehensive plan can help shape county rules that are currently not working well, and help control annexation threats – particularly with the 169 corridor in Harris Township's case.

The board discussed that they believed the township can exercise special assessments to handle urban development, as they have 'Urban Powers' (adopted in March 2004).

The board and Powers also discussed starting a semiannual round table with the County staff, similar to those that they currently hold with the City staff. They thought it would help build a relationship between township and the county, and be a proactive approach for common issues and projects coming down the line.

Powers asked the residents in attendance, all from the Airport Road Neighborhood Association, to explain to him the main issues of concern they had around the Hammerlund Gravel Pit. Butterfield explained that it was primarily the noncompliance of county ordinances, and lack of enforcement of the ordinances by the County. The noncompliance was regarding set back requirements for buffers, run offs into wetlands, hours of operation, noise control, and dust control. The lack of consideration by the gravel extractor to neighboring properties was also of concern.

Powers agreed to research what can put in the comprehensive plan to help with these issues.

Next meeting:

The date for the next work session was set as follows: **December: 21st – 7:30pm, at the Town Hall.**

The purpose of the next meeting will be a general review of the existing plan document, and to discuss what is still valid, what has changed, where more detail/clarity is wanted, what doesn't work, etc. Powers will send out the documents to the board ahead of time via email.

Also, to be discussed is the township's successes (what have we done in the past 5 years?); Clerk Smith recommended the annual reports pages titled "Twp Accomplishments" would be a good reference.

Powers and Kennedy will frame up how to run the Community Complex public meeting in January.

Powers will bring the feedback from the county and city officials that he talks to, as well as the feedback from Andy Shaw regarding Urban Powers.

The work session ended at approximately 9:15pm

Respectfully submitted,
Michele Smith, Harris Township Clerk