

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, June 25, 2014 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled Planning & Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, June 25, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman Rosato at the Harris Town Hall, with the following officers present: Supervisors Gary Rosato, Larry Key, Dennis Kortekaas, Jim Kelley and Burl Ives, and Clerk Michele Smith. *Absent: Treasurer Becky Adams*

Also in attendance: Glen Hodgson – road engineer from SEH, Mike Hendricks – recreational advisor from Creative Services, and Cyndy Martin - resident.

1. Pledge to the flag – followed by the reading of the township mission statement

2. Business from the Floor

- None

3. Roads

Glen Hodgson – SEH:

- Update and discussion on 2014 paved road projects: Harbor Heights, Lakeview Drive & Underwood Road – east. The plans for all the paved projects are almost done. Hodgson commented that they are on target to have the plans done for review & approval at the July 9th meeting, and then send out for bid with a due date of August 11th. He would then bring to the board for project award at the August 13th, 2014 meeting.

- *Harbor Heights:*

Braun Intertec coring showed there was only 1 ½” of bituminous and 4-5” of class V on Harbor Heights. Typically, more material than that is desired for a reclaim. Hodgson explained that a reclaim can still be done, but that more material – 2” of class V – is needed. He also recommended that they excavate some of the soil out of the surrounding soils so that the top of the road will be flush with the driveways and not above them. These two items will add to the cost of the Harbor Heights road project, but Hodgson still recommended them. In the end, the road will have 4-6” base, with 4” of blacktop on top - and be a 7 ton road.

Regarding the drainage problems on Harbor Heights, Hodgson said they will be corrected; he has talked a landowner who is in agreement with the proposed plan.

And, regarding the turnaround, Hodgson commented that while the township does not currently have a formal easement for the turnaround on Harbor Heights, he is talking to the landowner and hoping to get a formal easement in place.

- *Lakeview Drive:*

Hodgson said he is currently working on the drainage improvements and designing a ditch on north side of Lakeview Drive to correct the problem of sheeting water that would flow across the road and freeze. The design will also allow room for snow storage when plowed, and improve the sight distance around that corner. The culvert near Maturi’s will also be replaced, but they are not changing drainage that currently flows into his property as its very low volume.

Because the reclaim equipment is large and need clearance from the sides of the roads – including mail boxes – Hodgson called for swing away mailboxes posts to replace the current supports. Burgraff’s stone mailbox “holder” was discussed. It was considered a liability issue if anyone hits it and was injured – for both the township and landowner.

Hodgson also commented he would like to replace some of the signs that don’t meet current reflectivity standards – including a stop sign. He could put them in the contract, and have them installed as well.

- *Underwood – east:*

The plan for Underwood–east is proceeding nicely; it’s a perfect road for reclaim.

- *Underwood – west (drainage only, in 2014):*

Hodgson talked to the wetlands person out of Duluth regarding the Underwood Road - west. The person agreed to come up to look at the wetlands area, but Hodgson asked him to come when he had other reasons for driving to Grand Rapids - to save on travel costs. Hodgson also talked to Dick (Richard) Gunderson, a resident on Underwood Road-west, and showed him where he and the board would like to drain the excess water. Gunderson was fine with what Hodgson proposed, and agreed to give the township written permission to use the area for drainage but was not willing to do a formal easement. The drainage would get the water away from the road. Overall, this project is still in progress.

- *Neighborhood meeting:*

As requested by residents at the previous neighborhood meetings, Hodgson suggested having another neighborhood meeting for Lakeview Drive, Harbor Heights, and Underwood Road (both east & west) to share the road and drainage improvement plans that have been drawn up. He would also like to talk about the mailbox posts, and the schedule for construction.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kelley to have a neighborhood road meeting for Underwood Road (east & west), Harbor Heights Road, and Lakeview Drive on Wednesday, July 2nd at 7:00pm at the town hall. Supervisor Key seconded the motion, and upon roll call, motion carried by a unanimous vote.

- Update on 2014 Gravel Road Project: Bear Creek Road

The Clerk and Chair signed gravel road contracts between SEH and Schwartz for Bear Creek Road; Hodgson agreed to return an executed copy to the contractor and the project should start on July 14th per what Schwartz recently told Supervisor Key.

- Road evaluation and road condition rating discussion

The board and Hodgson reviewed the road evaluation spreadsheets provided by Hodgson at a previous meeting. They paid particular attention to low numbers in the priority index column as that indicated a bad road condition. However, Hodgson did remind the board to also look at other columns also for a true picture of the road. Ives requested adding column to list crack filling on the spreadsheet. Hodgson agreed it was a good idea, and the rest of the board liked the idea as well.

Roads discussed were as follows:

- Sunny Beach Road: One section of this 5 ½ mile road was rated a 1 (bad). Hodgson recommended that if this is to be a large project for 2015, that they get started this fall on prepping so they are in a position to move forward in the spring. Some areas could just get by with an overlay, but one area should be reclaimed. This could be a 2 year project per the board– and put in the budget, as they have never been able to afford to improve the entire Sunny Beach Road in one year due to the length. Hodgson offered that it would be more economical to do the road as one project – and so the board could wait 2 years to improve it, and build up the road fund by not doing any major paved road projects in 2015. However, per the board, then bad roads will only get worse. Yet, the traffic volume on Sunny Beach Road trumps many of the other ‘bad roads’ with lower traffic volume. Overall, the board agreed to really think about Sunny Beach Road options this fall.
- Isleview and Birch Street: These two roads were also noted to be bad.
- Gravel Roads: The board and Hodgson discussed that to save money, the board could wait a year and postpone repeating the 5 year gravel rotation until 2016. This means the gravel road scheduled for gravel in 2015 would wait until 2016.

The board agreed to continue discussing roads throughout the year.

- Sunny Beach Road speed limit discussion

In follow up to a discussion at the June 11th Regular Meeting, when it was learned that an area of Sunny Beach Road does not have any speed limit signs, Supervisor Key checked with attorney Andy Shaw to

determine if the township had the authority to restrict the speed limit on township roads down to 30 mph. Shaw confirmed what Hodgson had suggested in that a town board can only reduce to 35mph, if the road is in a “rural residential district”. Hodgson did conduct an on-site inspection of Sunny Beach Road between Wendigo Road and Wendigo Park Road and confirmed it is apx 7,100 feet long, with 40 dwellings, and thus does meet the definition of “rural residential district” as defined in Mn Statute 169.011.

However, Key strongly recommended a 30mph for the area, which required MnDOT to review the road. Key has arranged to meet with MnDOT and look at the road between Wendigo Park and Wendigo Picnic Park. He hopes to have the results and MnDOT recommendation by the next board meeting.

- Other road issues/concerns/comments

- Stony Point plat concern (survey needed) and road ROW location

Supervisor Ives discovered that he cannot see parcel information on the GIS database of the county’s website for much of the Stony Point Road area plat; most come up as “no data available” and is blank. Ives talked to the county and to the surveyor. And he reviewed the information included from prior minutes in 2011 and 2010 as provided by the Clerk, when this issue was previously discussed. Overall, as a realtor, Ives felt it would be difficult for anyone to sell a parcel on Stony Point Road. He wondered what the township’s options were to correct this.

Hodgson talked to county surveyor and the deputy surveyor, who provided him with a large aerial map of Stony Point area. There are actually two plats – but the one in Harris Township is called Kaynosh Beach from the 1920’s.

As he and board reviewed the map, they noted that some boundary lines of parcels go out into the water, while some land is not even included within the boundary lines of the plat. As a result of the plat map errors, most parcel lines are missing from the online GIS map.

To solve this issue, Hodgson was told that a “Boundary commission plat” would need to be done. There has been another one done in Itasca county – but involved a smaller number of parcels. That cost was \$2000-\$2500 per parcel, and an assessment was done. In the case of Stony Point, the county would have to assess those in the unorganized township area, which is under the County’s jurisdiction.

The board asked who’s responsible to start the process, and Hodgson replied that he thought it was the town board, and that they could start by going to the county. Part of the problem is outside Harris Township so Itasca County would need to be involved. Hodgson estimated that the cost would likely be more than \$2,500/per parcel as it’s much more involved than the other one in Itasca County, on Prairie Lake. He added that the township would probably have to front the money. Also, the boundary commission plat goes before a judge to declare the plat valid, so a court order may be needed

The board discussed that, as an Urban Township, they could assess involved landowners of Stony Point for the cost of surveys. However, Supervisor Key commented that it was his understanding that most residents in the area have agreed to boundary line locations with their neighbors and that to survey one lot out there could be as much as \$10,000. In addition, residents have *not* been complaining. However, other board members recognized that there is an issue – especially if trying to buy/sell property in this area.

Overall, board members did not fully know what all of their options were. One suggestion was to have Hodgson invite the county surveyor and assessor to the next P&D meeting. Another was to talk to the township and/or county attorney to determine who is responsible for correcting the issue. Another suggestion was for two supervisors and Hodgson to go to the court house and try to meet with the surveyor, assessor, auditor, and our county commissioner as that is their place of business during the day; Trish Klein may be able to arrange.

A motion was made by Supervisor Ives to pursue a meeting with 2 township supervisors, SEH road engineer, the county surveyor, assessor, auditor, and county commissioner. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Rosato. Discussion: Which supervisors would like to be included at the meeting? Ives had an interest and Rosato agreed to go as well. Upon roll call, Supervisors Ives,

Kelley and Rosato voted in favor of the motion; however, Supervisors Kortekaas and Key voted against the motion, without comment. Motion passed.

Hodgson agreed to start the process and get a meeting set up.

- Crack filling update:
Per Supervisor Key, Northwest Asphalt is still on track to do the township's road crack filling. However, he noted that other municipalities are starting to use another company – one that is more reputable. He would like to look into that company for next year.
- Dust guard update:
Dust Be Gone has been lined up to put dust guard on next week. This will be done after the gravel road project has been completed on Bear Creek.

4. Recreation

- Tennis Courts:
Mike Hendricks was in attendance and gave an update regarding the tennis court repairs. He stated that the tennis court projects at both parks and the Crystal basketball court resurface project have all been completed. The weather didn't cooperate well this spring, but they got everything done yesterday. The contractor's quote information was given to clerk to file.
- Power at Crystal Park pavilion:
A resident reserving the pavilion recently contacted the board stating that the power was not working; however, when the maintenance crew checked it the Friday prior, it was working. And, the next day, it also appeared fine. Supervisor Key wondered if the patron had a bad slow cooker. However, he noted that they may need to have an electrician check the power boxes at Crystal Park pavilion.

5. Town Hall Report

There were 21 hours of cleaning, and 0 hours noted for non-routine work by the caretaker. There were 11 total rentals, with 7 being resident rentals and 4 "discounted" (no charge) rentals for board use. Total money collected was \$350.00, with one deposit retained and no maintenance or safety concerns.

6. Maintenance Report

The board reviewed the maintenance report and noted that the docks were installed. However, Supervisor Key noted that the docks had been pulled out again due to high and still rising water level.

7. Old Business

- Lake sales in Harris Township report (from Itasca County Assessor - after Board of Appeals & Equalization mtg)
In follow up to the local Board of Appeals and Equalization meeting, Clerk Smith requested the "Lake Sales Report" that was not included in the information from the county assessor as has been provided in the past. Supervisor Ives questioned the content of the report, and the different formats used for 2013 and 2014 vs. 2011 and 2012 studies.
- Ramp at town hall
The board discussed again that the ramp at the town hall is in need of repair or replacement, as it's crumbling and is a safety hazard. There was some consideration expressed to cover the walkway with a lighted canopy as well. Supervisors Kelley and Key agreed to work on a proposed design and plan, and bring back to the board at the July P&D meeting.
- Meet maintenance crew
The new supervisors, Kelley and Ives, expressed a desire to meet the maintenance crew. They agreed to schedule something with Key, to best meet their schedules.

8. New Business

- Request for an official Harris Township FaceBook page (see email from new resident Kati M. and response email and document from MN Association of Townships attorney)

After reviewing the 12 page document from League of Minnesota Cities as shared by MAT attorney Hartnett, and the various questions that need to be addressed when considering a FaceBook page, the board agreed that the official township website is enough for the Clerk to maintain right now, and that currently the township is just not set up administratively to handle the demands of a FaceBook page. However, they may look at again when MAT can supply more guidance on this area of social media, and if an outside consultant could be hired to maintain a township FaceBook page.

- Pokegama Lake Association Meeting:

Supervisors Ives and Key attended a Pokegama Lake Association Meeting, regarding the high water levels of area lakes – including Pokegama. There were about 80 people in attendances, including first timers, members of the association, the DNR, the Army Corps of Engineers, and district representatives

The group discussed the ditch that doesn't work in Aitkin, which causes flooding, and what it would cost to correct. Also discussed was a high-water ropes study done to determine flood level. The lake association is planning to start a petition to get things started.

- New Maintenance Facility

Supervisor Rosato suggested that 2 supervisors work with the maintenance crew to design a new maintenance facility for the township's equipment and office, to be located at the Service Center property. There may be some preliminary concept drawings from when Julie Kennedy had the ICC Engineering interns work on a plan for the service center.

The current garage has a terrible humidity problem in the winter and Rosato and Key worry about mold growth in the walls and insulation. They need to correct the moisture issue caused from the in-floor heat when water drips off the vehicles onto the warm floors; a good air exchange system should be installed prior to winter.

Overall, the board agreed they need to start planning a new building – what is wanted, placement, related costs, etc. – and get it into the budget. Clerk Smith agreed to pull prior minutes from when the interns gave presentations and Hodgson will try and locate the plans shared by the interns. The board also agreed that at some point, they will need to pull in a professional to design the facility.

Supervisor Kelley agreed to work with Supervisor Key on this project, and will try to bring back some information to the board by the August P&D meeting.

9. Public Input

- Cyndy Martin: Social media is the largest growing form of communication today. The city of Grand Rapids and Itasca County both have FB pages, and she was in favor of the township having one as well – as a way to communicate with the community.

10. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made at 9:23pm by Supervisor Key, and seconded by Supervisor Kelley. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk