

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, August 27, 2014 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled Planning & Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, August 27, 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 residents Cyndy Martin, Judy Myers, Dan Butterfield, and Marge Kelley.

1. Pledge to the flag

2. Business from the Floor

- None

3. Roads (Glen Hodgson – SEH Engineer)

- 2014 paved road project update:

Hodgson has been in close contact with the paving contractor (Hawkinson) for the 2014 project, and next Tuesday, road work will be started by Casper Construction, a sub contractor for Hawkinson. This includes culverts and ditch grading on Lakeview and Harbor Heights. The reclaim and paving will occur approximately 2 weeks later. The hope is to complete the paving road project in September 2014.

Contract copies for the paving road project were given to the Chair and Clerk for signatures; one copy will be kept in the township road files.

- Potential 2015 road projects

In follow up to previous discussions, Hodgson wanted to continue discussions regarding possible road repair projects for 2015. Road condition, budget, traffic volume, etc. should be considered. And if the board is considering a major road project, he would like to get a jump on what needs to be done.

A road that continued to rise to the top of the list was Sunny Beach Road: The board discussed pros and cons for holding off on repairing Sunny Beach in segments over a few years, as could be afforded, vs. saving and repairing the entire road all in one year. Supervisor Kelley had posed this question to Hawkinson, and they recommended the board do what they can when they can....rather than waiting until they can afford to do the whole road at once.

Because test drilling results are good for 5-10 years, Hodgson commented that doing core samples may be a good start for Sunny Beach Road; the dirt under the road does not change.

The board then discussed having a neighborhood meeting for Sunny Beach Road residents – perhaps before any seasonal residents leave for the winter – though the number of seasonals was not known. Hodgson agreed that it's never too early to have a neighborhood meeting. If the road was done in 3 segments over 3 years, due to cost, it's likely the residents would understand that concept.

Drainage needs on Sunny Beach Road have *not* been reviewed, per Hodgson.

After discussing available dates, Supervisor Key made a motion to have a neighborhood meeting for residents of Sunny Beach Road on Wednesday, October 1st at 7:00pm, as an information gathering process only – no decisions regarding road repair would be made. Supervisor Kelley seconded the motion and upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Hodgson agreed to get the meeting invite list together and send out to all those who live on Sunny Beach Road. He will also gather what information SEH and Braun had regarding test bores, and what the cost would be to do them if needed, on Sunny Beach Road.

Other paved roads discussed for possible repair in 2015:

- Underwood – west: Control of water on this section of Underwood was discussed, but it was not a paving project.
- Fieldcrest Road: The washed-out and damaged area of Field Crest could be saw cut out and replaced with a new bituminous patch; however, other pavement issues of this road would benefit from an overlay. But, to address the immediate issue, a patch was recommended. Hodgson was asked by the board to get some cost estimates for on patch, as he and Supervisor Key had discussed when they looked at the road area a month or so ago.
- Little Crystal, Birch Street, and Tolerick roads were also mentioned as being in need of repair.

4. Recreation

- Wendigo Picnic Park ownership – see email from Twp attorney Andrew Shaw

Mike Hendricks and Supervisor Key met with attorney Andy Shaw, who did the research to determine if Harris Township owned the property of the Wendigo Picnic Park, and if so, if there were any conditions for its use or disposal.

Shaw sent an email to the board (*a copy will be attached to these minutes for future reference*) with his findings. In short, the property easement was given to Harris Township in 19971 for construction, maintenance and use as a public landing. And, due to way it was written, it must be used for a public landing - *not* a public park or picnic ground. However, the access is not suitable for a public landing – nor was it back in 1971 when it used by a resort in the area. Furthermore, if the township does not want it, the land must go back to the state of Minnesota – it cannot be sold outright by the township.

The board's options were reviewed:

1. See if an agreement can be done with state on MN whereby the township would pass the property on to the state and they deed it back to the township for park purposes. However, this is not an easy thing to do and would involve an attorney's time and fees.
2. If ownership was obtained (see #1 above), work with county to see if a variance could be received for the township to dispose of the land as a building lot. It's less than an acre – only 0.53 acre with a 12' lake easement - but needs to be at least 0.56 acre to conform with county zoning regulations.
3. Maintain the land as it is currently being used – by mowing, cleaning up the area, and removing the stairway to lake for safety purposes.
4. Do nothing – let the land go back to 'nature'.

The Board discussed what to do. Because the township currently does own it, but cannot sell it, the two most feasible options are to maintain it as it currently is, or let it go back the nature. The cement picnic tables are bad – and should be removed, and or/replaced with wooden ones. And the steps to the lake should be removed – as they are rotting and a safety concern.

Supervisor Rosato then made a motion to maintain the Wendigo Picnic Park as is, and power wash the cement picnic tables and remove the steps to the lake. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Ives and upon roll call, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

It was noted that the board also discussed that if a potential buyer was willing to pay all legal fees necessary to obtain the property, the board would be open to reviewing that option as well.

- Wendigo Park hard surface area

Mike Hendricks discussed replacing the Wendigo Park hard surface area, which he believed was budgeted for. He suggested the board develop a plan and solicit quotes in spring, whereby the township maintenance crew would remove what's left of the bituminous surface. Hendricks noted that drainage away from the recently repaired tennis courts is important.

Hendricks proposed replacing the current surface with a concrete or bituminous surface apx 40' x 60" - much smaller area than is currently there — with just a ½ basketball court with a new standard, and a small game area to the side. If the board approves, he'd start some preliminary plans to replace the surface early next spring 2015.

Supervisor Key agreed that the hard surface area is in bad shape. It was hard to determine utilization as it's in too bad of condition now to play on. The board liked the idea of Hendricks drawing up some specs and setting a time schedule.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kortekaas, seconded by Supervisor Key, to have Mike Hendricks of Creative Services draw up specs and a time table for the replacement of the hard surface play area at Wendigo Park, including 1 new basketball standard. Upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.

o Tree at Wendigo Park – causing problems to tennis court

Supervisor Key discussed that there is a huge pine tree at Wendigo Park, next to the tennis courts, that is weeping needles all over the newly repaired tennis court. It is a maintenance nuisance, and he felt it should be taken down to maintain the integrity and use of the court. Mike Hendricks agreed. Unfortunately, there is no way to prune the tree to prevent the needles from getting onto the court per Key, and it is a beautiful tree; as a result, there may be some pushback from residents if removed.

Supervisor Key made a motion to remove the large pine tree Wendigo Park that is weeping needles onto the tennis court, due to the maintenance issues and upkeep of the newly repaired tennis court. Supervisor Kortekaas seconded the motion and upon roll call, motion passed by a unanimous vote.

5. Town Hall Report

The board reviewed the town hall report, as prepared by the Town Hall Caretaker dated 8-10-14.

There were 28 cleaning hours, and a total of 11 rentals, which included 2 no charge memorial services and 4 no charge board meetings. There were 5 paid residential rentals, in which \$250.00 was collected. There were no comments by the board.

6. Maintenance Report

The monthly maintenance report for July 2014 was reviewed by board, as submitted by the maintenance crew. There were no concerns expressed by the board.

7. Old Business

- ICC intern information on Community Complex Concept Plan (revisit – Hodgson)

Glen Hodgson had previously given packets to the board from the SEH archives of the Community Complex project done by the ICC engineering interns in 2010-2011 for the Service Center property. Clerk Smith also found the to-scale map board and props the interns designed, in which various placement options could be played with including a new town hall building, a parking area, a recreation area & pavilion, trails, and a wind row in the cemetery. Overall, Hodgson wanted to discuss next steps with the board for this project.

Supervisor Rosato recapped that the board brought interns in to help them get a handle on how to best utilize the land and space they had at the Harris Township Service Center and Cemetery. He felt the board should now determine a plan on when and what to build.

Hodgson recommended identifying what uses the board would like to see on that property – such as expansion of cemetery, a new maintenance facility, and perhaps a town hall and recreation area - and then prioritize them.

Supervisors Key and Rosato expressed that a new maintenance facility was number one. The need for one facility to maintain and store all of the township's equipment was important. They would like to consolidate all current garages onto one property – and soon. A wash bay would be nice – rather than going to the car wash as it would make equipment last longer and look nicer. Good drainage would be needed for that, so there may be special guidelines to consider. HVAC was also a concern at the current maintenance garage; it wasn't constructed well to begin with and was designed for residential

use – not for heavy use by large, wet township equipment. The current in-floor heat is not working well and a forced air furnace would be worth looking into if the building will continue to be used for while. Supervisor Ives, however, felt the township was underutilizing the existing property and buildings owned by the township. He preferred the idea of seasonal maintenance facilities – using the current garages. For example, store all summer mowers at town hall garage in winter. And store the grave heaters at the cemetery garage where it's used.

Mike Hendricks noted that years ago, when a maintenance study done for the township, a major recommendation was to store all equipment in one place – so when there's down time, the maintenance crew could work on the "off season" equipment. And that a lot of the crew's time was spent running around the township to get and transport equipment. The study was done apx 10+ years ago and a workbook was compiled for the crew to help anticipate what things needed to be done, and when; many of study's findings still hold true today per Hendricks.

The board agreed that the next step would be for each supervisor to consider size/construction needs and options – including location. Revisiting this will be put on the agenda for the September P&D meeting.

It was noted that in prior discussions regarding a possible new town hall, that this was discussed just an option when annexation by the City of Grand Rapids was a hot topic. However, since the board did not see that happening for many years, it was no longer a priority.

- Employee Handbook:

- *"HR representative" and town boards - see email from Kyle Hartnett (MAT)*

Clerk Smith contacted one of the MAT attorneys for a recommendation of including the term "Human Resources Representative" when updating its Employee Handbook in areas where an employee or officer was to report concerns – in addition to the option to report to the board – as suggested by Supervisor Ives. Attorney Hartnett responded that most townships do not have an HR representative, but that a supervisor or board member could serve the same function for reporting issues. They could then seek help as needed for situations – typically from an attorney. Ives expressed he would still like the term added in as discussed at the prior work session when reviewing the Employee Handbook. Supervisor Rosato and Treasurer Adams currently act as the current HR representative and bring issues to the board– or attorney – as needed. Primarily, they serve as a contact person and it has worked well.

Supervisor Ives made a motion to insert the term "Human Resources Representative" into the updated township Employee Manual, where discussed at the related work session. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley. The board discussed modifying the term to be "board designated human resources representative", so as to include collaboration with outside sources if needed. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- *Wording option for harassment, drug free workplace, and FMLA -from MN League of Cities*

Clerk Smith shared wording from the MN League of Cities for the outdated areas of the Employee Manual, including harassment, a drug free workplace, and the Family Medical Leave Act. She'd just received it the day prior, from the Human Resources Director from the City of Grand Rapids. There was a lot to review, but she would try to implement the wording accordingly into the updated manual that she is still working on.

- Mediacom: Internet proposal received – stand alone and with a phone line

The clerk received a proposal from Paul Dulong at Mediacom-Business, for high speed internet (10 GB) at the Harris Towns Hall. The cost with 1 phone line and free nationwide long distance (keeping the same number) and free business basic cable TV (channels 2-27) was \$89.95/month plus a onetime install price of \$99.95. The cost for *just internet* was \$69.95/month.

Internet at the town hall is currently gotten through a portable hot spot devise from Verizon for \$40/month, and the phone is through Century Link – but the cost per line was not known.

A motion was made by Supervisor Ives to change to Mediacom for high speed internet, 1 phone line at the town hall with free long distance, and basic cable for \$89.95 and installation fee of

\$99.95. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Key. There was no further discussion and upon roll call, the motion passed by unanimous vote.

- Summer maintenance intern
Supervisor Key reported that the summer maintenance intern's last day was the 27th of August, and that he did a great job for the township.
- Update: Town Hall entrance ramp
Supervisor Kelley reported that the ramp at the town hall should be installed next week, Sept 8-12th, 2014 and that Stromberg will be there after the 15th to put the roof on. Due to the timing, the side entrance will need to be used for the Sept 10th Regular Meeting.

8. New Business

- Requests from Supervisor Ives
Supervisor Ives presented the board with a packet of items he was seeking answers to, including: all township property purchase dates and prices, a list of all township equipment as well as a spreadsheet with their serial numbers, purchase dates, hours used, condition, purchase price, and replacement dates. He also requested working keys and codes to all township buildings and a list of what's stored in each of them, and asked if all cameras worked. In addition, he submitted a 2 page detailed list as well as photos of maintenance issues he'd like to see fixed at the service center garage & house, the town hall building & garage, and the cemetery building. Ives also asked about the Sunny Beach Road speed limit signs and curve signs.
The board directed Ives to the township's annual report, as it contained much of the information he sought with regards to equipment and properties. They agreed to get him keys to the buildings and garages as requested. The condition of buildings was discussed at length. While some items are in need of repair, per Ives, others are for the look of a township buildings, which should "look nice" – including looking more organized and cleaner – to make a tax payer proud. Key commented that the maintenance of the Service Center 'house' was kept low in order to keep costs down – as it may be torn down eventually. However, Ives commented that the maintenance guys should be expected to maintain *all* buildings that the township owns - especially in fall and winter, when he felt they would be less busy. However, Key's concern was that the cost for all the maintenance items requested by Ives was not budgeted for, and that roads should be the the crew's first priority.
There was no board action taken on this item.
- Email from Andy Shaw on agenda notice question
The board discussed Supervisor Ives contacting the township attorney, Andy Shaw, without prior authorization of the board – asking about notice requirements for township agendas. The board advised Ives that there are other alternatives that should be explored before contacting the township's attorney, as that costs the taxpayers money. These options include asking other township officers, searching the Minnesota Township Association (MAT) website and library, and contacting one of the MAT attorneys. Ives stated he did call MAT but could not get in touch with either attorney that day. He offered to pay Andy Shaw for the cost of his inquiry and time. However, Supervisor Rosato stated he would not do that, but encouraged Ives to use the other alternatives as discussed, and to bring future issues to the board prior to contacting Shaw.
With regards to the agenda notice question asked by Ives, Shaw explained that townships are not required to give the same 3 days prior notice as a city, and in fact does not even have to have an agenda at all.
- ATV Trail Meeting
Supervisor Rosato and resident Dan Butterfield attended a public meeting this morning to discuss the future of ATV and multi use trails connecting Grand Rapids to outside areas. There were many different people in attendance including Dale Anderson from City of Grand Rapids Parks & Recreation Department, as well as representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the cities of Cohasset and LaPrairie, Harris Township, Itasca County, the DNR, and ATV groups. Items discussed included improved signage and looking at state aid grants. This project is still in the planning phase, and this was the first of many meetings to come.

9. Public Input

- *Judy Myers* commented that before spending money on a new maintenance facility, that road maintenance and improvements should come first – like Sunny Beach Road.
- *Dan Butterfield* commented he agreed that if money is spent on a new maintenance building, it may not be well received by those on Sunny Beach Road when told the township can only afford to fix part of it.

10. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn tonight's meeting was made by Supervisor Key at 9:43 pm; upon a second, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk