

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting
Harris Township Board
Wednesday, January 28th, 2015 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled Planning & Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, January 28, 2015. 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, Jim Kelley, and Burl Ives, as well as Clerk Michele Smith and Treasurer Becky Adams. *Absent: Supervisor Dennis Kortekaas*

Also in attendance: Glen Hodgson – road engineer from SEH, Mike Hendricks – Creative Services, Len Harding – Rapids Riders ATV club, Megan Christiansen – Visit Grand Rapids, and residents Dan Butterfield, Bonnie Key, Marge Kelley and Cyndy Martin.

1. Pledge to the flag

2. Rapid Riders ATV Club – Discuss motorized trails and route options through Harris Township

- Len Harding – from Rapids Riders and Megan Christianson – from Visit Grand Rapids spoke to the board about a motorized trails task force that has formed. The task force is made up of representative from a variety of clubs in the Itasca County area, including snowmobile clubs, ATV clubs, Grand Rapids Park & Recreation, Itasca County Park and Recreation, the DNR, and Visit Grand Rapids tourism.

The group is trying to develop a motorized trail route from the UPM trail near 9 mile corner to the city of Grand Rapids. They do not have a proposed route yet, but rather are first meeting with townships or cities with properties in this area, to discuss route options that would be agreeable to both entities. They meet with Wildwood Township on February 10th.

The City of Grand Rapids does have a designated route along 21st Avenue between Hwy 169 and Airport road, but they want it to connect to ‘something’.

Rapids Riders ATV club has agreed to be the sponsor, and would maintain the proposed gravel trails; they get grants for this work. They also would act as ambassadors and monitor the trails, reporting any problems to the DNR. The Rapids Riders group also has their own insurance.

There would be no cost to the township for a new motorized trail, other than posting 20 mph trail speed limit signs on trails that run along their roads or on their properties.

A work session with the Harris Town Board was then requested by Harding and Christianson, to further discuss specific motorized trail location options and review maps of the area. Before a definite route was decided, Christianson clarified that the public would be invited to an open house to give their input.

Sara Thompson from the Itasca County Land Department, who does GIS mapping of trails, would also attend the work session. She also would make sure that the trail could be accurately located via the emergency response system. Dale Anderson, from the City of Grand Rapids Park and Rec department, would attend the work session as well.

The board agreed that a work session was a good idea to explore their options in deeper detail. However, a work session wouldn’t be feasible until after the week of the Annual Town Meeting on March 10, 2015.

A motion was then made by Supervisor Ives to conduct a town board work session on Wednesday, March 18th, 2015 at 7:00pm at the Harris Town Hall, to consider motorized trail route options in the township as requested by the motorized trails task force. After a second by Supervisor Kelley, the motion carried by a unanimous vote.

3. Business from the Floor

- None

4. Roads

- *Glen Hodgson – SEH Road Engineer:*

- Discuss which board meetings the road engineer should attend this winter

Because road issues are rather dormant in the winter months, Hodgson asked what meetings the board would like him to come to after tonight. He reminded the board that he did not come to every meeting last winter either.

The board requested that Hodgson be “on call” to attend future meetings only when requested by the board. This was agreeable to Hodgson.

A motion was then made by Supervisor Key to have the SEH Engineer Glen Hodgson on call to attend meetings during the winter months, rather than attend all meetings. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Ives, and passed by a unanimous vote.

- “Underwood Road Ditch Maintenance and Road Shoulder Improvements – Wetland Permit Application” – full bound copy given to clerk for the township’s record

The thick and detailed bound copy of the wetland permit application was shared with the board. Hodgson commented that it had been submitted along with \$150 application fee, and he will let the board know when he has heard back from the Soil & Water Conservation Department.

Supervisor Ives asked if ditching on Underwood east should have same treatment as Underwood west. Hodgson agreed it would be a good idea to look at drainage and ditches on the east side of Underwood, because if work is needed, it would make the most sense to do it at the same time as the west side. It was clarified that no wetland application would be needed for the east section of the road, and that any ditch work would not disturb the new pavement on the east side. Hodgson commented that he did recall that there may be some plugged culverts to look at on Underwood east.

- Schedule another road planning meeting – for the 5 year road plan development

Hodgson is planning to attend the budget work session on Wednesday, February 4th to discuss the road fund and project priority for 2015 and 2016, but that he’d also like to get a work session scheduled to continue the discussion and development of the 5 year road plan for paved roads (for 2016 and beyond).

A motion was made by Supervisor Ives, seconded by Supervisor Kelley, to hold a road work session on Wednesday, March 4th at 7:00pm at the Harris Town Hall to continue the development of a 5 year road plan. Ives commented that it would be good to have this discussion prior to the Annual Town Meeting (on March 10th). Upon calling for a vote, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- *Other road issues / concerns*

- Roads conditions

Supervisor Key commented that the township roads are taking a beating with no snow and the frost, but that they are holding up. He noted that Wendigo Park Road is starting to crack.

5. Recreation

- Creative Services – Mike Hendricks: Discuss 2015 contract and budget items

Mike Hendricks from Creative Services, who has been contracted by the township for many years as a recreational advisor, shared his 2015 proposal for professional service with board. He commented that it was identical to that from previous years, except that there was an increase of \$5/hour to his hourly rate. Hendricks hoped the board would approve the proposal and his 2015 rate of \$55/hour.

Supervisor Key commented that Hendricks’s services had been priceless to the township over the past 10+ years. He had learned a lot from him regarding the development and maintenance of parks, but that he still

had more to learn from him. It was Hendricks who planned and worked with the board on the development of Crystal Park, which is a beautiful park. Supervisor Rosato echoed Key's comments and added that the township's parks would not be the high quality they are, without Hendricks services, advice, and recommendations to the board.

Supervisor Ives then made a motion to table the vote on the 2015 Creative Services proposal for services until the board has reviewed the budget for the Recreation fund, which will be discussed at the February 4th work session. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley.

Discussion: Chairman Rosato explained that in the past, Hendricks has supplied proposed park projects for the board to consider during the budget discussions. However, because his 2014 contract had expired, he is no longer under contract with the township. As such, he would not be able to prepare any information for the budget meeting unless his 2015 contract was approved tonight.

In response to a question about how much the township spends on Hendricks services in a typical year, the Treasurer reported that the total fee paid to Creative Services for 2013 was \$1,600. And for 2014, the fee was \$3,200 – almost double that of 2013. However, that was due to work on the Wendigo Picnic Park development proposals that were requested by the board. The average for the prior years was \$1,300/yr.

Key commented that he would like to approve the contract tonight as the cost for Hendricks has already been included in the 2015 budget. Also, he felt that Creative Services would save the township money with him on contract. Ives replied that he would prefer to look hard at the budget for the Recreation fund first – and then decide.

With no other discussion a roll call vote was called. Those voting in favor of tabling a decision on the Creative Services 2015 proposal for services were Supervisors Ives and Kelley. Those voting against the motion to table a decision were Supervisors Rosato and Key. Due to the lack of a majority, the motion failed.

A motion was then made by Supervisor Key to approve the Creative Services 2015 proposal for service. Upon a second by Rosato, a roll call vote was called. Those voting in favor of approving the contract with Hendricks were Supervisors Rosato and Key. Those voting against the motion were Supervisors Ives and Kelley. Due to the lack of a majority vote, the motion failed.

6. Town Hall Report dated Jan 8, 2015

The board reviewed the town hall report dated 1-8-15 as prepared by the town hall caretaker, noting there were 11 total rentals – including board use. \$325 was collected, with no maintenance or safety concerns noted.

7. Maintenance Report (new format) – for November and December 2014

Supervisor Rosato explained the new format of the maintenance report. The first page lists the various township funds (i.e. General, Road & Bridge, Equipment, etc.). The number written just to the right of the fund name is the number of hours the guys worked in this area. This number is for the 2 crew members combined. Under each township fund heading is a list of general ledger line items (duties). The crew underlines the areas where they spent their hours.

And, a summation of their work is provided in a narrative report – just as has been submitted in the past. Rosato noted that if the township utilizes interns again this summer, they too will be asked to fill out a similar maintenance report, to show where their time is being spent.

There were no questions or concerns by the board on the November and December maintenance reports.

8. Old Business

- November 11, 2015 Regular Meeting – reschedule to Tues., Nov. 10th, 2015 (due to holiday on 11/11/15)

The Clerk advised the board that the town hall was booked on their first choice date of Thursday, November 12th, to reschedule the November Regular which currently falls on Veterans Day – a federal holiday. However,

their second choice date of Tuesday, November 10th was open at the town hall, and so it has been booked for the Regular Meeting. The board was asked to please mark their calendars accordingly.

Supervisor Key then made a motion to have the Clerk publish notice of the rescheduled November Regular meeting, from Wednesday, November 11th to Tuesday, November 10^t, 2015. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley. Discussion: Clerk Smith asked for clarification as to publish a full schedule, noting the new November Regular Meeting date – or just publish the date change for the November meeting. The board confirmed that just a simple notice of the one meeting date change was needed. Upon a vote of the board, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

9. New Business

- 2015 Fire Contract memo and calculation spreadsheet. 2015 rate = \$75,249 (2014 rate = \$72,271)

Chairman Rosato expressed that the Fire contract information was for the boards review only; no action was needed. And that they can go over the calculation detail at a future budget work session or board meeting if desired.

- Consider setting a date for the final 2016 budget work session (Wed., Feb 18th?)

Ives proposed Tuesday, February 17th for the work session as he has a conflict on Wednesday the 18th. Supervisor Kelley also had a conflict on the 18th. The town hall care taker, who was in the audience, checked the town hall schedule and said that the hall is booked Tuesday, but only until 4:00pm. Thus a 7:00pm work session should be fine.

A motion was then made Supervisor Ives to set the date for the last 2016 budget work session for Tuesday, February 18th, 2015 at 7:00pm at the Harris Town Hall. Upon a second by Supervisor Kelley, the motion passed by a unanimous vote.

- Letter from Land Stewardship Project

Supervisor Key commented on a Land Stewardship Project (LSP) letter he and most of the board received recently, dated Jan 16, 2015. The Minnesota based Land Stewardship Project periodically sends out Action Alerts that describe how citizens can make their voices heard on critical issues related to family farming, the environment and our rural communities. Key felt this particular letter regarding keeping township rights strong, and not letting local control be weakened for any special interest, was especially important. He added that he would like to see it brought to the Itasca County Township Association meeting. The letter included names and contact information for MN state Senator and Representative, as well as the Governor. *(A copy will be attached to these minutes.)*

- Podium donated to the township

A podium was donated to the township by Mike and Mary Jo Hendricks. The board accepted the donation and thanked the Hendricks for the donation. They will have the podium set up at all broadcast town board meetings for audience members' use, along with a microphone (when received).

10. Public Input

- Dan Butterfield asked that a copy of the Land Stewardship Project letter please be included with the minutes that are posted on the township's website. The board and clerk agreed to do this.

11. Adjourn

With no other business to come before the board, a motion was by made by Supervisor Key at 8:31pm to adjourn tonight's P&D meeting. Upon a second from Supervisor Ives, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Town Clerk



LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

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landstewardshipproject.org

January 16, 2015

By acting together we can keep township rights strong!

Dear Fellow Township Official,

As a township officer, you know that township government is the closest to the people and that townships must have strong local control in order to effectively serve the community. Simply put, we know that strong local communities need strong local control.

But corporate special interests don't see it that way. Too often they want to profit at the expense of rural communities and local control stands in their way. Year after year at the Minnesota Legislature, they have attacked township rights, attempting to weaken the power of communities to have a say in controversial and potentially harmful developments. And year after year we have worked together to beat these attacks back.

This legislative session the attacks on local control began early. Before the legislative session even began, corporate special interests beat a path to the Capitol and signaled their intention to attack our township rights. At a November 2014 meeting of the Minnesota Senate Rural Task Force, David Ward, a former Wisconsin state legislator, outlined how Minnesota should weaken local control like Wisconsin did. Ward went through a detailed presentation of how he led the 2004 effort in Wisconsin to gut local control of large-scale feedlots so that in Wisconsin townships and counties no longer have any effective say on these issues. Ward now works as a lobbyist at the Minnesota State Capitol for the Cooperative Network, which wants the Wisconsin model of no local control for townships and counties of large-scale feedlots for Minnesota. Their membership includes the big dairy processors Land O'Lakes and Foremost Farms.

We can't let local control be weakened for any special interest. Most townships don't need to formally use their power of local control to enact local zoning ordinances, but the fact that we have it forces outside interests and developers to take our concerns seriously. You can bet that without this power, many developers would ignore township concerns altogether. And many townships have used this power to protect the land and people, and guide development in a way that fits in well with the community.

The legislative session opened on January 6 and special interests are meeting right now with legislative leaders, making their case for why local control must be weakened. It is critical they hear from us also in the early weeks of this new legislative session. The way we have kept local control strong in Minnesota, even while it has been weakened in neighboring states, is through a strong unified voice from township officers saying, "Local control is working. Leave it alone!"

-OVER-

Make these calls TODAY to let your elected leaders know that Minnesotans value strong local democracy and that weakening our township rights should be off the table. This letter has gone out to every township officer in Minnesota. If we all take action, our combined voices will send the clear message that any proposal to weaken local control is unacceptable.

1. Call your state Senator and Representative. Contact information for your state legislators is:

Rep. Tom Anzels (District 5B) at 651-296-4936
Sen. Tom Saxhaug (District 5) at 651-296-4136

Here is a suggested message: "I am calling as a township officer and constituent. Minnesotans value strong local control and township rights. Minnesota's rural communities are better off because we have strong local democracy in our state. I know that the Cooperative Network is pushing to gut local control of large-scale livestock operations like they did in Wisconsin. Weakening local control for any special interests is wrong and should be off the table."

2. Call Governor Mark Dayton at 651-201-3400 or 800-657-3717.

When Governor Dayton first took office in 2011, LSP members met with him on this issue. Governor Dayton was clear in his support for local control and his commitment to veto any legislation that weakens it. Call and let him know that this is the right position to take.

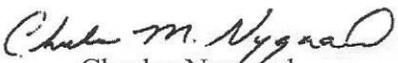
Suggested message: "I am calling you as a township officer. Minnesotans value strong local control and township rights. I am concerned because special interests are pushing to gut local control of large-scale feedlots in Minnesota. Weakening local control for any special interest is wrong. I appreciate your commitment to veto any legislation that weakens these rights."

3. Return the enclosed card so LSP can put you on a hotlist and keep you updated as the legislative session progresses.

Take these actions today and I know that together we will keep local democracy and township rights strong in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

As township officials and Land Stewardship Project members,


Charles Nygaard
Hendricks Township
Lincoln County


Alan Perish
Hartford Township
Todd County


Mark Brosig
Elba Township
Winona County


Bill Gorman
Belle Creek Township
Goodhue County


Nancy Barsness
New Prairie Township
Pope County


Phillip Batalden
Highwater Township
Cottonwood County


Richard Moudry
Westline Township
Redwood County