

**MINUTES from the P&D Meeting  
Harris Township Board  
Wednesday, September 23, 2015 at 7:30pm**

The regularly scheduled Planning & Development Meeting of the Harris Town Board was held on Wednesday, September 23, 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, Jim Kelley, Ken Haubrich, and Burl Ives, as well as Clerk Michele Smith and Treasurer Becky Adams. *Absent: Supervisor Dennis Kortekaas.*

Also in attendance: Glen Hodgson, SEH road engineer, Dr. Bruce Thomas and Rochelle VanDenHeuvel from ISD #318, Pam Rajala, Judy Myers, Dan Butterfield, Cyndy Martin, and a few other guests.

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

**2. Business from the Floor**

- Community information: Dr. Bruce Thomas - ISD #318 referendum for funding the school board's facilities plan  
Dr. Bruce Thomas, ISD #318 interim superintendant, spoke to the board and audience about the school board's plan to build two new kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade elementary schools, and the referendum coming up on November 3<sup>rd</sup> to fund the project. Some of the items noted were:
  - Overall, enrollment has increased over the past ten years; there are currently 4,000 students registered with ISD #318.
  - In elementary schools, enrollment has increased by 26%. All-day, every day kindergarten impacted the number of students in the buildings and so the 5<sup>th</sup> grade was moved to the middle school. But now the middle school is too full. 6 temporary classrooms were added to the elementary schools.
  - If the current enrollment issue was due to just "a bubble", the school board wouldn't be concerned. However, this has been talked about 4 ½ years since the decision to build was made, to determine *what* to build. There was a lot of public input received. They looked at the bricks and mortar, as well as the instructional needs with updated technology.
  - In 1955, ISD #318 didn't have special education programs; now they have 650 kids with special needs. Also, in 1955, the school district didn't have early childhood programming like they do now.
  - Class sizes are high – in the elementary schools and in the high school. But the school board can't do anything about that without additional space. And the space issues are significant.
  - The proposed plan by the School Board includes building two new K-5 schools in two locations – one to the east of Pokegama Avenue, and one to the west.
  - The cost to move from 4 elementary schools to 2 elementary schools is \$80 million dollars.
  - If delayed a year, the construction projected cost will increase another 8%; plus, interest rates will likely be higher – so would cost and estimated \$4 million dollars *more* to wait on the plan.
  - The board plans to repurpose the 4 existing elementary schools – for early childhood education sites or city parks.
  - The audience and board were encouraged to review all the information on the ISD #318 website regarding the building plan, and the referendum.

Chairman then opened up the floor for questions from both the board and audience members. After all questions were answered, the board thanked Dr. Thomas for presenting at tonight's meeting.

**3. Consent Agenda**

- None

**4. Roads**

- Glen Hodgson, SEH Road Engineer – project updates
  - As requested by Supervisor Ives, Hodgson provided a "bituminous road evaluation spreadsheet" with the condition rating columns showing. An electronic version was also available – if requested from Hodgson.

Upon a question, it was clarified that the formula for the 'priority index' is *condition x volume = priority index*. The lower the number, the higher the priority.

- Harbor Heights: The erosion issue of the resident on Harbor Heights Road, who contacted the board earlier this month, was reviewed by Hodgson and the township's maintenance crew. They had the short section re-graded and recycled aggregate pavement was installed by the maintenance crew.
  - Lakeview Drive: Last spring, the Board contracted with Itasca Utilities to do some additional ditching. Because some of the seeding did not "take" as well as expected, the Hodgson requested that Itasca Utilities seed the back slope of the ditch again. That work was completed by the contractor.
  - Crack sealant at LaPlant landing that had been removed by a patron; Hodgson looked at it and commented that while he'd never seen anything like that before, 90% of the crack filling was still intact.
  - Underwood Road: The punch list for Underwood Road-west was completed for this year; Hodgson will review the road in the spring.
  - Bonding call: Treasurer Adams and Hodgson will have a conference call tomorrow (9/24) with Paul Donna from Baird regarding financing the road improvement plan for 2016. They will report back at the Regular Meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup>.
- Other road issues/concerns
    - N/A

## 5. Recreation

- Crystal Park volleyball court is overgrown with weeds. Rosato commented that it had been recommended that they rent a rototiller to address the problem, which would help the court be ready for spring.
- Mowing and trimming of the parks will continue as long as needed, based on the weather.

## 6. Town Hall Report dated 9-8-15

The Town Hall Report as prepared by the Town Hall Caretaker was reviewed by the board. There were 16 cleaning hours reported, 8 total rentals, and a total of \$125 collected during the month.

There was a note on the report regarding the concrete platform off of the southern exit, near the back of the board room area. Ms. Key noted that the steps are cracking on the platform. After looking at the platform and steps, Rosato suggested the board also review them as he didn't think there was a safety issue.

Supervisor Rosato commented that he had met with Bonnie Key to go through her list of concerns and requests for the town hall that she previously shared with the board. Rosato added that he is still trying to determine a plan and timeline for the items. Some things the township maintenance crew will take care of as time allows. He is waiting to hear back from a water testing person regarding the water at the town hall, to get rid of the smell and stains from the water. And Rosato agreed to call a floor refinisher to get that project scheduled.

## 7. Maintenance Report for July 6 – August 7, 2015

The board reviewed the Maintenance Report as prepared by the maintenance crew. Supervisor Ives asked for clarification regarding the hours by categories page, and some of the G/L accounts and related funds – specifically about Wendigo / Crystal park items being under Buildings and Grounds rather than Recreation.

Treasurer Adams had talked with maintenance crew, as there are things in the Recreation Fund for Wendigo and Crystal parks, but there are also some items for Wendigo and Crystal parks in the Building & Grounds Fund. The crew recommended moving *all* items regarding the Crystal and Wendigo parks to the Recreation Fund. Adams agreed it made sense, but wanted to bring it to board for approval.

**The board approved Treasurer Adams change the fund of several general ledger lines , whereby any line items that had to do with Crystal Park or Wendigo Park should be in the "Recreation Fund" (only) – rather than some items in Recreation and some in Buildings & Grounds.**

## 8. Old Business

- Consider proposal(s) for conversion to natural gas at Harris Town Hall and Harris Service Center  
Supervisor Haubrich requested proposals from three contractors for the conversion to natural gas at the town hall and service center. He received two as follows (the third said he was too busy):
  1. Northern Air Plumbing and Heating: \$2,479 – and included a new water heater
  2. Aspire Heating: \$1,216 – and included conversion of the existing hot water heater to natural gas

The board discussed that they could keep the propane water heater for now, and use up the current propane – and then look into replacing it at a later date.

***Supervisor Ives made a motion to accept the natural gas conversion proposal from Aspire Heating and Control Inc. as presented, for the Harris Town Hall and Service Center in the amount of \$1,216.00. It was noted that the proposal includes an inspection of the facilities furnaces. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Kelley, and passed by a unanimous vote.***

- Township Email Addresses  
Supervisor Ives talked about the Collaborative Opportunities meeting he and Supervisor Haubrich attended, where an Information Technology (IT) person spoke to the group. Ives asked about the board getting email addresses that would be separate from their personal emails – and where the email addresses would include the township names, such as “B.Ives@harristownship.org”. Clerk Smith agreed to check with the township website provider, GovOffice, and report back to the board what they can offer. Treasurer Adams also suggested setting up free Gmail accounts where the “@gmail.com” would be the same for everyone, but that each person could create their own user name, but using a consistent ‘format’ for everyone on the board.

Ives went on to talk about the IT survey (which the clerk completed), which asked about the IT needs of the township including software programs, hardware, and security. Ives added that there is a consultant in the area that may be able to help the township with our needs – including backing up of data. However it was not known how much this consultant charged for the services she provided.

- IRRRB demolition project update:

Dan Butterfield, the township’s representative for the IRRRB residential redevelopment program, gave an update on the Stony Point landowners’ application for help with the costs of a demolition project of the house and garage that were on the property they recently purchased. Overall, the application packet was completed, signed by the board chair, and returned to IRRRB.

Per Butterfield, the application was approved but IRRRB, but the awarded amount was not yet known. And the board was still waiting for the contract from IRRRB, and guidance on the next steps in the process. Butterfield reminded the board that there will be more paperwork after the demolition is completed as well, including after photos, but said overall that the process has went fine.

- Annual Road Meeting:

Supervisor Rosato suggested having the “Annual Road Meeting” yet this fall, before the first snow fall. This meeting is usually held in the spring or summer, after annual road reviews. It had been delayed this year, however, due to busyness of the board. Rosato recapped that a notice is typically put in the newspaper for the road meeting, and the public is encouraged to come and share any concerns, requests, or issues about their roads that they’d like the Board to consider for repairs. Rosato asked if this was a ‘mandated’ meeting, but no one was sure.

## 9. New Business

- None

## 10. Public Input

- Judy Myers asked how the “Adopt-a-Highway” roadside clean up went. The board commented that it went well; they hauled 11-12 bags of garbage out of the ditches along the 2 mile stretch of River Road which was adopted by the board in honor of the two township maintenance crew workers who were killed on the job

in September of 2004. All five supervisors participated in the cleanup which took place from apx 5pm – 7:30pm on 9/18/15.

**11. Upcoming meetings/events**

- Mon Oct 12 Itasca County Twp Association Meeting ..... 7:00pm Court house
- Wed Oct 14 Regular Meeting ..... 7:30pm Harris Town Hall
- Wed Oct 21 Round table with City of Grand Rapids Staff ..... 5:30pm GR Public Works-Serv Ctr
- Wed Oct 28 Planning & Development Meeting ..... 7:30pm Harris Town Hall
- Tues Nov 3 Special Election by ISD #318.....polls open 7am – 8pm Harris Town Hall

**12. Adjourn**

***With no other business to come before the board, a motion was made at 8:48 p.m. by Supervisor Ives, seconded by Supervisor Kelley, to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele Smith – Harris Township Clerk