

# Work Session January 18, 2017 Minutes

Present are: Ken Haubrich, Peggy Clayton, Jim Kelley, Dennis Kortekaas, resident Jay Bowers, Burl Ives, John Powers with the Comp plan

## 1. Pledge to the flag, followed by the reading of the Harris Township mission statement

John Powers wants a wide range conversation to better understand the current issues that concern the board. John would like to know why we want to update in the comprehensive plan. John will need to do additional research and we will plan the next meeting tonight. We need to write the draft document after the public meeting; and have an open-ended discussion with the public. We would like a quick turnaround to get this done as fast as possible. Quick plan as we have done this before. John has had some discussion with Supervisor Kelley about what we want done and key issues we have including the 169 corridor. Dan Swenson, from Itasca County, will come to the public meeting and talk about those individuals and businesses that have come to see him. County zoning can only issue businesses building permits that are not zoned commercial with the blessing of the Harris Township Board. We want the south boarder line and north border line to be zoned commercial except those areas that are already zoned residential.

Looking at other key issues... Building codes, in the current comp plan it refers a lot to the City of Grand Rapids building codes. We would like to be going to the state building codes. Strike anything that is referring to the City of Grand Rapids. Explain at that time concern was annexation by Grand Rapids, prior to the current plan. They were looking at annexing the area around the "s" curves on 169. To keep the commercial, does not require public utilities. The smaller businesses and the kind that were coming in to Grand Rapids, go through a lot hoops because of the codes the city has for new businesses. The County is not about to handle the orderly annexation that could be coming. That is not the small thinking we need, we need to pull it out and put something else in. We are still against tying ourselves to Grand Rapids, we need to cut those ties. We need to make sure for the future we are not tied to Grand Rapids, so when we want to incorporate into a city we are not mentioning the City of Grand Rapids so much. One reason that the other communities are booming is they don't have the building restrictions that Grand Rapids has. We want to be able to open up for commercial development. Right now we have conditional use properties that are doing business and full blown commercial properties right across the street from each other. We would like to stop doing conditional use for any property. There is a lot of property, the entire corridor should be able to be zoned commercial and have it able to be used in the future as commercial properties. Except where there is dense residential areas. We want to be able to put in the residents hands, to sell their property as a commercial property if they want. The county will not re-zone the entire area right away. If there is a resident that wants to keep it residential they have that option.

Natural Gas is an incentive to come and build in the area. In the next couple of years a map will be drawn of where all the natural gas lines are. Convenience to the residents who are already here and anticipate in the future in the raw land. Broadband is here in all the high density areas, but the rural do not. Only 169 corridor has the giga zone internet. Century link has fiber-link in the 169 corridor also. The Township has taken over roads: Lake View Trail, Wendigo Circle, Katheryn Ave, and Nicholas Street are in the road plan. Two are tarred and are two dirt roads. We will be busy having to rebuild quite a few roads and we have a 5 year plan. Discussion about the parallel road that was a loosely drawn road with an easement. There are a couple of building problems there, we still have the easement, but not sure we are going to make it into a walking trail. Wise to keep it and pull the drawing out of the document. We are keeping the easement.

Township facilities, town hall, parks, maintenance center, cemetery. Nothing has changed in that area. The community center has gone off the plan.

Boat landings are between a rock and a hard place and we have huge problems with parking. Casper landing problems with flooding and erosion and has destroyed roads and boat landings. Mishawaka

boat landing has the picnic area, with a middle hump. If the hump was removed we could get three to four more vehicles in there. Right now we have super congested area in the landing. Could we get area across the road of the landing? We could try and go after the state legacy money and build a parking lot for the access to help with the congestion. Army corps of engineers might have money like that and could be a potential thing the township could pursue. This will be one of the things we will talk about at the public meeting. Issues with water quality is a concern. Wood tick landing could be a concern, with the beaver control. They have not been into the culvert. It would be nice to see what would need to be done as the road interest to put in a culvert so kayakers could get in there. Hale Lake does not go up and down in water level like Pokegama Lake does. Hale lake has a primitive boat access that is carry in only. That is staying and it is, it has come up three times now to redo it and the county and DNR don't think it can be done.

Gravel pits, we do not have any current problems with the gravel pits. There has not been any run off or issues that we know of.

Trails- semi regional trails have a trail corridor. We have a causeway to be able to allow snowmobiles and ATV's. We have talked to ATV task force about our trails and we are looking ATV development. The city of Grand Rapids is still part of a committee with Sara Thompson, Roger Clark or Cory Cease to get the trails done. They all work with the land department and Cory is the new land commissioner. When they do development in the area to get the snowmobile trails in certain areas, there is land owners that were not communicated to in the best way. The city will have to look at expenditures to get the easements for the trails.

Future of Harris Township: Designated as an urban township as we have the second largest population in Itasca County. Attributes of the township, we don't want to box ourselves in if we need to do something. We would like to keep a sense of an urban, not urban in suburban. The lake is a beast in all in itself, as we have the lake and have the population density of Grand Rapids. If we are rural, we don't have that many farms in our township anymore. We have a sense of being rural but we have neon signs and blinking lights in the area. We might have to have a stop light in the intersection of 169 and Harris Town Road as it's a busy intersection. We don't have one resident that wants to be annexed into the city of Grand Rapids. We should do it soon, before they are in better shape to make that happen. We should have something to say to be able to govern ourselves. Everything that the city brought in has not brought income to the bottom line.

Action plan: If there is an interested party who want to come into Harris Township they will have to follow the building codes of the County. We want to make this easier on who wants to come in as the city of Grand Rapids is a 300 page building code. So anyone who comes in would be zoned by Itasca County and not the City of Grand Rapids. Cohasset could have something in place to help us with this and ad hear to the state building code. We should look into what Cohasset has.

Wood tick and Hale Lake connection, possible issues of aquatic problems. Hale Lake might be saved because of the clogged pipe. There is no damn in between the two lakes.

More potential from the county to support rezoning and support this plan going forward. We have this in our plan and we would like you to support this.

Who is taking care of the causeway? The Pokegama Lake association would not help with it, they have in the past and it's too much. It is still an issue, put it on the table at the public meeting. MN Dot is not maintaining it, it's a state highway and the beautification of it should fall under their jurisdiction If we had someone to make it nice would be great. It is such an obvious place.

Roads and transpiration: how to handle access to 169, they added a 5<sup>th</sup> lane for turning which needed to happen for the area to be zoned commercial. Contact MN Dot for the current status. We were hoping to that they would have been able to take that 5<sup>th</sup> lane and go all the way into town. Crystal Springs Road by Crystal Park the hard 90 degree turn could be a problem, go at the county board with our concerns. We need to continually update and implement the 5 year road plan.

Establish cooperative ventures with other local governments. Others who have the right to govern themselves.

Comment that was made: Harris is second largest community by population behind Grand Rapids. It's a statement about who we are. People like to live in Harris Township.

Public meeting- whoever shows up and we have four tables and we give them a couple exercises to talk about and what needs to be done in their views. They will be able to share with the group after they are able to talk about it. One is the 169 corridor pros and cons. We should have a discussion about additional zoning controls.

The structure of the public meeting will be to have John talk first give them each exercises and get them talking for about 20-25 minutes.

Homeowners would apply to the county to have their property rezoned and they would still come back to the township and have it approved. That is the way now, in the future and after we finish the comp plan it would be they could go right to the county and have it done for them.

We can run the meeting in a couple of different ways. John is setting the frame work and to guide the residents in the way people are talking to each other. They report to the group and have the citizen's talk and give us input to what they think is happening. Have the first exercise the characters of the township and are these things still valid in the community. Are these thing still important to you? You have 20 minutes and a lot of bullet points. The discussion on taxing, are we going to have them going up (taxing) or bonding. We are hoping to bring in more of a tax base to the township to help with the things in the township. Can we have this as one of the questions? Boat landing and trails need to be separate discussions as they are both big topics. First discussion would be are these still pertinent topics for the township. It would be a two hour meeting. Internet and other utility services in the area are something we would like discussed also. Road maintenance and the amount of money it will take to maintain the roads. In the agenda there will be a final thoughts about what we need to do to maintain the roads and how much do you want to spend on those roads. Cost to maintain vs rebuild and it might be something that comes into play as how do we pay for them? We would like input to fill out the action plan. Meeting on February 15 at 6-8 pm at the town hall for the discussion to help on the comp plan. Second meeting is going to be March 15 at 6-8 pm for the draft document and discussion on action plan. (March 15 was rescheduled to April 25.)

We have businesses in our area who are not zoned commercial. (Wendigo golf course)

Motion to adjourn made by Supervisor Haubrich seconded by Supervisor Clayton, passed by all 8:30 pm

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carri".