

Chassell Township Planning Commission
Chassell Fire Hall
April 7, 2022

Attendance: Brian Waters, Doug Hamar, Steve Spahn, Lynn Gierke (for Dan Palosaari), Dale Peterson, and Keith Meyers. Public guests: Daniel Niemala and Ryan Gray

Call to Order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment: Daniel Niemala missed the public hearing yesterday on the zoning ordinance and discussed the possibility of increasing the square footage requirement under 8.2.2.f.5 for having a building permit from 100 to 200 square feet. It was discussed that 16' x 12' is a common dimension for a shed and it is believed that the county requirement is 200 square feet. The commission agrees that this would make sense. Keith will get with Todd LaRoux with the county building department. Ryan Gray discussed the issue with the culvert in front of his property that has resulted in a collapse. There is a question of who is responsible given its proximity to US 41 and that it is in the right-of-way. The commission was sympathetic for the circumstances and encouraged contact with the Houghton County Road Commission and bringing this to township board's attention.

Agenda: There were no suggested changes or additions. Brian moved approval of the agenda. Keith provided the second. There was unanimous approval.

Approval of the March Minutes: Keith moved for the approval of the March minutes. Brian provided the second. There was unanimous approval.

Road Commission Report: Dale reported that the snowfall total submitted to the state was 218.5" through February as compared to 180.4 last year. Kevin Harju has asked for letters from the Township Supervisors on projects. Kevin will be taking this information to the county commissioners on the 18th. Dale discussed the change in direction with the ARPA funding. Initially it could not be used for roads, but the rules have been modified to allow for that. Dale noted that the township has a big expense coming up for the pump station and that Dave is in the process of deciding how to proceed. There is \$1.8M available for roads and the HCRC would be seeking a 50/50 match from the townships. Chassell looks good because we have a 5-year road plan. It came up on the most recent agenda that we are the only township to have submitted one. Dale also noted the importance of our having a road millage as well. Dale noted that the culvert FEMA project by the rink will start as soon as weather permits. Dale indicated that he will be back by early June.

Old Business:

- a. **Chassell Mercantile** – The settlement agreement has been signed by the Vulajs. Keith will contact Jeff Ratcliffe with KEDA to see if there are any additional steps we need to take.
- b. **Historical Trail** – Keith, in his role as President of the Chassell Historical Organization, has signed the \$50,000 grant agreement for the boardwalk and signage with the funder. DP Construction increased its price by \$5,000. The funder is fully committed for this year, so Keith is applying for a grant from the Keweenaw National Historical Park to cover this difference in the project budget. Doug is completing the permit application for the boardwalk permit.
- c. **Cemetery Church – Dangerous Building** – The township has proceeded with ticketing Heath Sundstrom as the Manager of Clint Sundstrom’s LLC. The township had set aside ticketing because of Heath’s willingness to help transfer the property at no cost to a developer if one could be found, but the danger created by the collapse of the building requires that action be taken to make the site safe as soon as possible.
- d. **Snowmobile Trail Update** – No Report
- e. **Playground Equipment Border** – DP Construction will address this once weather permits.
- f. **Sturgeon River Launch Site** – Keith has been discussion with a manufacturer in Charlotte, Michigan that is interested in the project (Feighner Dock). They plan to provide us a bid. We are still waiting on word regarding the Keweenaw Convention & Visitors Bureau grant proposal supporting development of the launch site.
- g. **Fitness Trail Project** – The plan remains for the signage to go in once weather permits.
- h. **Park Boardwalk Project** – After receiving a go ahead in response to the letter of inquiry, Keith has submitted a full proposal to the Portage Health Foundation.
- i. **Signage Grant** – Keith is working with James Schwaderer on the history of floating timber on the Sturgeon and is seeking subject matter experts at MTU to help with the wildlife/fishery interpretation.
- j. **Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping** – Keith has been in contact with Mike Morrison with the MDNR in Lansing about the process for establishing the Sturgeon River as a recognized river trail. Mike will be following up with Keith.

New Business:

- a. **April 6, 2022 Zoning Ordinance Hearing** – Keith provided a review of items addressed in the current revised draft including: a blight preamble to clarify board intent; RV parking (enforce current language allowing side and bac yards with no screening requirement); allowable building size (reduced from 600 sq/ft to 200 sq/ft in accordance with International Building Code); hotels (would be permitted in US 41 North and South); pre-schools and day cares clarified as permitted in all districts; elder care, senior housing/nursing homes, and group homes to be permitted in US 41 North and South; and any development of 5G beyond the exiting tower, including deployment of transmitters would need to come through the Township Board. It was decided to retitle 11.7 “Towers and Wireless Communications Equipment”. Keith is working with Dave on additional clarification beyond transmitters to include antenna or other devices for wireless transmission for public use. Dale recommended removal of the group home clarification

to US 41 North and South recognizing they could be in any district without clarification. There was unanimous agreement to make this change.

- b. Zoning Ordinance Approval** - The Planning Commission unanimously approved moving the revised zoning ordinance for final action by the Township Board next week. Lynn will post the revised document on the township website.
- c. Recreation Plan** – Brian noted that our current 5-Year Recreation Plan ends in 2023, so we will need to begin working on the next 5-Year Plan.
- d. Master Plan** – Brian moved that we recommend to the board that it approve contracting with Pat Coleman to complete the Chassell Township Master Plan subject to receiving the 75% grant from the MEDC. Dale seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The next meeting will be on May 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned.