

**Chassell Township Planning Commission**  
**Minutes**  
**June 2, 2022**

Attendance: Brian Waters, Doug Hamar, Steve Spahn, Lynn Gierke, TJ Palosaari, Dale Peterson, Daniel Niemela, and Keith Meyers.

Brian Waters convened the meeting just after 7:00 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was given.

**Agenda:** There were no additions, but Brian indicated that Pat Coleman would present on the Master Plan after Dale gives the road report. Brian moved this change; Keith provided the second and there was unanimous approval.

**Minutes:** Dale noted one change in his report noting projects both with grant funding and without. Brian moved approval with this change and Doug provided the second and there was unanimous approval.

**Public Comment:** Dale wants to be sure that there is follow up on Dar Gronevelt's concern about the ditch in front of her house on Lindala Road. TJ brought up the need for communication about the Farmers Market. Keith noted that it has been publicized broadly on Facebook. TJ noted that there are many people who do not use social media who would have missed that. Daniel noted the large number of vendors who are participating. Brian welcomed Daniel Niemela to the Planning Commission.

**Road Commission Report:** Dale noted that the next Houghton County Road Commission meeting will be held a week from Monday. Lynn commented that the HCRC is putting down gravel. Dale noted the need for reflectors at the Sturgeon River bridge. Dale noted that there will be issues with the cost of materials and is expecting a reduction in the number of projects because of these increased costs. Lynn noted that there will be no construction on US 41 until 2023. TJ noted water over the road on a Boundary Road culvert. Dale noted the need to keep pressure on Portage Township to do Boundary Road correctly (not band aids).

**Master Planning:** Pat Coleman congratulated us on receiving the grant from the MEDC. Pat expressed appreciation for being selected as the consultant. Pat noted that we have a good list of activities on our agenda. He also expressed appreciation for the quick turnaround on the contract. Pat indicated that permission is needed for Houghton County to release GIS files with property boundaries. We will need to notify our surrounding communities, Baraga, and Portage Townships. Pat will provide the letter. Pat asked that we establish lines of communication. Brian indicated that this should be to him with cc: to Keith for dissemination. Pat will be collecting information on the township. It was noted that the 5-year recreation plan is a good source. By our next meeting Pat will have front end drafts and we will schedule engagement meetings. This will involve a public planning workshop with informal conversations in August and September. Pat will get a draft plan to us for comments which will be appreciated. The plan adoption process will include a public hearing with appropriate notice and finally board approval. Pat reviewed the schedule, and it was determined that we would meet at 6:00 p.m. on the Master Plan ahead of our

normally scheduled Planning Commission meetings. In some initial brainstorming about issues that we will want to address in the plan, we discussed the need to address drainage, housing, agriculture, and transportation.

Throughout the course of Pat's discussion, Keith provided updates on old business items:

**Chassell Mercantile:** A settlement agreement was reached with Arben Vulaj to transfer ownership to the Houghton County Land Bank. Dan Palosaari will be redeveloping the site and is working with the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance on next steps.

**Historical Trail:** Doug Hamar is finalizing the EGLE permit application. Hunter King with the EGLE has indicated a 30-day turnaround for approval of the permit to construct the boardwalk on the wetland. DP Construction will construct the boardwalk. James Schwaderer will be putting together the text for the signage by incorporating the work done by Chassell Township Schools students with his research and the input of the Chassell Historical Organization board. This work will be completed by August at which point it will be handed off to Terri Frew who teaches the art and design class at MTU. Her students will develop three proposals for each of the signs and the CHO board and Doug will make selections. These final selections will go to Industrial Graphics in Houghton for production. We plan to have construction and sign manufacturing completed for dedication of the trail to take place by late fall.

**Cemetery Church:** The township's attorney, Amy Schultz, is working with Heath Sundstrom's attorney to transfer ownership of the property to Land Bank. The township has already made claim on the adjoining property which is foreclosure and is seeking transfer of that property to the Land Bank. Once both properties are in the Land Bank, the township will seek proposals for redevelopment of the combined sites.

**Snowmobile Trail Update:** No report

**Playground Equipment Border:** The playground border has been installed by DP Construction.

**Sturgeon River Launch:** The township board approved awarding the launch to Feighner Dock out of Charlotte, Michigan, subject to final approval by UPEA. Chris Holmes is waiting on a sketch from Lowell Miller with Feighner's U.P. representative out of Gwinn.

**Fitness Trail Signage:** John Durocher has reported that the signage is being produced by Copper Island Printing in Calumet and it is expected to be available soon.

**Park Boardwalk Project:** Our grant proposal seeking funding for the replacement of the boardwalk along the lake at Centennial Park was not successful with the Portage Health Foundation. We have learned that the DNR will have a grant opportunity coming available later this year related to the bi-partisan infrastructure funding approved recently by the Legislature and approved by the Governor which may provide an opportunity to fund this project.

**Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping:** We have secured a \$3,000 grant from Visit Keweenaw (formerly the Keweenaw Convention & Visitors Bureau) to provide for two signs at the Sturgeon

River launch site. One will include a map of the river and historic interpretation of the river's use for moving white pine timber to the mill in Chassell. The second will include information on the wildlife and fishery found along and in the river. Keith is collaborating with John De Pue with the MDNR's Baraga Office on content for the signs. These monument quality signs will be manufactured by Industrial Graphics in Houghton.

Daniel suggested support for the Farmers Market on Wednesdays in 2023 given its impact.

Doug noted an issue with trash in the alleys and suggested the possibility of a town clean up with students as a potential fund raiser for the senior class where owners could put trash out at the curb to be hauled off.

Brian noted that his and Ericka's terms are up in August, and both have agreed to extension which will need to go to the township board for final approval.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, July 12, 2022, with Master Planning at 6:00 p.m. and the regular meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Brian moved for adjournment with a second from Doug. There was unanimous approval.