

Chassell Township Planning Commission
August 4, 2022
Minutes

Attendance: Brian Waters, Keith Meyers, Doug Hamar, Steve Spahn, TJ Palosaari, Dale Peterson, and Daniel Niemela. Absent: Dan Palosaari and Ericka Malone. Guests: Sherrif Josh Saaranen and Lynn Gierke

The meeting was called to order by Brian Waters shortly after 7:00 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was given.

Brian recognized Sherrif Josh Saaranen who briefed the commission on his focus areas including keeping children safe, vulnerable adults, and human trafficking. He noted how Chassell is relatively safe. He noted the regional uptick with crystal meth and with dealers carrying guns. He indicated that he has two staff on the narcotics team. Recreational marijuana has provided a boost to funding. Doug asked Josh about vulnerabilities here in Chassell. These were discussed off the record. Josh noted that there were issues with the tribe during the spearing season. On the topic of vandalism, Dale brought up showing a presence as a deterrent. There was also a discussion about stopping by the Sturgeon River Road since it has been a gathering point on hot days.

Dale gave the Road Commission report. Lynn injected that a Freedom of Information Act request had been received from George Rajala's attorney. Lynn noted that George had come to the township board about Rajala road in 2019. Dale expressed that the road should be handled the same way as the Sturgeon River Road regarding gravel. There was discussion about high use roads needing to receive priority. Elm, Laird, and Calumet Townships have all agreed to use their ARPA funds as match with the county. There was discussion about how Chassell Township will utilize its road millage as match and that this was okay with the Houghton County Road Commission. Dale noted that the Massie Road. The 4th Street drainage is causing a wetland on Doug's property. There is discussion going on with Chris Holmes about this matter and a drainage along the McIntyre property to the lake would be a solution. Chris met with Hunter King from EGLE on Monday. With the work that has been done behind the Gagnon property there is now a nice ditch, but now the water is just standing there. Doug noted that the EGLE permit application is at 80% complete but noted the need to incorporate a ditch. Keith noted the 30-day time frame that EGLE will need to process the permit application ahead of its approval in order for DP Construction to complete the work this fall.

Old Business:

Chassell Mercantile Update: Keith noted that the developer has submitted a drawing for the project to Jeff Ratcliffe at the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance and discussions are taking place at that level.

Historic Trail: Keith noted the partnership that has been put together with MTU's Art and Design class (Terri Frew) to develop three proposals for each of the signs on the trail. During

September, Keith will work with former Chassell Heritage Center Curator Luann Hamel, the new Curator Mat Moore, James Schwaderer, and Doug to pull together the content for each sign including what the Chassell Township School students have put together with their research. The students will begin work in late September. The proposals will be made in October, and we will select from those and had those off to Industrial Graphics in Houghton for production.

Cemetery Church: A settlement agreement has been entered into between the township and Heath Sundstrom to transfer ownership of the former Holy Trinity Lutheran Church to the Houghton County Land Bank within 45 days. Once this occurs, the township will run an RFP to seek proposals to redevelop that site and the adjoining site the township already has made a claim on and had transferred to the Land Bank.

Snowmobile Trail: No report

Sturgeon River Launch: Feigner Dock (Lowell Miller) has been non-responsive to repeated efforts by both Keith and Chris Holmes. A sketch had been requested on numerous occasions. Not only had it not been provided, but they stopped returning our calls. Brian moved that we proceed with AccuDock. TJ provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously. Keith will contact Chris Holmes about contacting AccuDock to make sure their proposal is consistent with the site as excavated.

Park Boardwalk Project: This is part of the preliminary engineering study being completed by UPEA. Doug suggested that we do a better job of marking off the existing boardwalk, so it is not a hazard.

Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping: Keith has contacted the DNR in Baraga for assistance with the sign content. The plan is to include these two signs as part of the project to be worked on in September by MTU's Art and Design class.

Bark Park Improvements: A group of people will be organized to address these. Lynn will get in contact with Nathan Hanks

Resident Recommendations: Pickleball courts and a compost bin have been recommended. With our open house next month, we will defer additional discussion until then.

New Business:

Centennial Park Preliminary Engineering Study: We will invite Chris Holmes to present at our September meeting.

Membership Terms: Brian and Ericka's terms are expiring. We will need to have the board approve new terms at their next meeting. Dale moved that we recommend new three-year terms for both Brian and Ericka. Doug seconded the motion. The board approved the motion unanimously.

The next meeting will be on September 8, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. which will be after the Master Plan Open House from 5 to 7 p.m. on the same night.