

Chassell Township Planning Commission
September 8, 2022
Minutes

Attendance: Brian Waters, Doug Hamar, Steve Spahn, Dale Peterson, Daniel Niemela, Keith Meyers.

The meeting was called to order just after 7:00 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was given.

Agenda: Brian added membership terms to the agenda. Dale made a motion to approve the agenda. Doug provided the second. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Minutes: Doug made a motion to approve the June and August minutes (there was no quorum in July). Dale provided the second. The June and August minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comments: Eric Niemala commented on vacant buildings and fees for vacant buildings and about allowing owners to use them as they see fit since the landowner owns the land.

Road Commission Report: Dale reported that Boundary Road was discussed with the board. Dale indicated that Dave Mattson indicated that we would do it in sections. The Houghton County Road Commission says the west end will be done this year. On Massie Road, Dale indicated that portions have been paved and culverts put in place. Dale also indicated that the HCRC had promised culverts up the north side next year. Mowing has been done on North Entry. Dale noted that he had complimented them about their schedule, but noted that their past history has been to mow twice a year and we need to keep after them about it. Kevin Harju will be addressing the township board next week. \$183,170 in funding (equal to our ARPA amount but coming from the road millage). The three phases we are interested in addressing in order to maximize the number of projects: 1) Klingville continuation of SE west leg, culverts, and other bad spots; 2) paving of North Entry in existing dirt portion and three areas where culverts have collapsed (they had no answer about why they did not use steel); and 3) half mile on Lower Pike to the first curve. Expedited quotations have been asked for ahead of next week's meeting and then a service agreement would be signed. There is a February 2025 deadline for spending these funds. We want to look at maximizing future available road millage funding. Dale noted that up to 10% of a bid is equipment movement costs. We will put the 5-year plan review about what should be done in the plan on the October agenda. Massie Road will remain on the plan until the work is completed. Dar Gronevelt who was in attendance at the meeting brought up Lindala Road. Dale noted that the DNR would be funding work on the ditching there after the Massie Road work is completed. Keith discussed the FOIA response on George Rajala's legal action and that he had spent 45 minutes accumulating the email communications related to our road priorities. Dale indicated that he met with George's son and discussed the flooding on the southern two-thirds. There was a \$70,000 quote to address this a couple of years ago. There was discussion of the drainage issues faced by both Rajala Road and the Sturgeon River Road as Brian noted there is flooding with the latter as well.

Old Business:

Chassell Mercantile Update: Keith indicated that a plan has been submitted related to the redevelopment of the site and that the developer is working with the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance. The neighbor to the site, Iola, was present at the meeting and expressed concern about potential over-development of the site. Iola also indicated that she would be listing her property for sale.

Historical Trail: Keith indicated that Doug has given him permission to complete the EGLE permit application for the project. Doug mentioned the delineation being completed by U.P. Engineers & Architects (UPEA). Chris Holmes will address this when he arrives at the meeting. As reported in August, Keith is working with Terri Frew's Art and Design class at MTU on the development of the interpretive signs for the trails. Keith will be meeting with current and past curators of the Chassell Heritage Center (Mat Moore and Luann Hammel) over the next month to provide the needed inputs to the students for the development of their sign proposals.

Snowmobile Trail: No update.

Sturgeon River Launch: Chris Holmes from UPEA is still working with AccuDock on specifications for the floating dock and gangway. He can provide comments on this when he arrives. Keith is also working with Terri Frew's Art and Design class on the development of the two signs for the launch site funded by the grant he secured from Visit Keweenaw. The assignment will go to the students during September.

Park Boardwalk Project: Still part of the preliminary engineering study on the park being completed by UPEA.

Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping: The work on the signage for the launch site is the extent of this effort at this time.

Bark Park Improvements: No report.

Membership Terms: Brian reported that the township board had approved the membership terms for Ericka and himself.

New Business:

Centennial Park Engineering Study: Chris Holmes was present from UPEA. On the topic of a potential marina, Chris reported that Houghton currently has a waiting list that is three pages long. L'Anse is looking to put more into their marina and Baraga is full. The possibility of having fuel was discussed, particularly the requirement to have an attendant.

Chris noted that he has talked with Brittany at AccuDock about having wheels on the dock and is waiting to hear back.

Chris discussed the delineation involving the culvert under the rail-trail, noting that the issue will likely be with the Corps of Engineers. He indicated that he will be getting with the Corps. He noted that Jean Battle has retired, and that Kate is the new contact person.

The commission also heard from Dominic Snell who has an interest in establishing a concession to rent canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards at the canoe/kayak launch. The commission discussed running an RFP to award such a concession ahead of next year's floating season.

Daniel brought up putting together a statement in the master plan about being development friendly and will work on a draft ahead of the next meeting.

Brian moved for adjournment. Keith provided the second. There was unanimous approval.