

Chassell Township Planning Commission
December 8, 2022
Minutes

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

The meeting was called to order by Brian Waters just after 7:00 p.m.

The pledge of allegiance was given.

The November minutes were deferred to the January meeting.

Public Comments: Ross Rinkinen expressed concern about the conduct of the young men living in the long-term rental to the north of them which has included such things as loud music outdoors during the warmer months, snowmobile operation at late hours, and large numbers of vehicles parked on and around the property. The conduct has been seen as consistent with a fraternity house and not what would be expected in a residential area. Pat Coleman (who was still present after the completion of the master plan meeting) asked if we had a limit on the number of unrelated individuals who could live in one residence and noted that some local units of government place a limit on the number of vehicles that can be parked at a residence. The Commission advised Ross that the board likes to see neighbors work out their issues. Ross indicated that the landlord has secured a restraining order against them, so they are not allowed to have direct contact with the tenants. Considering the order, the Commission advised Ross that future disruptions should be addressed by calling the Sheriff's department. Keith indicated that he would reach out to the landlord regarding the situation.

Township Master Plan: Consultant Pat Coleman indicated that he would make the changes discussed during the master plan meeting that took place between 6 and 7 this evening for us to forward to the board to get their okay for public distribution. Once distributed there will be a public hearing in no less than 63 days. Brian moved that we forward the amended draft of the master plan to the board seeking its approval for public distribution. Steve provided the second to the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Road Commission Report and 5-Year Road Plan: The Commission reviewed the draft Chassell Township 5-year Road Repair Plan (2023) prepared by Lynn Gierke after our last meeting highlighting the recommendations from the planning commission (see attached) and made no changes to the document that Lynn will share with the board.

Old Business:

- a. **Chassell Mercantile Update:** Dan and Keith met with a potential business tenant for the development project on Monday.
- b. **Historical Trail:** Dan's crew has been constructing the boardwalk. Brian and Keith met with the current and past Chassell Heritage Center Curators Mat Moore and Luanne Hamel to review the MTU students' proposals for the interpretive signs. They selected

the top designs and provided feedback with numerous narrative edits and changes in photographs. We should receive final drafts this week and will hand these off to Industrial Graphics in Houghton to be produced. Kristen Ojaniemi from Discovering will be back tomorrow to interview Dan and his crew to get footage for a follow-up story on the project. Kristin will also interview both Don Lafrenier and Terri Frew from MTU. We are working on a potential interview with the funder.

- c. **Snowmobile Trail Update:** No Report
- d. **Sturgeon River Launch:** AccuDock has not followed up with Chris Holmes yet on adding wheels to its design. American Dock has aluminum now and is preparing an estimate.
- e. **Centennial Park Engineering Study:** No Report. Keith indicated that Chris Holmes is working with Keith on what we need for the SPARK Grant proposal.
- f. **Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping:** Keith indicated that he has been working with Steve Rouser at WUPPDR on the map for the Sturgeon River sign at the canoe/kayak launch. The draft map was shared with the commission. Mat Moore has produced a draft for the Sturgeon River sign and is completing illustrations for the Wildlife/Fishery sign. Once complete, these will go to Industrial Graphics for production.
- g. **Bark Park Improvements** – The board provided the okay to proceed with this project in the spring. Nathan Hanks suggested a dock for working dogs behind the Bark Park.
- h. **RFP Specifications for Launch Site Vendor** – Keith will turn his attention to this once the SPARK Grant proposal has been submitted.
- i. **Launch Site Amenities as part of DNR Grant Proposal** – We will turn our attention to this proposal over the winter ahead of the April 1 deadline for either a Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant or a Passport Grant.
- j. **Old Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and adjoining property RFP:** The deadline for proposals is December 15, 2022.
- k. **DNR SPARK Grant Proposal:** Chassell Township residents were notified of the priorities under consideration for the Chassell Township SPARK Grant proposal on the Chassell Township Facebook page and the opportunity to provide input at tonight’s meeting or to provide written feedback to the township office. The posting explained that the elements under discussion grew out of the preliminary engineering study being completed by U.P. Engineers and Architects, recommendations made by the Superior Alliance for Independent Living in conjunction with the township’s 5- Year Recreation Plan, citizen input as part of our MEDC master planning process, and input received from DPW staff. The priorities highlighted include:
 - 1. Rehabilitating the waterfront boardwalk with connection to the trail along the dog park as well as creating ADA accessibility.
 - 2. Improving the park’s available parking.
 - 3. Creating an ADA accessible walkway from the pavilion to the lake.
 - 4. Modifying the pavilion restrooms to create ADA accessibility.
 - 5. Making needed repairs to the dock and boat launch as well as adding a few transient boat slips.
 - 6. Replacing the boards around the ice rink.
 - 7. Establishing a winterized bathroom.

- l. Bridges Out of Poverty – possible blight donation opportunity:** Keith met last Friday with Kevin Store from the Portage Health Foundation. They are willing to function as our 501c(3) to receive tax deductible donations for our blight remediation program to help economically disadvantaged residents who cannot afford to address blighted conditions with their homes. The foundation would administer this program for 1% of the fund balance or \$500/year and handle all investing of funds, distribution of funds to be granted, and necessary reporting. They discussed a potential twice a year grant cycle in the spring and fall based upon available funds. Keith asked for an approval from the commission to bring this to the board for its approval. Steve made the motion to approve bringing this proposal forward to the board. Brian provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

New Business:

- a. Lakeshore Drive Long Term Rental Issue:** addressed during public comments.
- b. Report on meeting with the MEDC:** Keith met with Pablo Majano, Jen Tucker, and Vicki Schwab from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation on November 17th at the Chassell Heritage Center to discuss our progress on the Master Plan as we work toward becoming a redevelopment ready community. It was also a great opportunity to discuss the many things we have done over the last few years to move Chassell forward with our focus on making it a great place to live, work, and play.
- c. Planning Commission Membership Opening:** Brian advised the commission of Ericka Malone's resignation and that we would need to seek a replacement. Rich Smith, a retired mechanical engineer in attendance at the meeting, expressed an interest in the position. Brian indicated that the board would need to be made aware of the vacancy and public notice will need to take place. The commission expressed its appreciation for Ericka's excellent service to the commission and thanked Rich for his interest.
- d. Master Plan Review and Schedule:** addressed after public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.