

**Chassell Township Planning Commission**  
**Minutes**  
**April 6, 2023**

**Attendance:** Brian Waters, Keith Meyers, Doug Hamar, Steve Spahn, and Rich Smith. Lynn Gierke was also in attendance from the Board.

Brian called the meeting to order at 7:29 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was given.

**Approval of the Agenda:** Capital Improvement Committee was added to the agenda. Approval of the agenda was moved by Brian and seconded by Keith. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Reading and Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the February and March meetings were reviewed. Keith moved approval of both sets of minutes. Steve provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

**Public Comments:** Lynn Gierke asked Brian to provide an updated membership list of the Planning Commission for the township website. Keith reminded the commission members about the Redevelopment Ready Community Series put on by KEDA and the MEDC with sessions that will be taking place at the Lakeshore Center on April 27<sup>th</sup>, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, and May 15<sup>th</sup>. Keith also noted that he has submitted a Keweenaw National Historical Park Advisory Commission grant proposal on behalf of the Chassell Historical Organization to help fund repairs to the inside north end of the foundation wall at the Heritage Center. Brian advised the commission that the Baraga Lakeside has been purchased and that he talked with the buyers about the opportunity Chassell presents.

**Portage Paddle Sports – Brendan Jacques:** Brendan could not make it to the meeting. A new meeting time was set for Monday at 6:00 p.m.

**Road Commission Report and 5-Year Road Plan Discussion:** No report. Rich Smith asked if the former rail bridges need to be rated for train traffic. No one knew.

**Old Business:**

- a. **Chassell Mercantile Update:** Keith reported that the Zoning Board of Review approved the setbacks for Dan's project on Tuesday.
- b. **Historical Trail:** Keith reported that Cain Besse gave the okay to fund the higher costs associated with the boardwalk and the interpretive signs. Three of the signs will be mounted to the boardwalk rails to help keep the sign costs at a smaller increase. The foundation increased the grant award to the Chassell Historical Organization from \$50,000 to \$55,120. Keith also indicated that he has been in discussion with Jeff Kakuk at the MDNR about the needed agreement between the township and the MDNR about use of the rail-trail which will also require liability coverage by the Township.
- c. **Snowmobile Trail Update:** No report

- d. **Centennial Park Engineering Study:** Chris Holmes from UPEA has provided Keith with the needed cross-section drawings for the EGLE permits application for the proposed MNDR SPARK Grant proposal.
- e. **Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping:** The signage is paid for (Industrial Graphics) and we will seek reimbursement from Visit Keweenaw once the signs are installed.
- f. **Bark Park Improvements:** Scheduled for this spring.
- g. **Launch Site Amenities as part of DNR Grant Proposal:** We will delay the proposal until 2024 as Keith overlooked the requirement for a hearing and a resolution from the board. This will also give us the opportunity to see where we stand with the upcoming vote to renew the recreation millage.
- h. **SPARK Grant:** We are still waiting for instructions regarding the second round. Brad Barnett had shared with Keith that there may be changes that may be favorable to rural locations. Keith reported that the EGLE permit application was modified by EGLE from a \$100 fee to a \$500 fee. We also needed to provide adjacent landowner information. The application went up for public comment this morning through April 26<sup>th</sup>. Assuming this goes well, we should be receiving our permits right after that. We have gotten additional letters of support from MTU and the Chassell Farmers Market. We are waiting for a letter from the Ojibwa Tribe and need to contact the Veterans of Foreign Wars post. We will approach the MTU Paddling Club for a letter of support as well. The EGLE permits should add two points to our score. Community action is now providing limited transportation which may help as well. The project's site drawing has also been improved by UPEA as we have worked with EGLE on securing our permits.
- i. **Bridges Out of Poverty – possible blight donation opportunity:** Keith needs to circle back with Kevin Store.
- j. **Lakeshore Drive Long Term Rental Concerns -Kathy Schreiner:** Keith was unable to get this coordinated before leaving for Finland and now the Rinkinens are out of town on spring break.
- k. **Old Holy Trinity Church and adjoining property RFP:** There was one proposal from Keith Michaelson. Keith Meyers discussed this proposal with County Treasurer Lisa Mattila and KEDA Executive Director Jeff Ratcliffe as non-responsive because it did not include the church property. An extended deadline of May 30<sup>th</sup> will be set.
- l. **Sturgeon River Launch:** AccuDock, JAM Services, and Feighner have submitted responsive bids. The commission discussed the bids with Chris Holmes and decided to recommend an award to Feighner. Keith moved approval of Feighner at a price of \$45,911.52 which includes installation by Feighner. Rich provided the second. There was unanimous approval of the motion. Keith will take up final approval with the board.
- m. **Recreation Millage Promotion:** Keith has drafted a press release to share with the Gazette that can also be used on the Facebook page, the website, and local posting. Keith will get with Kelly Holmes about the average cost of the millage to residents to include in the release. Keith will review this with the board at their next meeting before distributing.
- n. **Master Plan – last reimbursement submitted to MEDC:** This has been taken care of and Pat Coleman has been paid.

## New Business:

- a. **Park and Recreation Board:** The commission decided to recommend to the board that they place the existing entity into the planning commission. This will help us as we update our 5-Year Recreation Plan as well as with scoring when we make future application under either the Natural Resources Trust Fund or Passport programs with the MDNR. Keith moved that we make this recommendation to the board. Brian provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.
- b. **Survey Residents regarding Recreation Plan Renewal:** The commission discussed Survey Monkey and Google Survey as potential directions for the survey. It was decided that Google Survey will be used since that can be done at no cost to the township.
- c. **Otter Lake/Sturgeon River Canoe Launch Improvements DNR:** The commission decided that Keith would reach out to Portage Township to discuss the possibility of reaching out to the MDNR jointly on this.
- d. **Long Term Rental Contact List:** We still need to do this for short-term rentals so we will add long-term rentals as well. Brian will find a form.
- e. **Front Yards (alleys and lakefront properties):** This was a discussion about waterfront properties. We understand Houghton considers the waterfront to be the front yard. Keith will check with his sister who is a trustee downstate to see how their township approaches this topic as well. There was also a discussion about jake brakes. Lynn will ask for a sign on the Chassell-Painesdale Road. There was also discussion about adding the fitness trail to the current US 41 signage and about having warning signs for speed reduction on both ends of US 41 approaching downtown.
- f. **Capital Improvements Committee:** The commission discussed the importance of inventorying assets, determining useful lives for capital assets, and establishing depreciation funds to prepare for the replacement of key assets as part of a capital improvements plan. This type of planning is an expectation with becoming a redevelopment ready community. Keith moved that we recommend the creation of a capital improvements committee within the Planning Commission to the board at its next meeting. Brian seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Keith will explore available assistance through the MEDC.

Brian moved and Doug seconded a motion to adjourn which was approved unanimously.