

**Chassell Township Planning Commission
Minutes
July 5, 2023**

Brian Waters called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

Attendance: Brian Waters, Doug Hamar, Steve Spahn, Dan Palosaari, Rich Smith, and Keith Meyers. Absent: Daniel Niemela and TJ Palosaari Guest: Lynn Gierke

The Pledge of Allegiance was given.

Doug moved approval of the agenda. Brian provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

The June minutes were deferred.

Road Commission Report and 5-Year Road Plan Discussion: No report

Capital Improvement Committee: A meeting date of July 25th at 5:30 p.m. was set.

Park and Recreation Board: No report

Old Business:

- a. **Chassell Mercantile Update:** Dan and Keith met with John Schmitt from the Small Business Development Center on June 30th at DP Construction to discuss restaurant recruitment for Dan's project. John provided helpful input.
- b. **Snowmobile Trail Update:** No report on Chassell to the Nichols Trail, but the Baraga to Chassell leg is expected to be ready for this winter.
- c. **Centennial Park Engineering Study:** Chris Holmes was not available to attend the meeting.
- d. **Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping:** Our plan is to engage Baraga County in a partnership on this effort. Brian will be reaching out to Baraga County to invite them to our next meeting.
- e. **Bark Park Improvements:** Lynn reported that the work will be completed after the Strawberry Festival.
- f. **Launch Site Amenities as part of DNR Grant Proposal:** We will give this a closer look after the recreation survey results are received.
- g. **DNR SPARK Grant:** Keith reported that he and Lynn submitted the updated grant proposal by the June 23rd deadline. Key improvements to the proposal include secured all the required EGLE permits, secured the county soil and erosion permit, improved the sustainability features related to the renovation of the pavilion restrooms, updated site design drawings from UPEA, and added several additional letters of support, including one from KBIC.

- h. **Bridges Out of Poverty:** Keith indicated that Kevin Store has been very busy with the recent renaming of the Portage Health Foundation to the Copper Shores Community Health Foundation which has included incorporating Dial Help and Senior Meals into their organization. Keith will follow up with Kevin on our planned relationship for them to be the receiver of donations to then be granted out to Chassell residents demonstrating financial need to address blight.
- i. **Lakeshore Drive Long Term Rental Concerns** – Kathy Schreiner: Keith reported that the Rinkinen family will be moving, so this matter is considered to be resolved.
- j. **Old Holy Trinity Lutheran Church and adjoining property RFP:** Keith reported that since no proposals were received by the May deadline, the Houghton County Land Bank will move forward with the first acceptable proposal to come forward. We will modify our announcement to this effect. Shortly after the closing date a contractor expressed an interest in redeveloping these sites and is currently working on a potential development with Jeff Ratcliffe at the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance.
- k. **Sturgeon River Launch:** Keith reported that he is continuing to work with Feighner Dock on the delivery of the launch. They are waiting for the delivery of some key parts. On June 20th, Keith and Steve installed the two interpretive signs at the launch site funded by Visit Keweenaw. One includes a map of the river and discusses its historical use for moving white pine timber. The other sign discusses the wildlife and fishery found along and in the river. These signs were designed by Chassell resident Mat Moore with technical assistance from Steve Rouser at WUPPDR on the map and John DePue (MNDR) and Joe Youngman on the wildlife/fishery. The signs were produced by Industrial Graphics in Houghton.
- l. **Otter Lake/Sturgeon River Canoe Launch Improvements DNR:** Since Portage Township indicated to us that the better launch site would be on the Baraga County side of the outlet, we will incorporate this direction in our discussion with Baraga County.
- m. **Front Yards (alley and lakefront properties):** The need for definitions and clarification of no paving and easement size were discussed.
- n. **Expression Swing Playground Equipment:** We will seek resident input on this in the Recreation Survey.
- o. **Portage Paddle Sports:** We need to continue to work with them on implementation details.

New Business:

- a. **Recreation Plan Survey:** Lynn indicated that Click to Mail through the USPS will cost \$600. Brian moved that we recommend approval to the Board. Rich provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.
- b. **Historic Trail Signage Update:** Keith reported that Brian, Steve, Jake Elenich, and he had installed five of the in-ground signs along the trail on June 20th. The three-remaining rail-attached signs will be ready for installation this week. Brian, Steve, and Keith will handle their installation. Keith reported that he weedwhacked the historic trail this past Saturday and the fitness trail yesterday.
- c. **Miscellaneous:** The commission discussed updating the signs for the Heritage Center to include the fitness and snowshoe trails. There was also discussion about mapping the

cemetery and unmarked graves. We will look to involve the Chassell Heritage Center Curator and past Curator in this effort.

Brian moved that the meeting be adjourned at 6:07 p.m. Doug provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

The next meeting will be on August 3, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.