

Chassell Township Planning Commission
July 8, 2024
Minutes

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

Brian called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was given.

Agenda: Brian moved approval of the agenda he had sent out. Doug provided the second for the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Minutes: Approval of the June minutes was deferred to August so Keith can get them completed.

Public Comment: None

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

Capital Improvement Committee Report: Lynn has forwarded what current asset list reviewed by the DPW staff. We will need to look this over and set up a committee meeting to determine the next steps.

Recreation Committee Report: The committee met ahead of this evening's Planning Commission meeting. Keith reported on the brushing this morning of the Chassell Trails coordinated by Arlyn Aronson and carried out along with Steve Spahn, Mat Moore, Liam, and himself. All five were weed whacking with equipment provided by Arlyn. This effort will continue again tomorrow.

Recreation Facility Issues: None reported.

Old Business:

- a. **Chassell Mercantile Update:** Keith reported that the project has been fully costed and has been progressing.
- b. **Snowmobile Trail Update:** Based on Recreation Committee discussion, Keith will be reaching out to Jeff Kakuk for help with talking points on items we will want to cover with landowners, including potential payments for easement and support for fencing and gate acquisitions. Doug expressed willingness to speak with one of the landowners.
- c. **Centennial Park Engineering Study:** Discussion focused on the location of the pickleball courts. An anonymous resident plans to support the building of two courts. DP Construction had staked out a location down from the pavilion. The commission supports locating the courts on the other side of the playground. Resident feedback had supported this location so they could keep an eye on their kids at the playground while playing. Two other factors include the sound made by playing which could be disruptive to receptions

and other rental activities taking place in the pavilion. Additionally, Brian noted the potential future use of the area east of the pavilion as a location for a bandshell for musical entertainment. Brian moved a recommendation to the board that pickleball court be located next to the playground. Daniel provided the second. The board approved the motion unanimously.

- d. **Old Holy Trinity Lutheran Church:** Keith reported that demolition is on a course to happen by this fall. It was reported that ditching has taken place in the alley behind the church and that other materials are being dumped at the site.
- e. **Sturgeon River Launch:** Keith reported that Lowell Miller from Feighner Dock had been out on June 29th to add the ADA transfer to the kayak launch as well as the longer rails and transfer plates. The curbing on the launch dock still needs to be installed. Keith also reported that Merrie Carlock from the MDNR made her site visit on the Natural Resources Trust Fund and Recreation Passport Grant proposals on July 1st. Merrie had a number of suggestions related to accessibility which she will follow up with us about. Once initial scores are published, we will have the opportunity to update our proposal in September to help improve our score.
- f. **Kick Sled Track on Bay:** We need to schedule a meeting with Marco Guidotti and Corey Soumis to discuss student production of kick sleds.
- g. **Youth Bike Trail:** Nothing new.
- h. **Water Trail:** Keith has been in discussion with Brad Barnett about the possibility of adding the Sturgeon River to the Keweenaw Water Trail. Brad indicates that this site has become dormant and that this could be an opportunity to get it going again. It was suggested that we add the Sturgeon River Sloughs to the water trail.
- i. **MDNR Spark Grant:** DP Construction will begin work on the sidewalk project after the Strawberry Festival. Merrie Carlock approved the plans and specifications for the waterfront boardwalk on June 27th. Chris Holmes will be getting this part of the project out for bids. Keith drafted and Lynn sent in the quarterly grant report to the MDNR.
- j. **Baraga/Chassell Trail Project Collaboration:** Waiting for word about the Attorney General's opinion.
- k. **Veterans Banners:** Doug reported that he has not heard from Donna Byykkonen.
- l. **Historic Trail Buckthorn Project:** Sigrid Resh is coordinating a follow up event for later this month on the buckthorn mitigation. Keith also reported that he had been out to weed the boardwalks and chainsaw a tree that had fallen across the trail.
- m. **Blight Mitigation Fund:** Keith shared the one-pager on the Blight Mitigation Fund that he put together that we will make available at the Planning Commission booth during the Strawberry Festival.
- n. **Rent-Fun Program:** This was shelved at our June meeting until after we complete the waterfront boardwalk and sidewalk from the pavilion to the waterfront.
- o. **Cemetery Mapping:** No report.
- p. **Cemetery Trees:** A Go Fund Me was discussed for the carving of the white pine as well as strategic plantings. Doug will look at this.
- q. **Rail-Trail Priorities:** Keith emailed the priorities we arrived at during our June meeting based on resident input to Dan Dowdy at Baraga State Park on June 18th. He has not replied to this communication.
- r. **Mountain Bike Trail:** No report.

- s. **Screening for Corner Lots:** It was agreed that we need to produce parameters for screening in these circumstances to be included in the Zoning Ordinance.
- t. **Strawberry Festival Table:** Keith indicated that he would cover this whenever he is not serving Strawberry Shortcake at the festival. Brian and Steve indicated that they would help.
- u. **Marinette Street Clean-Up:** We will plan an event for the fall when the leaves are off the trees.

New Business:

- a. **Commission Member Terms:** Three terms are expiring on August 10th for TJ, Dale, and Steve. Brian indicated that he needs to know their plans by August 1st. Dale indicated that he would be withdrawing from re-appointment but indicated that he will continue attending Houghton County Road Commission meetings when he is in the area. Brian noted the Commission's appreciation for Dale's service and efforts related to the Township's roads. Lynn echoed how important Dale's work was at HCRC meetings.
- b. **Tire Event:** Lynn is working to set up a tire recycling event which she suggested at a Township Board meeting when the commission sought to reimburse Jim Vaught for the tires he was going to need to recycle as a result of the excavation for his retaining wall adjoining township property. Tentative dates are either July 17th or 18th. More about this as it develops.

Brian moved for adjournment. Steve provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting ended at 7:09 p.m.

The next meeting will be Thursday, August 8, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.