

**Chassell Township Planning Commission**  
**October 6, 2022**  
**Minutes**

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

The meeting was called to order by Brian Waters at 7:05 p.m. and the pledge of allegiance was given.

**Agenda:** Brian added the 2023 recreation millage boardwalk project and non-profit organization to help remediate blight to the agenda. Keith moved that these two agenda items be added. Brian provided the second. There was unanimous approval.

**Minutes:** The September minutes were tabled to the November meeting.

**Public Comment:** Pete Torola informed the commission that REA is constructing a tower on the southwest corner of the Chassell-Painesdale Road and the Upper Pike River Road.

**Road Commission Report:** Dale introduced Kevin Harju from the Houghton County Road Commission who shared the cost proposals for the three projects to be completed with the help of the ARPA funding being made available to the township by the county. There was discussion about the clay issues with the Klingville Road which will necessitate 6" of gravel and 5500 yards of sand to do one mile. There was discussion about how hard it is to get drainage to work on North Entry. They will be putting a grid down with 6" of gravel then pave to gain 9". The funding match requirement from the township will be \$183,170 which is equal to the amount of ARPA funding received by the township. Kevin expressed that price volatility is a big issue currently being faced by the HCRC. Dale brought up using steel culverts and not plastic on North Entry. Kevin confirmed that they use steel now. Kevin indicated that we have a February 14<sup>th</sup> deadline for completing the service agreement. Our projects would be on the 2023 schedule if we go forward with the agreement. Dale noted that Dave Mattson will not necessarily have the board make a decision next week. Kevin indicated that once they know which projects the township wants to move forward with the HCRC will draw up the agreement with a quick turnaround. Kevin indicated that the HCRC shoots for a 25-year life once their projects are completed with some lasting less and some lasting more. He underlined that you must do the right kind of fix, noting that if we do not do Klingville right we may only get 8 to 10 years. Brian asked about the traffic counter on the Sturgeon Road. Kevin said that MDOT would have done that. The commission talked with Kevin about the process for assessing speed limits in town, particularly in front of the school. Keith mentioned a recent conversation he had with Soren who is the pastor of the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church about moving the speed reduction to the north of the church given the danger posed with exiting the church. Kevin indicated that we should get with Rob Tervo with the MDOT Ishpeming office. Dar Gronevelt brought up the Lindala Road ditch. It was noted that Steve Wright with UPEA was doing a study on this for the DNR. Dale asked about the possibility of split speeds for trucks on the Chassell-Painesdale Road noting issues with the use of Jake brakes. Kevin indicated that he was not aware of this being allowed

should reduce once the College Avenue project in Houghton is completed. TJ asked for an explanation of the triaxial geogrid material and Kevin explained how it works. Dale brought up the crosswalk feedback the commission received from the master plan public input event and asked if we should go to the board and recommend a study for safety reasons. Pete Torola suggested starting with MDOT. Dale indicated that he would be looking at the roads to see if any changes need to be made to the 5-year road plan and get this back to the board by December so they can adopt it by January. Dale indicated that we will keep active projects like Massie Road on the list until completed.

#### **Old Business:**

**Chassell Mercantile Update:** The developer is continuing to work with Jeff Ratcliffe at KEDA.

**Historical Trail:** Keith indicated that he filed the permit application for the boardwalk with the EGLE on Doug's behalf and that the permit has been approved. Keith has provided this information to the Corps of Engineers for their review. Keith met on September 21<sup>st</sup> with current Chassell Heritage Center Curator Mat Moore and past Curator Luanne Hammel to consolidate the research by the Chassell Township Schools students, by James Schwaderer, and themselves into input on the nine interpretive trail signs and the two interpretive signs for the canoe/kayak launch. Keith met with Terri Frew's art and design class at MTU on September 27<sup>th</sup> to present the trail project and the proposed signage (9 on the historic trail and two at the canoe/kayak launch). The students will utilize the input assembled by Mat, Luanne, and Keith as a basis for designing three proposals for each interpretive sign for review and selection by the Chassell Historical Organization board and Doug. Keith subsequently met onsite with Terri Frew's class on September 29<sup>th</sup> to give them a firsthand view of the trail and to answer their questions as they begin their design work.

**Snowmobile Trail Update:** TJ discussed the snowmobile trail closure in Gogebic County at the Blackjack Ski Area. TJ also discussed the importance of incentivizing landowners here through the funding available through the DNR.

**Sturgeon River Launch:** Chris Holmes is still working with AccuDock on information needed before we move forward with the purchase of the floating dock and gangway. Terri Frew's class is working on the two interpretive signs to be funded by the grant from Visit Keweenaw.

**Centennial Park Engineering Study:** Chris was not available to meet with us.

**Sturgeon River Water Trail Mapping:** Working on this in conjunction with the work being completed by Terri Frew's class.

**Bark Park Improvements:** No report

**RFP Specifications for Launch Site Vendor:** We will work on this as we get past the historical trail construction and into December with the intent to award this ahead of next floating season.

**Launch Site Amenities as part of DNR Grant Proposal:** Over the winter we will work on a proposal for the DNR's April 1<sup>st</sup> deadline on amenities to further improve the launch site. Flush



toilets may be possibility given our proximity to the sewer line. Picnic tables and improved parking would be other features to include.

**RFP for the Development of the Holy Trinity Church and adjoining property:** Keith reported that the church property has been transferred to the township. It should have been transferred directly to the Houghton County Land Bank, but Keith worked with Lisa Mattila in the Treasurer's Office, and she guided us through the process to quit claim the property to the Land Bank. The document just needs Dave Mattson's signature at this point. Keith has also been working on a draft RFP to seek proposals for the redevelopment of the church site and the adjoining property to the north. Lisa Mattila indicated that after the adjoining property in foreclosure was claimed by the township, she instructed the firm that manages the auction of foreclosed properties to remove it from their list which they initially failed to do. This resulted in some confusion locally about the availability of the property.

**2023 Recreation Millage - Boardwalk Project:** The commission discussed prioritizing the replacement of the waterfront boardwalk as the focus for the funding that will come in from the 2023 recreation millage. This project had been submitted to the Portage Health Foundation for funding under the Recreation grant program, but the proposal was not successful. Options could include seeking funding again from the Portage Health Foundation if there is another round of recreation grant funding in 2023 or from the DNR if it comes forward with its expected grant opportunities for parks.

**Non-Profit Organization to Help Remediate Blight:** In the commission's 2018 Blight Survey, a preponderance of residents indicated a willingness to contribute to a fund to provide financial assistance to those who cannot afford to address blight conditions with their homes. Now that we have the updated zoning ordinance in place, the commission would like to move forward with this concept. We need a vehicle for receiving and approving the award of such contributions. It was discussed that the Chassell Improvement Association might be an option. Keith will reach out to Kriss Bosley to find out if the organization has non-profit status as a 501c(3).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.