

Chassell Township Planning Commission
Minutes
September 7, 2023

Brian Waters called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was given.

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

Agenda: Keith asked to add signage for the Bark Park and Historic Trail

Minutes: Doug moved approval of the July 5, 2023 meeting minutes. Brian provided the second. The motion was approved unanimously.

Public Comments: None

Road Commission Report and 5-Year Road Plan Discussion: Dale noted that 7th Street is in progress and Massie Road is complete. Concern was expressed about the depth of the ditch on the north side of the road. Dale plans to meet with Lynn Gierke to see what is currently available from the Road Fund. The first come/first served approach on projects by the Houghton County Road Commission was noted. Brian discussed the possibility of incorporating roads into the 6-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

Capital Improvement Committee Report: Doug will work on the spreadsheet and we will look to meet next week.

Park and Recreation Board: No report

Old Business:

- a. **Chassell Mercantile Update:** Keith discussed the meeting that Dan Palosaari and he had with John Schmitt with the SBDC about recruiting a restaurant for the project. Dale brought up the topic of a liquor license and whether one was available for the project.
- b. **Snowmobile Trail Update:** No report.
- c. **Centennial Park Engineering Study:** Chris did not respond to a request to attend the meeting.
- d. **Bark Park Improvements:** The improvements involving the fence gates have been completed.
- e. **Future DNR Grant for Launch Site Amenities:** The plan remains to submit a Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant or Passport Grant proposal in the 2024 cycle to help fund improvements for a vault toilet, parking and road improvements, picnic tables, and barbecue. We will look at the recreation survey results and start developing the proposal once we review the survey results.
- f. **DNR SPARK Grant:** An announcement of grant recipients is expected this month. Keith noted that a new DNR Director was just appointed in Lansing.

- g. **Bridges Out of Poverty (Blight Remediation Assistance):** Keith and Kevin Store are coordinating a follow up meeting on the topic of Copper Shores Community Health Foundation acting as the recipient of contributions.
- h. **Old Holy Trinity Church and adjoining property RFP:** Keith reported that the contractor is working with Jeff Ratcliffe from KEDA on the necessary information for the MEDC's CRP program. Keith shared the rendering for the 4-plex that is envisioned for the combined sites.
- i. **Portage Paddle Sports:** Still in process.
- j. **Discussion with Dan Dowdy (DNR Unit Supervisor)) and Barbara McEwen (Executive Director Baraga County CVB) regarding Otter Lake/Sturgeon River Launch – Sturgeon River Waterway and Baraga to Chassell Rail Trail:** Brian indicated that he is waiting to hear back from Baraga County.

New Business:

- a. **Membership Terms:** Doug, Keith, and Daniel's terms are all up. All three agreed to continue for 3-year terms. Brian will bring this to the Township Board for approval at their next meeting.
- b. **Rec Plan Survey Response Report:** The commission reviewed the responses received to date (160). It was noted there is an absence of younger respondents. To help address this, the survey will remain open through September 30th.
- c. **Milfoil Report/Update:** A report will be provided at next month's meeting. Doug brought up the DNR not paying toward the cost of treatment noting its land holdings along the lake and that they should be paying a proportionate share.
- d. **Sturgeon River Launch Parking:** Moving the rocks to allow for site users deliver their boats was discussed. We will ask the DPW to move these and work on appropriate signage indicating that there is no parking on the ramp and use is just for delivery/retrieval of boats. Signage along US 41 was discussed. Keith discussed the lack of success he had on this issue with MDOT's Crystal Falls office. Doug suggested contacting Rob Tervo.
- e. **Water Trails Program handbook draft:** We will use the draft handbook as our guide for developing our proposal to seek river trail until we are able to get a final draft.
- f. **Park Campfire/Cook Rings:** It was agreed that we should include these into our Centennial Park preliminary engineering study.

Brian moved that we adjourn the meeting. Steve seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval of the motion. The meeting ended at 8:05 p.m.