

Chassell Township Planning Commission

November 7, 2024

Minutes

Attendance: Brian Waters, Cindy Cowell, Keith Meyers, Steve Spahn, Dan Palosaari, Daniel Niemela, Doug Hamar **Absent:** Rich Smith

B. Waters called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and the pledge of allegiance was given.

B. Waters moved that the agenda be approved and S. Spahn seconded. All ayes. Motion to approve agenda carries.

S. Spahn moved that the October 3, 2024 minutes be approved. B. Waters seconded. The October 3, 2024 meeting minutes approved.

Public comments: K. Meyers reported that Jesse Widerhold from Visit Keweenaw requested a Chassell Roundup and Meyers provided him one on 10/21/24.

The Road Commission Report and 5-year Plan discussion was moved to new business.

The Capital Improvement Committee Report was tabled.

The Recreation Committee Report was tabled. The ski trail will be discussed in new business.

The only question regarding recreation facility issues was the removal of the launch. It was reported that the launch has been removed for the season.

Old Business

Chassell Mercantile Update: The Houghton County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority approved the brownfield plans developed by the consultant which lays out the housing project. A meeting held last week to discuss population and school funding. The state values the school funding based on school population. On brownfield; Township needs to approve the brownfield application, and then the County Commission can make their final approval at their December meeting.

Snowmobile Trail Update: Bulldozers are out on the corridor to clear it. D. Palosaari questioned where the trail will enter Chassell. A potential property allowing entrance has no trespassing signs currently posted. A discussion was held regarding the trail entrance into Chassell and the DNR knowledge of entrance location. D Hamar offered to speak to an impacted landowners. Two additional properties were discussed as potentially offering access to Chassell.

Centennial Park Engineering Study: No report.

Holy Trinity Church: A second RFP for demolition will close on 11/8. A review of the cistern at the property was made.

Sturgeon River Launch Improvements: Still waiting for funding status of the NRTF and Recreation Passport grant applications. Completed the preapplication meeting request with EGLE. 10/17 met on site with Casey Abrams and Linda Hansen from EGLE. No permit will be required to install culverts in upland portion to provide access to the Beagle Club property. A permit would be required to provide boardwalk access to the property. Their survey showed that the Township possesses over 100' of access to the Beagle Club. This footage provides the opportunity to create primitive camping sites or the consideration of a small land swap

Kick Sled Track on Pike Bay: Jeff Ratcliffe from KEDA shared the name of a Finnish company that makes kick sleds. K Meyers will reach out to the company for a potential purchase and information.

Youth Bike Trail at Centennial Park/Bark Park: Tabled due to discussion of potential pump track.

Keweenaw Water Trail: K Meyers has a conversation with Brad Barnett from Visit Keweenaw. B. Barnett and KLT remains very positive about including the Sturgeon River on the trail.

DNR Spark Grant Project Report: Will discuss in new business.

Baraga/Chassell Trail Project Collaboration: Discussed under snowmobile trail update.

Veterans Banners: 20 banners were secured honoring Chassell veterans. Utility poles will be used to hang the banners.

Visit Keweenaw Destination Grant: The KDG will be closed out. All activities are completed. The signage is all up and the Buckthorn remediation project has been successful with the most recent work day being held on Make a Difference Day.

Historical Trail Buckthorn Project: The MTU students who have been working on the project removed 5-10 trailer loads of buckthorn on Make a Difference Day. The students have requested to make informational signs for the wetlands.

Hamar Creek Restoration Project: The creek is clear from behind E. Palosaari's property to the lake. It was suggested to meet with EGLE for guidance on the project. A discussion of fish returning to the creek and the barrier of the culvert on the Chassell Painesdale Road was held. C. Cowell shared that there are fish passage grants available that could be used to allow creek fish passage thru the culvert.

Blight Mitigation Fund: There is money in the fund. Discussion was held regarding what agencies could support the fund and its work. Suggestions made were Copper Shores and WUPPDR. K. Meyers indicated that Lisa MacKenzie from WUPPDR would look for regional blight funds. A presentation regarding the blight fund has been made to the Chassell Women's Club on 10/9. The club was very supportive of the fund and its projects. It was decided that a link for the public to donate to the fund would be placed on the Chassell Township webpage.

Cemetery Mapping: No update

Cemetery Trees: D. Hamar is pursuing a pro bono arrangement for cemetery landscaping.

Rail Trail: The state is surveying to determine property encroachment to the trail. The DNR indicated that the width of the trail varies greatly from location to location.

Disc Golf Location: The disc golf course needs a champion to promote and maintain the course. A discussion was held about encouraging Chassell School physical education classes to use the course for PE classes.

Mountain Bike/Pump Track: The Planning Commission is expecting budget costs from B. and E. Palosaari. The track cost projections can be used to seek grant funding. The Planning Commission can provide some seed money for the project. This seed money would also serve as match funds to for any potential grant projects.

New Business:

X-Country Ski Trail Marinette Street Access: K. Meyers, S. Spahn and B. Waters met with Jay Fedorocko to discuss trail access through his property near the water tower. The trails need a mid entry access trail head. Many skiers do not want to have to ski up or down significant hills to access the trail network. The Township has land at the end of Marinette Street. Ski Trail access is right there. The property has a sizeable clearing that would allow for skier car parking. The township has an easement with E. Laru for a water line, however, if skiers cross the corner of her property, the Township will indemnify her. The Commission will speak to other impacted landowners. Discussion was held regarding a vehicle to maintain the trails

Old Rink Warming Shack Upgrade: DP Construction has been rehabilitating the shack for storage of the groomer. The project will be finished shortly. The shack will be used to store the ski track groomer. A volunteer to serve as the primary groomer in addition to a back up volunteer are being sought.

2025 5-Year Road Plan: The 2024 Road Plan was reviewed with discussion. The 2025 Road Plan will be brought to the Commission in December for review and approval.

Boardwalk Project: The Spark Gant project period goes to 2026. All bids must be put out and awarded by 2024. The Chassell Lions also contributed 20k toward the project. After the boardwalk installation, there is approximately 140K plus the Lions contribution remaining to put toward rehabilitating the boat ramp dock and restrooms. Future work on the project when additional funding is identified will include lighting the boardwalk. Solar lights would work well. The Boardwalk discussion led to a discussion about the pickleball court being installed in Centennial Park. D. Palosaari indicates that the court concrete is poured and will now sit until spring. Palosaari offered that the court is poured at a 1% slope so that rainwater will run off of the surface. Recognition to the benefactors will be discussed at the December meeting.

Planning Commission Secretary: A call was made to the Commission for a secretary. C. Cowell indicated that she would be willing to serve in that role. Cowell was appointed secretary.

Adjournment: K Meyers moved to adjourn. B Waters seconded. All aye. Motion to adjourn carries and meeting is adjourned at 8:20 pm.

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