

Chassell Township Planning Commission

MINUTES

September 4 2025 / 7:00 PM / Chassell Fire Hall

ATTENDEES

Brian Waters, Doug Hamar, Cindy Cowell, Steve Spahn, Keith Meyers, Lynn Gierke; also attending one community member guest

AGENDA

1. Call to Order 7:04 pm

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Approval of the Agenda K. Meyers motion to approve agenda. S Spahn second. All Aye. M/C.

4. Reading and Approval of August 11, 2025 Minutes D. Hamar moved to approve August minutes as presented. B Waters asked one question. Minutes stood as written. K Meyers second. All aye. M/C.

5. Public Comments None

6. Road Commission Report and 5-year Road Plan Discussion Supervisor Gierke attended the last HCRC meeting. The Commissioner gave a report on the work completed in Chassell Township. The Township was not billed for the work. Gierke indicates that she will ask for an update regarding the paving on 2nd Street. B Waters commented that the Township Road Committee will work on an updated five year plan.

7. Zoning B Waters offered that the Planning Commission will invite the Township Zoning Administrator to the September meeting.

8. Capital Improvement Committee Report L. Gierke, C Austin, and D Hamar met in August. The group visited the intent and purpose of the Capital Improvement Committee. The Committee will update the project list. The Excel sheet will allow the TB to review assets, inform budget decisions and see the life, depreciation and stipend for assets.

9. Recreation Committee Report Will be included in discussion later on agenda.

10. Recreation Facility Issues Vandalism was discovered on the historical trail. A message was spray painted in large letters on the boardwalk surface. The spray paint has been scrubbed off. A directional sign was also defaced. C Austin cleaned the sign.

11. Old Business

a. Chassell Mercantile Update K Meyers had a conversation with Jeff Ratcliffe from KEDA regarding the project. J Ratcliffe indicates that he is meeting with an interested developer next week. J Ratcliffe determines that the property will be a

longer term project. Due to this timeline, the TB is moving forward with bidding to asphalt the road by the building site.

b. Snowmobile Trail Updates K. Meyers spoke with Carly Graff from the DNR about the trail project. DNR staff will contact Barb McEwen from the Baraga Tourism group to move trail collaboration forward. The DNR staff will also work on being able to connect the Baraga/Chassell Trail to the Bill Nichols trail.

c. Centennial Park Engineering Study K Meyers reports that he is working with Chris Holmes from UPEA on finalizing the study. Meyers held a pre-application meeting with EGLE regarding the marina plan to ready the plan to capture future funding. Curt Wemple from the MI Waterways Grant Program indicates that the current MI focus is on repairing existing marinas, and not new marina construction. Meyers discussed the possibility of any private funders with Ron Yesney, DNR Trails Coordinator, to pursue a public/private partnership. Jordan Byelich, DNR Waterways Development Manager indicated that funded marina projects around the Great Lakes need to be marinas that are at least 30 miles apart. Meyers pointed out that the Houghton County Marina has a wait list of over 100 boats, Chassell has great transient boat traffic, and B Waters offered that the marina filled in on Keweenaw Bay in Baraga took 30 marina slips out of the area. Byelich indicates that he will arrange a meeting to discuss funding possibilities.

d. Old Holy Trinity Church The Houghton County Land Bank will not have funding available to raze the blighted house on the property adjacent to the old church property. The County is putting out a RFP to seek a developer for the church and home lot as one project. B Waters pointed out that the Township has project handling costs to recoup from the demolition of the land bank property.

e. Sturgeon River Launch Improvements No award information has been announced from the Passport Grants competition yet. The portable toilet has been put in place at the launch. MDOT removed the log jam upstream from the launch and has the removed logs piled on the river bank.

f. Keweenaw Water Trail K. Meyers reports that this project is still in progress with WUPPDR and Visit Keweenaw.

g. Baraga/Chassell Trail Project Collaboration Information was shared under b. above.

h. Hamar Creek K. Meyers will receive an update from Casey Huckins from MTU regarding next steps.

i. Cemetery Mapping D. Hamar had a conversation with C. Austin regarding mapping. Austin indicated that Jeremy Shannon's MTU class completed additional GPR mapping this past summer. Austin indicates that the instructor would like to continue the project every summer. Austin found that the cemetery was abandoned from approximately 1900 to 1949. The cemetery fell into disrepair during those years. Grave markers made of wood disintegrated. Hamar and Austin discussed possible memorial markers for unmarked graves. Software for a cemetery database is being explored. The tall pine stump is being considered for a landscaping feature as a carving. Ideas for raising funds for the carving were discussed.

j. Cemetery Landscaping Discussed in i. above

k. Rail-Trail K. Meyers discussed the rail trail in an August meeting with Carly Graff and Ron Yesney from the DNR. Meyers will receive a template to create a RFP to have an engineering study done on the deck and rail at the Pike River Bridge crossing. Graff and Yesney indicated that they will research funding from the DNR to complete the decking.

l. Marina Development Discussed under agenda item 11. c.

m. Mountain Bike Trail/Skills Track Ebb and Flow Trailworks will be invited to the October meeting to give an update on the project.

n. Splash Pad The Township Board did a walk of the Centennial Park property. They reviewed an open area at the park with the splash pad in mind. It was determined at that time that the project will be moved to low priority. It was suggested to watch other splash pad projects that utilize lake water for the features to inform the Chassell Township project. The splash pad will be tabled.

o. Misslitz Field Improvements Brothers Max and Evan Massaway are lining up Eagle Scout projects. Evan will complete his project at Misslitz Field. Planned are the infield, dug out, benches and steps. The scout projects will begin this fall. The work that the Township will complete includes an extension to the back stop fencing, the batting cage; including moving it closer to the ravine, and placing fencing to protect the dug outs. Marquette fencing looked at the projects to submit an estimate. JCS indicates that they will contact the Township to come in and write an estimate. Steve Szyszkoski is willing to complete the survey. John Erickson informed K Meyers about the materials used in the Hancock Driving Park. The Township will look locally for a similar grade of sand. The project will include crowning of the infield to allow for water run off.

p. Ski Trail Bridge Repair . The lower trail bridge needs examination after the most recent flood. Skier use is fine, but a review is needed before grooming equipment is run across the bridge.

q. Water and Sewer Ordinance Review Andrea Aho, Treasurer, B. Waters, D. Hamar and K. Meyers will meet to review the ordinance.

r. Blight Ordinance Review The review is ongoing. Supervisor Gierke pointed out that the review is more than only blight ordinances; the review covers general township ordinances. Gierke will give a list of all ordinances to be reviewed to the Zoning Commission. This item will appear under new business going forward.

s. Ditching Concerns within the Township The DNR will reach out to all entities involved in the right of ways and properties regarding water run off and ditching. A meeting is scheduled for 9/10 with the DNR to discuss the issues and put in place a watershed policy for the Township.

t. MEDC RRC Deliverables-PC Annual Report Report completed. Addition requested by PC during review was added. The Township Board approved the report.

u. Max and Evan Eagle Scout Projects Discussed under o. above. Added information is that the Township Board approved up to \$5000 to cover the cost of Max's Eagle Scout project in the dog park.

12. New Business

a. Zoom Meeting regarding the Pike River Bridge Discussed under c. above.

b. Boat Launch Fee Concerns The requirement of a launch fee at Centennial Park will be researched by PC members as required in the installation grant guidelines.

c. Trail Bridge by the Old Rink The bridge was moved downstream during the most recent flood. EGLE indicates that a dredge permit will be needed to remove flood silt and debris out of the creek to restore the creek to original depth. The culvert in that area will need to be addressed. A culvert behind the old ice rink shack was identified as needing replacement. A permit from EGLE will be necessary for the culvert.

d. Tree Identification on the Fitness Trail/Mtu Sierra Williams B. Waters approached Sierra Williams from the MTU Forestry Dept regarding tree identification on the fitness trail. Williams had knowledge on individuals who would be interested in the ID project. Waters thought that the Chassell High class that made the fitness trail signs could also make tree identification signs to place along the trail. The added information would give families an educational activity to engage in while using the trail.

For the Good of the Order: It was reported that the Township Board approved the seat renewals put forth by the Planning Commission.

NEXT MEETING

October 2 2025 7 pm Chassell Township Fire Hall

Adjourn B. Waters motioned to adjourn. S. Spahn seconded. All aye. M/C Adjournment at 8:22 pm.

