

MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
4338 BEELINE ROAD
ALLEGAN COUNTY
HOLLAND, MI 49423

September 14, 2016

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Township Clerk Wendy Van Huis called the regular monthly Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Wendy Van Huis, Linda Howell, Ed Stielstra
MEMBERS ABSENT: Terry Hofmeyer, Gary Dewey
STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Trustee Ed Stielstra opened the meeting with prayer and led the pledge of allegiance.

ARTICLE III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the August 10, 2016 meeting. **A motion was made by Howell and seconded by Stielstra to approve the minutes as submitted. Clerk Van Huis called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. FINANCIAL REPORT / REVIEW & APPROVE THE BILLS

Clerk Wendy Van Huis reviewed the bills for the month of August 2016. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Howell and seconded by Stielstra to approve and pay the bills as submitted. Clerk Van Huis called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE V. CORRESPONDENCE - None

ARTICLE VI. REPORT OF OFFICERS

- A. STATE REPRESENTATIVE WHITEFORD – No report.
- B. COUNTY COMMISSIONER KAPENGA – No report.
- C. PLANNING COMMISSION – HOWELL

Howell reported that the Planning Commission met on September 7 and discussed the following items: approved for recommendation to the Township Board Obbink request for P.U.D. amendment; tabled Havlik rezoning request for further information; tabled Master Plan review discussion.

D. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – STIELSTRA

Stielstra reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals met on August 24 and reviewed the Chamberlain Variance Request to change property lines, which was denied.

E. PARKS COMMISSION – MICHELLE SALL

The Parks Commission met on August 17 and discussed assignments for the Greater Ottawa County United Way Day of Caring. Seven local companies are sending volunteers to do the following projects: Huyser Farm – clear rows in the blueberry fields; Farview Park – trim pedestrian and horse trails, spread 20 yards of wood chips; Sanctuary Woods – clear trails, pick up trash and shovel gravel on the trails; Wolters Woods – clear trails, pick up trash and shovel gravel. Sall reported speaking with a blueberry consultant who advised that clearing the trees and brush in the rows would greatly benefit the blueberry crop. Stielstra asked if a “non-expert” could volunteer and Sall responded yes, definitely to help clear the rows. Sall added the MSU Extension program often studies the blueberries at Huyser Farm as it remains an organic farm. Stielstra asked as a horse owner, have we ever surveyed the population of horse owners and heads of horses in the township. Sall stated a survey was recently sent and data is being collected and one question addressed usage of the horse trails but not population. Stielstra suggested conducting a survey in the future that would address this question. Van Huis mentioned the Huyser Farm hunter lottery, which will take place on Saturday, September 17. Meshkin noted that the blueberry expert is actually Brad Moore who is directly involved in the blueberry co-op located in South Haven.

F. FIRE CHIEF AND FIRE BOARD – CHIEF DEN BLEYKER

Chief Den Bleyker submitted a written report on the response calls for the month of August: 41 calls total, 28 calls from Laketown, consisting of 20 rescue and 8 fire, 11 calls from Fillmore, consisting of 11 rescue calls and 0 fire call. There were 2 fire assists to Saugatuck Fire Department. Den Bleyker stated ISO has contacted the department to schedule an audit in November. ISO rates the department on water supply, equipment, training, dispatch and all fire rescue related requirements. The scale used is a 1-10 rating, the lower the score, the better. Graafschap currently has a rating of 6 down from 7 which is the best possible score for residential. The rating of the department affects residential homeowner insurance policy premiums. Van Huis asked if the insurance companies are made aware of the rating and Meshkin responded that the reports are used by insurance companies to determine rates. Stielstra commented that the last time the rating was improved was when the ladder truck was purchased.

ARTICLE VII. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS ON OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Undersheriff Frank Baker introduced himself as a candidate running for the office of Allegan County Sheriff. Baker first recognized and thanked Fire Chief Den Bleyker for the effort he put forth to secure the new public radio system for emergency responders. Baker went on to explain his qualifications for the position of sheriff having been an patrolman since 1987 in Wayland and Allegan County and achieving numerous promotions throughout his career including detective, sergeant, captain and finally undersheriff in 2015 from which he retired last week to run for the office of Allegan County Sheriff. His academic background includes a degree in criminal justice and courses in police administration. Baker has held seats on several non-profit boards in the community including Safe Harbor Children’s Advocacy and Sylvia’s Place. He is also currently involved in Allegan County Legal Assistance Center, which provides affordable legal aid to those who may have the resources to hire their own attorney. Baker expressed concern about the rising use of heroin in Allegan County and the need for a crisis response team for mental health issues starting at the point of proper response of law enforcement. Stielstra asked if Baker anticipates gaining a trained negotiator for mental health crisis response. Baker responded that he hopes to be able to gain training for all patrol officers to be equipped to handle such situations appropriately. Stielstra thanked Baker for the monthly reporting that is done by the Sheriff’s Office. A resident asked about the Forgotten Man Ministries and Baker responded that he fully supports the program adding that there is now a program for females. A question was raised about the prevalence of heroin in the county and Baker responded that there have been a couple of overdoses and one death. It is rising in popularity because it is a low cost drug and accessible.

Mike Tye of 3860 65th Street stated that his family moved into the area in August and when they purchased the home, having Internet access was an important factor. His 13-year old daughter has

homework on a take home computer that requires the Internet on a daily basis. To find out that the Fiber Optic Project would not be on the November ballot was very disheartening. He is very passionate about getting Internet access for all township residents and wants to know why it was not put on the November ballot.

Densel Abney of Creekwood Drive is also very disappointed the fiber project is not on the November ballot and is thinking of leaving the area because she works at home and needs the Internet every day.

Sheryl Laupmanis of 6526 Creekwood Drive feels the Internet should be considered a utility; we are living in the dark ages in this township without it. When her husband had cancer, there was so much research done on the Internet that it was debilitating for them to be without it. She added that she pays school taxes but does not have children, does not mind paying and in the same way the Internet should be considered a utility paid by all taxpayers. It needs to get back on the ballot.

Dick Becker of 2382 Valley asked how the meetings with Charter went. Meshkin responded that there have been 4-5 meetings with Charter this year, the last being in August. The cost to build their system would be about \$3 million but would not serve residents that are more than 150 feet from the road right of way. Additional plant would have to be built to reach those customers and it would be at an additional cost to them of several thousand dollars.

Laupmanis asked if it would be fiber optic and Meshkin responded that it would be a copper system and the township would have no control over the price.

Tye asked if fiber is more beneficial than coax and Meshkin said fiber is the absolute best system; it can be buried to avoid weather issues and it has a life span of approximately 30 years. Fiber does require an electronic mechanism that needs to be replaced every 5-10 years.

Jim Allen of 4263 66th Street asked if the Board has looked at doing a special assessment district for the infrastructure. He referred to an article he had sent to Terry Hofmeyer regarding the Google and its intent to drop fiber optic because it is out of date. Meshkin explained that the State of Michigan does not allow special assessments for Internet or telecom projects. The attorneys have researched it and the state representative is looking into it but nothing so far. Meshkin added that our proposed model is unusual because it is a community owned system; there are many out there but follow the same utility model, which requires paying capital cost; our property tax model lowers the requirement for subscription because you do not need a "take rate" like City of Holland, which is a subscription model. Google is looking at containing costs, not dropping fiber. Allen said the Google model is looking at wireless and Meshkin stated that Wi-Fi is too spotty in Laketown because of the trees. Satellite transmittal is one way from the satellite to the home but to upload you cannot bounce back to the satellite.

Mitra Delaney of 6298 144th Street said she thinks the reason some of us do not want fiber is that we believe it should be kept in the private sector and not a community owned business. Other options should be looked into for those who do not have access.

Tye said there are not a lot of other options. We need to have Internet and there was a solution but it was voted down by people who have Internet.

Jim Delaney of 6298 144th Street stated that fiber optic is not a new thing; it was not done in Silicon Valley because it was a cash cow. He does not see where it is feasible for the township to do this. Meshkin invited Delaney to discuss the financials with him.

Ronda Allen of 4623 66th Street said she would be fine paying for fiber optic but feels people were against voting on it because we need an itemized list of what it is going to cost and the details of the project. People do not believe it will be just \$40 per month.

David Laupmanis also worked in Silicon Valley and believes that fiber optic is the way to go in the township because the Wi-Fi is so spotty that it is not practical. Mannes stated that he would be interested in learning more about the financials.

Tom Crum of 6295 144th Avenue stated that the telephone company is privately owned – why would a small township like this want to get involved in something like this, it is way out of whack to please a few people.

Mitra Delaney asked about the \$30,000 that has already been spent and could it be used to find other options.

ARTICLE VIII. OLD BUSINESS – None

ARTICLE IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. MACC REVISED BYLAWS

Clerk Van Huis asked Meshkin to review the MACC Revised Bylaws. Meshkin explained that the MACC is the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council comprised of nine units of government from local cities, townships, county and state offices. The MACC was formed in 1989, this is the second reinstatement of the bylaws and the changes are minor reflected in Section III. Composition to add terminology, “County Participants”; Section VI. Make up of Officers ; 6.2 to include Watershed; 6.5 to address duties of the Past Chairperson. The changes have no financial impact on the township or any other municipality.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Howell and seconded by Stielstra to approve the MACC Revised Bylaws to include correction to the cover page date. Clerk Van Huis called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

B. OLD ORCHARD P.U.D. SECOND AMENDMENT

Clerk Van Huis asked Howell to review the recommendation. Howell explained property to the east of bank building would be developed with a 3-unit stand-alone condominium with the driveway facing the office building. While this is, a stand-alone unit unrelated to Orchard Park, several residents came to the public hearing to ask questions. The developer adjusted the proposed project to meet the setback requirements as requested and the engineer must review the flood plan elevations prior to construction.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Howell and seconded by Stielstra to approve the Old Orchard P.U.D. Second Amendment. Clerk Van Huis called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE X. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS

Dick Becker of 2382 Valley asked for an update on the Macatawa Water Project. Meshkin responded that it remains in litigation.

Van Huis mentioned the Michigan Cares for Tourism group that volunteered at the Felt Mansion on Tuesday. Meshkin stated it is a private non-profit that each year selects a project in the state to volunteer for and this year selected the Felt Estate. More than 200 volunteers from around the state painted the chapel, cleared trails, worked on the Carriage House, grounds and more. Their time and materials were donations so there was no cost to the Felt Estate or township.

ARTICLE XI. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Howell and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 P.M. Clerk Van Huis called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTON APPROVED

Township Clerk, Wendy Van Huis

Recording Secretary, Diane Ybarra