

APPROVED 3-5-14

Special Casco Township Joint Meeting
Hosted by the Planning Commission
February 8, 2014 9:00 AM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Barker, Daniel Fleming, Dian Liepe, Lewis Adamson, David Campbell, Paul Macyauski, Judy Graff

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Susan West, Recording Secretary

ALSO PRESENT: Allan Overhiser, Township Supervisor, Cheri Brenner, Clerk, Pam Blough, Parks Consultant, Jeanne Van Zoeren, Blue Star Trail, and other interested parties, all listed on attached sign-in sheet (attachment 1)

1. **Welcome and Agenda.** Meeting was called to order at 9:04 am. There were no changes to the agenda. Chairman Barker thanked everyone for their attendance and introduced the Board Members. Cheri Brenner, Clerk, introduced Kathy Stanton, of 6691 120th Ave., South Haven, MI 49090, as the Township's website manager.

2. **Township Infrastructure-Update – Allan Overhiser**
 - A. **Revenue sources and proposed millages, Infrastructure, Roads, Township Hall, Water & Sewer, Police Patrol, Internet Service**
 - B. **Parks, Nature Center, Maple Grove, Bike Path & Sharp Park and future needs**
 - C. **Grants; In process, due, seeking and future wish list**
 1. Allan Overhiser indicated that the primary activities for the Township have been: water & sewer (which is in good cash flow), Police Protection options and funding, and working on the website.

 2. Regarding the Website/Internet:
 - a. Cheri Brenner indicated that the various Committees need to send their approved Minutes to Kathy Stanton for the website, as well as to herself.
 - b. Stanton indicated that from working on the website, she discovered that the site for Senior Services was no longer there. The domain name had expired. She will have the fee paid and the site restored.
 - c. Stanton stated that she has made separate pages for the various Committees and included updated contact information for each.
 - d. Stanton reported that while links exist for various needed documents, the documents themselves (ie Applications, Permits, etc) were not there. She will be correcting this once Alfred Ellingsen, Township Zoning Administrator, revises these documents.

- e. Campbell asked how long will it be until the site is in full working order. Stanton answered in approximately 3 weeks.
- f. Stanton stated that the Fennville Library Board would like to have their information on the website. Chairman Barker suggested that the Airport and South Haven Hospital may also want to be linked to the Township's website.
- g. Macyauski inquired as to the possibility of Wi-Fi being made available through the Township. Stanton will research what the cost would be, what it would entail, and where the service area would cover.

3. Regarding policing:

- a. Graff reported that there has been much talk regarding policing. A proposed millage was voted down twice in 2008. Residents have expressed various concerns, ie burglaries, park coverage, the fact that the Township has no one to respond to ordinance violations, and that the Allegan County Sheriff's response time is poor. Some residents have said they are willing to pay more for policing, while others said they are not. As of this date, it has not been decided if a millage will be on the ballot or not. Allan Overhiser will be talking with residents through April, 2014 to gather information and there will be public meetings on this topic (dates have not yet been determined). If it is decided to place a millage on the ballot, it would be in August, 2014.
- b. Issues that are being considered are: 1. Where the service would come from (the Allegan County Sheriff or the City of South Haven), 2. Would one or two, full time or part time police officers be needed.
- c. Graff stated that they would guess that if it makes it to the ballot, they would be asking between 1 & 2 mills over probably 5 years.
- d. Macyauski asked if a vote by the residents would make the final decision and Graff answered yes.
- e. Resident Matt Super, of 7366 N. Shore Drive, South Haven, stated that the response time from the Allegan County Sheriff's Department is poor and asked if using the South Haven Police would be an option because they are close and have the resources. Graff answered that consideration would have to be given to the fact that South Haven Police are in a different County, but further stated that talks with both Allegan County Sheriff's Department and South Haven Police will be had.
- f. Graff stated that per State law, Allegan County does not have to provide patrol and that we do not pay a millage specifically for police protection from Allegan County.
- g. Overhiser stated that there are approximately 4 – 5 Townships to 1 deputy due to budget cuts.
- h. Graff stated that when there is a call to 911, the nearest car, whether it be the County or the State Police, would respond.

- i. Chairman Barker asked how SHAES handle working with two counties and Overhiser answered that despite some problems, it does work out.
- j. Graff stated that she believes that a police presence can make a difference as it has by having the State Police Cars sitting in the Township Hall's parking lot.
- k. Sandra Warren, of 1059 68th St., South Haven, MI, asked when the public hearings on this matter will be held. Overhiser answered that specific dates have not yet been set, but that they will be sometime in March of this year. Chairman Barker added that dates, once set, will be on the website.
- l. Macyauski asked if names and addresses of residents that attend the Board Meetings are reflected in their Minutes. Overhiser answered that they are.

4. Regarding water & sewer:

- a. Adamson stated that the past mistakes are behind them and that they are now on a path to fiscal responsibility. He does not anticipate anything coming up that would cause them to come to the Township for money. Meijers has been a great help this year with their 22 connections. The upcoming bond payment will be made.
- b. Adamson further stated that they are checking into refinancing one of the bonds which is currently at 4 ½% down to less than 1%.
- c. Adamson stated that there is not a surplus of money at this time, but if there is in the future, they will determine how to handle the funds at that point, ie cut the debt retirement that each individual pays, or use it for infrastructure.
- d. Overhiser stated that both Casco Township and South Haven Township, together, are owed approximately 1.4 million. Campbell asked if it will be possible to pay the Townships off first before investing any surplus funds into infrastructure. Overhiser stated that this matter will be considered farther down the road, possibly in 2015.
- e. Adamson stated that 20 connections are needed each year. Chairman Barker asked if the 20 needed hook-ups each year was just from Casco Township. Adamson stated that the 20 needed hook-ups are from Casco and South Haven Townships together. Chairman Barker asked if the mandatory hook-ups that have not yet hooked-up are included in the 20 figure and Adamson answered yes.
- f. Graff stated that she is concerned about the mandatory hook-ups that are getting away with not paying. Overhiser stated that they will be going back approximately one year for collection. Adamson stated that a lien could be placed on these properties in the event there is a sale in the future.

5. Regarding roads:

- a. Overhiser stated that \$280,000.00 is collected from millages for roads. If the roads in the North Shore Drain area (which include Lincoln St., Washington St., Euclid St. and Pershing St.) are paved, it would eat up the budget, but that it would help with the drain system in that area.
- b. Overhiser stated that the County does not pay to pave secondary roads.
- c. Overhiser stated that decisions on what roads will be paved will be made in March, 2014. Macyauski asked how these decisions are made. Overhiser answered that they divide the Township into four sections so that all areas are being helped and they also look at need.

6. Regarding the Township Hall:

- a. Graff reported that there has been no activity since the fire department left two years ago. Preliminary designs and estimates were done regarding expanding the seniors' section, but that it was tabled due to lack of money. Chairman Barker asked what the cost factors were and Graff answered that putting in insulation, construction, air conditioning, toilets, etc are all considerations. She further stated that it would be a major project.

7. Regarding Parks:

- a. Pam Blough, Parks Consultant, of P.M.B., 419 Sand Piper, Grand Haven, MI, stated that Josiah Jessup has replaced Judy Graff on the Parks and Recreations Committee. The Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of every month.
- b. Regarding the Nature Preserve, Blough handed out a summary sheet dated February 8, 2014 (Attachment 2) and reported as follows:
 - i. The southern piece is now open.
 - ii. A Grant was received from the Coastal Management Program to help fund the stairway to the beach and that same is nearly finished.
 - iii. A fence has been put up along the bluff edge
 - iv. Various signs need to be purchased, ie for park rules, etc.
 - v. A Ribbon Cutting Ceremony will be held this spring.
 - vi. A Grant from the Natural Resources Trust Fund for parking was denied.
 - vii. Gigi Sizemore has agreed to chair the FRIENDS Committee
 - viii. Fleming asked what was being done regarding the sign at the Nature Preserve regarding funding because he finds the existing sign to be incomplete, insulting and that it misrepresents itself. Blough answered that Sandy Warren, Bruce Brandon, and David Dobreff are working on wording for additional signs. Blough further stated that

smaller signs are now being used. Graff asked if the current sign could be replaced with a smaller sign, but Blough indicated that she did not know.

- ix. Debra Schuette, of 750 Blue Star Highway, South Haven, MI asked when the Final Site Plan regarding the Nature Preserve would be approved. Pam Blough indicated that it already had been approved approximately one year ago at the same time the stairway was approved. Chairman Barker stated that he remembered Schuette being at the meeting. Blough stated that the Master Plan will be revisited in the future.
 - x. Matt Super asked what is being done to protect property owners near this park from the public. Graff stated that the Township Board has always made sure that the park operates in the best way possible for all residents, but that this is one issue that should be considered in deciding a possible policing millage. Graff further stated that the Board is still committed to running a top quality park.
 - xi. Debra Schuette stated that people come through her property, ignoring the signs. Graff stated that everyone along the beach front has this problem and that this is one reason to consider the policing millage.
- c. Regarding the Township Hall Property
- i. Doug Murdoch donated the trees that were planted
 - ii. Sandra Warren stated that DeBest helped with the planting of those trees
 - iii. Cheri Brenner stated that she sent out thank you notes to both Murdoch and DeBest.
- d. Regarding the SHARP Park
- i. Chairman Barker stated that he talked with Brian Dissette and was informed that they are still active in fundraising for this project and that they are moving forward on this long term goal.
- e. Jeanne Van Zoeren, of 7250 Point Betsie, South Haven, MI, asked if the Township was part of the Authority. Chairman Barker answered that he did not believe there was a need to join at this point.
- f. Chairman Barker asked Pam Blough is any Grants were in process and she answered that there were not.
- g. Regarding the Blue Star Trail, Jeanne Van Zoeren reported as follows:

- i. Blue Star Trail will be a 20 mile, off road trail that will be used all year round for walking, jogging, hiking, cross country skiing, etc.
- ii. Van Zoeren gave a slide screen presentation which included the following information:
 - a. The benefits of this trail include: Community, Health, Wellness & Safety, Environment, Tourism & Economy, and Education.
 - b. Phase 1 is a 2 mile section in Douglas that is underway. Completion date should be in October, 2014.
 - c. Phase 2 will cover from Baseline to Beverly Shores. This section is a 1.8 mile stretch and will begin in October, 2014 and should be completed in Spring, 2015.
 - d. Phase 3 will be in Saugatuck Township. Saugatuck Township is assuming ownership of this section and will be responsible for maintenance, etc . Target completion date is in 2016.
 - e. Phase 4 is located in Casco Township. There is a possibility that private funding will allow construction up to the Nature Preserves.
 - f. Phases 5 & 6 will be in Ganges Township and will complete the trail. Target date for completion will be in 2019.
 - g. Formal Resolutions of Support have been received from City of South Haven, Township of South Haven, Casco Township, Ganges Township, Village of Douglas, City of Saugatuck and Township of Saugatuck
 - h. Innovative Partnership – There has been great coordination between Allegan County Road Commission, Saugatuck Township, Village of Douglas, Allegan County Community Foundation, Allegan County Board of Commissioners and Friends of the Blue Star Trail
 - i. The total cost of the project is estimated at 6.1 million, with the major expense being construction. A majority of this cost will be received from Grants. 70% of the cost of Phase 1 was received from Casco residents.
 - j. 90 members of the Friends of the Blue Star Trial have lent their talents and time to this project.
 - k. Graff inquired as to what is happening between South Haven and St. Joseph. Van Zoeren answered that there is not much happening in Berrien County.
 - l. Matt Super stated that Van Zoeren gave a great presentation
 - m. Debra Schuette asked what this trail consists of. Van Zoeren answered that it is a 10' wide, paved trail. Schuette then asked how the trail would impact her driveway, trees, and fence. Van Zoeren stated that engineers would be talking with property owners individually to make those types of decisions.
 - n. Kathy Stanton asked who property owners should contact if they have specific questions. Van Zoeren stated that individuals could contact their respective Township with questions and that the State will have to approve the final plans.

- o. Van Zoeren closed by stating that they are taking donations to fund the project.

3. Master Plan & Zoning

- A. Master Plan**
- B. Zoning ordinance update**
- C. What needs to be done?**
- D. Township Questions;**

Chairman Barker stated that the Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance Book revisions have been completed. Attorney Bultje is reviewing the revisions to make sure all changes are proper. Once approved by the Board, the revised ordinance book will make future Planning Commission meetings more streamline. The Board will hopefully approve the revised book in March of this year.

4. Revenue – Resource Allocation – Future Outlook & Needs

- 1. SHAES**
- 2. Water & Sewer**
- 3. Airport**
- 4. Seniors**
- 5. Police Patrol**

- a. Regarding the South Haven Hospital: Graff asked to give an update on the South Haven Hospital. Graff reported that the South Haven Hospital is a community asset and that it should be used. The hospital is a 40 million dollar operation. 80% of its customers receive outpatient care. The hospital spends between 4 and 5 million dollars on care given to those who can't afford it (chairity). The Wellness Center has been a great success and is now 5 years old. Urgent Care opened up last year and has been successful. It is open seven days a week from 11 am to 9 pm
- b. Regarding SHAES: Overhiser stated that most of the renovations have been completed on the building on Blue Star Hwy. and the building is now more public friendly. He further stated that the police are now back in the building.
- c. Regarding Seniors: Overhiser stated that the seniors' activities are basically the same as last year. Things are going well. Sandy Warren stated that Brown Bag Lunch outings have been started to allow seniors to enjoy the outdoors.

5. Needs, Problems, Requests, Wants Comments: None

Chairman Barker thanked all for attending. Cheri Brenner stated that Casco's various Committee members are very dedicated workers for the Township. Chairman Barker thanked all for their work all year.

Motion to adjourn by Fleming, 2nd by Campbell. All in favor, MSC. Meeting adjourned at 11:38 am

Minutes prepared by Susan West, Recording Secretary

Next Meeting: Regular Meeting on March 5, 2014 at 7:00 pm

Attachment 1: Sign-in Sheet

Attachment 2: Summary handout from the Parks and Recreation Committee dated February 8, 2014

Feb. 8th - 2014

BRUCE BARKER

7758 PACIFIC AVE

Dan Fleming

6756 109th Ave

Dian Liepe

722 62nd St., Pullman

Lou Adensen

473 Blue star SH

Dave Campbell

7174 FRENDLELL AVE

- JUDY GRAY

850 ~~Blue Star~~ Michigan Dr.

- Josiah Jessup

6717 108th AVENUE

- Chen Brenner

917 Blue star S.H.

Kathy Stanton

6691 120th AVE.

Debra Schutte

750 Blue star Hwy

BIKE
TRAIL

- Joanne Van Zoren

7250 Point Betsie

- Jim Van Buren

South Haven

PARKS

- PAM BRUGH

PMB. 419 Sand Pipee Grand Haven

- Sandra Warren

1059 68th St, So. Haven

- Allan Osohise

6317 - 107th South Haven

MATT SUPER

Matt Super

7366 N. Shore Dr S.H.

**Casco Township Parks and Recreation Committee Report
Casco Township Planning Commission Annual Meeting
February 8, 2014**

Update for the Parks and Recreation Committee

The Parks and Recreation Committee meets monthly on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Hall.

Members and Officers

Bruce Brandon, Chair
Louis Howerton, Vice Chair
John Johnson, Secretary
Josiah Jessup, Township Board Representative
Sandra Warren
Tom Storr
David Dobreff

Committee Items of Business 2013

Advisory role for the Casco Township Nature Preserve property and operation.
Oversight of the Beach Access Stairway project funded by the Township and a Coastal Mgmt. Grant.
Completed the Special Land Use Permit process for the northern Preserve property.
Completing the Final Site Plan Submittal for the north property to the Planning Commission.
Supported the submittal of the MNRTF grant application for additional parking. (Unsuccessful)
Monitoring the development of the Blue Star Trail/US Bicycle Route 35.
Assisting in coordinating the new Friends of the Casco Township Nature Preserve.
Coordination of Interpretive Signs in the Nature Preserve.
Began development of the beach operation plan for the Nature Preserve
Monitoring the development of SHARP Park.

Proposed Committee Work Items for 2014 (and beyond)

Administration of beach access stairway construction with Township and Coastal Mgmt. Grant funds.
Installation of Interpretive Signs at the new beach access.
Finalization and implementation of beach operation plan.
Ribbon Cutting and opening of the beach access stairway.
Recommendation and installation of additional signage at Nature Preserve for a variety of items.
Review Master Plan for northern property of the Preserve. (Maple Grove Property).
Revisit the desire to resubmit a MDNR grant application for additional parking at Preserve.
Assess maple trees on the northern property for needed pruning or removal.
Review and revisions to the existing Parks Ordinance.
Assistance the operation and maintenance of the Casco Township Nature Preserve.
Continued assistance in the refinement of the five year parks budget
Monitor and coordinate with the development of the Blue Star Trail/US Bicycle Route 35.
Continued support of the Friends of the Casco Township Nature Preserve.
Support the efforts to continue to renovations to the Township Hall for community and recreational use.
Begin the master plan process for the recreational development at the Township Hall.
Development of an Invasive Species Policy (working to coordinate with Allegan County Parks)
Continue to support the acquisition of a property along the Black River for public access.
Complete a property survey of the Miami Beach Access property to clearly identify lands owned.
Monitor the development of SHARP Park.