

Essex Township

Clinton County, Michigan

Carla Wardin, Supervisor
Angela Bunn, Clerk
Kathleen George, Treasurer
Rex Ferguson, Trustee
James Gavenda, Trustee

6/17/2015 REGULAR MEETING

Township Supervisor Carla Wardin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm in the Maple Rapids Community Center. She began the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Supervisor Carla Wardin, Trustee James Gavenda, Trustee Rex Ferguson, Treasurer Kathleen George and Clerk Angi Bunn

VISITORS

Township Assessor Beth Botke, Township resident Linda McCausey, Township resident Honey Blemaster, Township residents Jim and Dottie Bancroft, Township resident Judy Salisbury

VISITOR CONCERNS AND STATEMENTS Linda McCausey

McCausey is requesting a renewal of her special land use permit for her property at 6018 Essex Center Road. The permit allows for a medical hardship opportunity; a detached, moveable, self-contained unit in conjunction with a single-family residential structure. McCausey explained the unit is for her Mother, who is elderly. She told the Board the property is well-maintained, and it is not the family's intention to have the unit on the property permanently. The special-use permit would be for a five-year period, and would then be up for renewal. She also stated the insurance on the trailer is current.

Honey Blemaster

Blemaster explained that without her knowledge, her husband had a foundation placed on their son's grave in Beech Cemetery. Blemaster acknowledges this was in violation of her agreement with the Township, and she immediately contacted Bunn when she learned the foundation had been placed. She would like to have a marker placed on her son's grave, and is looking for clarification from the Board so she may move forward.

James Bancroft

Bancroft has been approached by the East Plains Cemetery, Lebanon Township Board, as to setting foundations and burying cremains, as well as do maintenance in their cemetery.

Judy Salisbury

Salisbury is concerned with the ongoing digging on the Pete and Terry Maniez properties. She reviewed the history of the project, beginning in 2006. She would like to know who will monitor this project, who is enforcing the permitting of this project, who is accountable for adhering to the permits? Salisbury believes the Maniez family should hire someone to complete the project, or they should have to get a mining permit.

Beth Botke

Botke reported she will be in the Township doing re-measurements. She will be around property lines, and not going in any residences. She will be looking for inconsistencies or new construction done without permits. The state requires at least 20% of properties must be re-measured each year.

Botke has been working through correcting some previous land divisions that were done without a certified survey.

APPROVAL OF 4/15/2015
MINUTES

The reading of the 4/15/2015 meeting minutes was waived. Gavenda moved to approve the meeting minutes as presented. Supported by Ferguson. Motion passed and carried (MPC).

REVIEW OF AGENDA

The agenda was reviewed. There were no additions.

TRUSTEE'S REPORT
Editing of Website

Ferguson and George have been working on editing and making current the Essex Township website. Ferguson said the site has not been hacked since the last meeting, and is clean of any suspicious activity. However, some of the anti-virus software has the site on the list of suspicious websites, and despite Ferguson's attempts to notify them the site is clean, the site remains 'flagged'.

New Fire Chief

Gavenda reported the Maple Rapids Fire and Rescue has a new Chief, Frank Upton. Upton has been a firefighter for many years. He will replace retiring Chief Jim Blemaster. Gavenda added the Department is looking for new firefighters and first responders. Anyone interested should contact Chief Upton.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer reported the general fund balance is \$96,603.65. She reviewed income and expenditures since the last meeting.

Data breach policy

George said Mercantile Bank is requiring any organization that does electronic transfer of funds to have a data breach policy in place. She presented an example policy, and will draft a resolution to adopt a data breach policy for the August meeting. She also explained the electronic transfer of funds does not affect taxpayers directly, will not expose taxpayer information in any way.

Bunn motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. Supported by Ferguson. MPC.

CLERK'S REPORT

Bunn reported on expenditures #5455-5497 and income since the May meeting, and reviewed the general ledger for the fiscal year. George motioned to approve the Clerk's report, supported by Ferguson. MPC.

Blemaster foundation

The Board discussed how to resolve the Blemaster Foundation in Beech Cemetery. The foundation does not meet the criteria as written in the Cemetery Ordinance, as it is six inches deep, and not the required 12" minimum. Wardin motioned to fine Blemaster the \$100 penalty as established in the ordinance, and the foundation will have to be redone according to the original agreement between the Honey Blemaster and the Township. Supported by Bunn. MPC.

Cemetery Ordinance review

Bunn presented an amended Cemetery Ordinance. The Board reviewed and discussed making changes to the internment, memorials and markers, and foundations portions of the ordinance. Bunn will have a final draft for the August meeting.

Gregory cemetery marker request

Bunn presented a request from Linne Gregory to put a second upright grave marker on her Lowe Cemetery space. There is an existing upright marker on the space, and she would like an additional marker to be placed directly east of the existing marker, on the same space. Bunn motioned to deny the request, seconded by George. MPC.

Gregory also requested permission to donate a bench to the Lowe Cemetery in her family's name. The bench would be placed under a tree near the family plot. Bunn motioned to approve this request. Supported by Ferguson. MPC.

Cemetery compost barrels

Bunn reported there are still problems with people putting plastic garbage in the barrels in the Cemeteries. She will order sticker to put on the barrels stating "Organic Materials Only – Take Your Trash With You".

Library contributions

The Board discussed the library contributions, and Bunn will ask the Maple Rapids library if someone will make a presentation to the Board regarding the library's finances, residents who use the library, etc. Bunn will also contact the Briggs Library in St. Johns to ask if they will continue requiring Township residents to pay to use the facility.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT
Findlay Road Bridge

Supervisor Wardin reported the Findlay Road Bridge project is well underway. Gavenda said the Maple Rapids Fire Department has recorded the house numbers on either side of bridge for emergency response purposes.

Maniez pond project

Wardin reported she has had complaints about sand/materials being hauled from the Maniez property. She has spoken with Al Hoard, and he has issued a written order to Pete Maniez, telling him to re-slope his pond project and remove the materials from the project. Wardin told Hoard she was uncomfortable that no time-limit was indicated in the letter. Ferguson reviewed the history of the project, beginning in July 2007 through October 2012. Bunn said she was frustrated this project is still ongoing. Ferguson expressed concern over potential liability if the slope of the pond is not properly designed. Wardin will meet with Al Hoard, Pete Preston and Kam Washburn on June 23 to discuss the project, and the Board's concerns. She will try to update concerned neighbors with any information she attains in that meeting.

NEW BUSINESS
McCausey special land use

George motioned the Board recommend approval of the McCausey special land use permit renewal. Supported by Gavenda. MPC.

Planning and Zoning
survey

Wardin added a survey in the summer newsletter, asking residents how they feel about the Township adopting a Planning and Zoning ordinance. She will report back at the August meeting.

ADJOURNEMENT

There being no further business before the Board, George motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 pm, supported by Gavenda. MPC.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Bunn
Essex Township Clerk