**PUBLIC WORKS, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE\***

**ST. JAMES TOWNSHIP, BEAVER ISLAND, CHARLEVOIX COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

MEETING MINUTES FOR September 7, 2022 8:00AM @ SJT GOVERNMENTAL CENTER

**Attendees:** Bobbi Welke, Cynthia Pryor, Joel Meintsma, Vicky Fingeroot, Diane McDonough, Shelby Harris

Call to Order, input on agenda, no minutes reviewed of August 15th meeting

**Additions to Agenda:** ETIPP Update, County Road Classification, Blight Update, S. Marina Landscape Proposal, Public Restroom Shut Down Schedule, Twp Campground Firewood Structure, Assessor Update, Rental Purpose Parking Downtown, Fishing Pier, Gov. Center Parking Lot, Sewer Review

**County Road Classification:** Welke shares with Committee that all new gravel passed testing and was reviewed by new Charlevoix County Road Commission Manager, Patrick Weeks. Welke informs the Committee of several Charlevoix Country Road Classifications, such as Paid een Og Road being a “County *Primary* Road” while East Side Road is a “County *Local* Road”. These classifications are part of Charlevoix County and MDOTs process to determine which roads are to be paved in the future. Welke shares that a paver is scheduled to come to the island in 2024 to pave the Township Airport and that on the 2023 November ballot, voters will be able to vote yes or no to have certain County Primary Roads paved (example Paid een Og). Welke has began communications with Peaine Township Board already, strongly recommending we begin the process to reclassify several of Beaver Island’s County Roads to take advantage of this paver being on the Island and letting Islander’s have more of a say in which roads are to be paved-specifically East Side Road that includes the BI Transfer Station and Welke Airport that handles the US Mail for the whole Island. The deadline for this reclassification is December 2022 and Welke asks the Committee if St. James Township’s Donegal Bay Road, is a County Road we wish to have reclassified and paved. The Committee agrees that reclassification for East Side Road to the Welke Airport at least should be pursued before the deadline, but all agree that Donegal Bay Road is not a road we want paved due to concerns of more speeding occurring on paved roads than gravel, along with the future project of finishing the Donegal Bay Bike Trail to Donegal Bay that will be alongside the road as well. Welke will follow up with Peaine Township and the process of reclassifying County Roads.

**Governmental Center Parking Lot:** The Committee comments that in leu of the paver coming to the Island in the future, St. James Township should investigate what would be required for updates to the Governmental Center Parking Lot and Drains. Committee agrees grants should be sought by the future grant writer and development plans in line with the future Public Beach and needs of BIEMS.

**Assessor Update:** Welke informs the Committee that one response to the Assessor position posted on the MTA (Michigan Township Association) Website has been received and that there is an October 17th deadline to Charlevoix County for Assessment Justifications to which St James Township is not qualified to submit without an Assessor. McDonough inquires who the County Assessor is and if they can help us. Welke responds that she will follow up on this.

**South Marina Landscaping Proposal:** McDonough brings a proposal to the Committee to have Maintenance Director Meinstma remove the hedges growing along the South Marina parking lot. The hedges have grown out of maintenance control and could be replaced by a fence, gravel or even more parking spaces. The Committee agrees this could be a positive development and more of a development plan will be discussed along with reaching out to the private property owner next door.

**Rental Purpose Parking Downtown:** Contact with specific business owners utilizing downtown parking has not been fully made yet but McDonough suggests possibly utilizing the South Marina Parking Lot for parking of Island Rental Businesses, especially if the Landscaping Proposal is followed through on. Welke requests that the Zoning Ordinance be reviewed again and to continue to follow up with business owners’ needs.

**Speed/Radar Trailer:** Welke informs the Committee that Peaine Township tabled the vote to help purchase a Speed/Radar Trailer for Beaver Island on account of wanting more discussion with the Island Deputy Sheriff. Welke has since reached out to the BI Community School inquiring if they have any interest in helping with the purchase to which the school is further investigating/discussing. The Committee notes that the flashers on the School Speed Limit Sign need to be fixed as well. Welke will bring this to the attention of the Deputy Callian and the Charlevoix County Road Commission.

***Joint Planning Commission Update***

**Trail Committee Interaction:** The Beaver Island Archipelago Trails Association (BIATA) stated the need for more interaction with both St. James and Peaine Townships in order to move the BI Trails Work Plan forward. To accomplish this, BIATA asked for representatives or liaisons with each Township to be made. Fingeroot expressed her interest in joining BIATA, either as a Township Rep or as an Island Resident. Welke suggests discussing using Harris, the St. James Planning Assistant, as the liaison for St. James and Peaine Township with Peaine Township Supervisor Tilly, along with a Joint Township Meeting, to further discuss trails development/work plans for the Beaver Island Recreation Plan as a whole.

**Workforce Housing Proposal:** The BIA (Beaver Island Association), who has been working on the Island’s housing crisis, requested the St. James and Peaine Township Planning Commissions to support and bring to the Township Boards’ next monthly meeting, a request to budget $2,000 each to hire Community Research Services LLC to conduct a Workforce Housing Survey for Beaver Island. The Committee agrees as having this official survey work done will help in any future grant applications and further information about our Island’s housing crisis.

**Planning Commission:** Welke suggests adjusting the St. James Township Planning Commission Member number from 7 to 5 positions as there is issue achieving a quorum and filling the seventh position. Harris shares insight to the Planning Commission’s issues and McDonough suggests reaching out to Angel Welke to further investigate the laws of the Open Meetings Act and members being able to vote online or not after the Covid-19 Pandemic. McDonough states she would be interested in joining the Planning Commission to fill the seventh position if allowed. Welke also suggests to the Committee that we investigate what rate of pay was given to the Planning Commission Chair during the 2017 Master Plan Update as the current 2hrs/week rate is not enough for the current work demand. Committee agrees and all will be investigated.

***Grants***

**Grant Writer Status:** Welke shares there are two interested candidates for the Grant Writing position and the Committee discusses what the work load for the position will be and the possibilities of hiring more than one person depending on grant demand while still utilizing other Township employees for other grants.

**Post-Master Plan Update:** The Joint Master Plan Committee will be posting another RFP for post-Master Plan work which will include updates to the Zoning Ordinance, creation of an Economic Development Plan and Construction Improvement Plan.

**Township Campground:** Pryor shares that the Township Campground’s Pit Toilet building needs a new roof and better ventilation. Meintsma suggests an opaque roof to allow for better lighting and to repair the ventilation while replacing the roof. Pryor and Meintsma also suggest providing a temporary/moveable, raised structure to the Jiminy Creek bluff trail to help stabilize the bluff walkway and provide better safety to those who wish to walk down to the beach. The Committee agrees and discusses moving this issue to the future Parks and Recreation Committee and applying for next year’s Charlevoix County Parks Millage Grant again to help cover these costs.

**J. Gillespie Park:** Welke expresses the need to update the overall safety of the J. Gillespie Park with suggestions of utilizing the Charlevoix County Parks Millage Grant for example to install a new safety railing and possibly landscaping along the support wall to keep people from the edge. McDonough suggests discussing possibly landscaping ideas with St. James Township Landscaper Heidi Vigil and the Committee agrees.

**Updates to Street Lights:** Welke brings to the attention of the Committee again, the Community desire for Dark Sky approved lighting downtown. Pryor states that the Community School and Township Buildings produce the most light pollution and suggests we lead by example and change our community lighting at our buildings along with the street lights. Meintsma suggests assessing what our current street/building lights possess (LED lightbulbs, full count, wattage, etc) and to contact the company they were purchased from. Harris shares that some of this research was started in the Spring and that an example of what a Lighting Ordinance for the Township could be was presented to the Township Board as well. Harris shares that along with updates to lighting, the installation of outlets to the street lights was also requested, specifically to allow the Township Christmas Decorations to be plugged in rather than utilizing extension cords. The Committee asks for this research to be shared with Meintsma and for him to start a cost assessment for the project as a grant will most likely have to be pursued.

**Trails:** Welke updates the Committee that the Port of St James Association (PSJA) is tackling the legal obligations for the future continued development of the Donegal Bay Bike Trail (property easements) as they fully support the Township pursuing the completion of this project. This project will require collaboration between PSJA, St James Township, MDOT and others. Harris updates the Committee that currently any further development of the Gull Harbor Loop Trail potential project is at a standstill but that collaboration with Little Traverse Conservancy (LTC) is going well and that the Committee should consider applying for a grant (possibly the Charlevoix County Parks Millage Grant) in the Spring to help develop the trails we do have within the Gull Harbor Nature Preserve, especially with the new LTC Stanhope Preserve next door with new trails created this Summer. The Committee agrees and will keep the future projects on their future agendas.

**Township Property Evaluations:** Welke inquires if there are any known grants to have the Township Properties evaluated of what can be done with them in regards to Community needs. The Committee is not aware of any but Pryor suggests moving this issue to the future Parks and Recreation Committee. Welke shares that the Township Insurance Assessor will be coming to the island on Tuesday, September 27th for the first time since 2019, and will ask for any insight on property evaluations.

**Fishing Pier:** Welke brings to the Committee’s attention the potential future plan of a Public Fishing Pier and suggests establishing a Sub-Committee to move this plan forward. Potential grants and partners such as Grand Traverse Band and Little Traverse Bay Band and/or the BI Historical Society along with possible locations were briefly discussed with Welke, McDonough and Meinstma volunteering to the Sub-Committee.

***Safety***

**Safety Issues Forum:** Welke inquires the Committee if there are any other topics to add to the Safety Issues Forum being hosted by the Townships and Deputy Sheriff over ORV use and speed limits. The Committee strongly suggests addressing the ferry traffic issues downtown.

**Quarterly Health and Safety Advisory Committee:** Welke informs the Committee that an establishment of a Health and Safety Advisory Committee has began where members of the BI Fire Department, BIEMS, BIRHC, Deputy Sheriff, and Air Evacuation will meet quarterly to discuss health and safety matters of the Island. Welke has met with the Emergency Planning Coordinator and will be joining the Hazard Communication Meetings, sharing with the Committee that EMS and an Evacuation Plan were in the Top 20 priorities documented at the recent 2022 Master Plan Open House.

**Closing Schedule:** The Committee discusses a schedule for closing of seasonal Public Places with the Township Campground shutting water off to the public showers October 1st and closing for the season October 31st. The North and South Marinas will close after September 30th. The Committee agrees that the Public Restrooms should be kept open longer and that Meintsma will close all Public Restrooms by October 31st.

**Blight Update:** McDonough brings back to the attention of the Committee blight issues that need to be addressed within the Township. An ordinance is already established with a list started for review by the Zoning Administrator and Supervisor. The Committee shares concerns for legal obligations to follow and time lapses, suggesting the Township starts from scratch on blight issues and investigate having a zoning enforcer.

**No Wake Zone:** Pryor suggests to the Committee that Font Lake residents be notified of the DNR Public Hearings for the No Wake Zone application next month. Welke agrees and states that once the DNR posts the Public Meetings, they will be shared, along with notices going to Peaine Township’s Fox Lake Residents that also applied for a No Wake Zone.

**Firewood Structure:** McDonough and Pryor have been discussing the need for a firewood structure to be built or purchased at the Township Campground, suggesting we utilize the Charlevoix Parks Millage Grant again for further needs at the Campground. Storage and cost of firewood will need to be discussed further as well, to which the Committee agrees overall.

**Engineer Sewer Review:** Meintsma implores the Committee to follow up on investigations of the grease/sludge build up in the Township Sewer including reaching out to the Township Engineer for their review along with continuing discussions with local restaurant owners and the need for grease traps. The Committee reviews that the costs of the grease/sludge clean outs have already been adding up for multiple years with more rising costs with the current Sewage Company.

**ETIPP Update:** Harris and Welke share that there is a meeting they are joining being hosted by the Island Institute and National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) for the DOE Energy Transferring Initiative Partnership Project (ETIPP) Grant that was award to the island’s non-profit group, Tara’s Meadow, under the Beaver Island Sustainability Initiative (BISI) to meet Master Plan goals of independent and more sustainable energy on the Island following this meeting at 10am. More information will be learned from this meeting and be shared with all at a later date.

**Next Meeting:** October 19th, TBD time at the Governmental Center Conference Room

**Meeting Adjourned:** 9:55am

\*Public Works Committee established by Township Board on 12.7.2016. Current members: Supervisor Welke, Trustee Cole, Trustee Fingeroot, Administrative Assistant Pryor, Planning Assistant Harris, Maintenance Director Mientsma