

## **Empire Township Meeting Minutes May 26, 2020**

The Town Board meeting was called to order by Chairman Terry Holmes at 8:00 PM.

**Present were:** Terry Holmes, Jamie Elvestad, Ed Gerten, Charles Seipel, Jeff Hince, Denise Williamson, Brian Hilgardner, and Jane Kansier.

**Agenda:** Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the agenda. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

**Meeting Minutes:** Ed Gerten made a motion to approve the minutes of the Town Board Meeting of May 12, 2020 and the Planning Commission Meeting of May 19, 2020. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

**Treasurer Report:** The treasurer's report showed a General Fund Account balance of \$30,398.94 plus investments and an Escrow Account balance of \$19,809.65 plus investments. A transfer of \$30,000 from Savings to General Checking was made on 5/26/2020. The first half tax settlement in the amount of \$647,451.16 was received on 5/26/2020. The Town Board reviewed the Statement of Cash Flows through April.

Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the financial report. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

**Visitors:** The resident at 2752 197th Street West requested information from the Township regarding an upcoming wedding to be hosted in her yard in October. The gathering will be less than 500 people, and music at the wedding might go until midnight. Attendees will need on street parking. After discussion, it was determined that a permit for large gatherings would not be needed. Overnight parking will be allowed as long as it is kept at a minimum. It was recommended that all neighbors be contacted regarding music and sound generated.

Representatives from the girls' softball fastpitch association were present to request permission to begin softball practice at Stelzel Fields. After discussion, it was recommended that the ballfields be open to practice for both the girls and boys softball clubs, provided that practices are being held within State guidelines, starting June 1st. Jeff Hince indicated that the fields can be ready by then. Restrooms will not be open, but portable toilets are available. The representatives stated that they can help with the fields and placing fences if needed.

**Bills to be Paid:** Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve the attached list of bills in the amount of \$36,466.98. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Maintenance / Sewer and Water / Road and Bridges**

Jeff Hince reported that sealcoating on numerous Township streets has been completed. Maintenance is currently working on spraying weeds, mowing properties, and grading roads.

## **Park & Rec**

Denise Williamson reported that rentals in the Public Works building have been cancelled for June. The Town Hall is open to the public and social distancing guidelines have been posted at the entrance. The Park and Rec. Committee will have their first meeting on Monday, June 8th.

## **Engineering**

Brian Hilgardner reported that he will have a response letter ready at the next Town Board Meeting regarding the proposed drainage ditch next to the Met Council property. He is working with Met Council to see about getting language in the letter of understanding that would permit construction of a ditch while the solar farm is still in place on the property. Hilgardner was going to meet with Al Full regarding future development of his land. The Town Board recommended that Mr. Full bring his plans to the Planning Commission first. Plans are being worked on for the proposed roundabout at Hwy 3 and 66. Dakota is also working on preliminary plans to expand County Road 46 to four lanes all the way to Highway 52.

## **Planning**

Jane Kansier presented a memo regarding the repeal of Ordinance No. 475., Wetland Management Ordinance. The memo reported that Ordinance No. 475 conflicts with much of the language already covered in Ordinance No. 350, Water Resources Management Ordinance. Ordinance No. 350 is the most recent and up to date. The Planning Commission reviewed and recommended adoption of Ordinance No. 475-A. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 475-A; An Ordinance Repealing Ordinance No. 475, An Ordinance Establishing Westland Buffers, Wetland Setback Requirements, and Permit Requirements for Wetland Alterations. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Town Board reviewed information from the City of Farmington regarding a proposed amendment to their 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The amendment calls for the rezoning of a parcel just to the south of the Farmington High School from A-1 (Agricultural) to R-3 (Medium Residential) for a Planned Unit Development. The Board had no comment on the proposed plan amendment.

Jane Kansier reported that the Met Council is set to approve the Comprehensive Plan for Empire Township tomorrow. She will bring a resolution approving the plan to the Town Board at their next meeting.

The Planning Commission will be reviewing a request to amend a section of the zoning ordinance relating to individual solar panels. Kansier reported that she will have language regarding zoning ordinance classification for individual parcels surrounded by mining overlay at the June 16th Planning Commission Meeting.

## **Old Business:**

Charles Seipel reported that he has received information from Elko-New Market regarding their credit card processing for utility bill payments and he has requested a demo from the company that handles their credit card processing. The Town Board recommended that Seipel determine what processor will work the best for the Township and work to get processing capability

established. Residents that pay bills using credit card processing will be responsible for paying the processing fee in the form of a convenience fee.

**New Business:**

The Town Board reviewed a draft Covid-19 Operating Plan for Empire Township. It was reported that the Township might need to consider contingency plans in case staff need to quarantine or become ill. Seipel asked that the Town Board review the draft plan and let him, or Jeff Hince know if they have any recommendations.

It was reported that there was a request to conduct Planning Commission meetings by remote access only. The Town Board recommended that protocols be put in place to help ensure better communication during the meetings for those that attend in person and remotely. It was recommended that the Commission member that presides over the meeting be at the meeting site on an interim basis to better handle comments from Commission members and the public.

The Town Board reviewed a letter from a concerned resident regarding safety issues at the intersection of Calgary Trail and 200th Street West. Many vehicles are not stopping for the stop signs. The Town Board recommended that the Sheriff's Department be contacted to see if incognito patrols can be stepped up at that intersection.

It was reported that the comment period for the draft Dakota County Groundwater Plan is due on July 20th. Brian Hilgardner stated that he did not see any concerns with the proposed plan.

It was reported that nuisance violations still exist at some properties on Chrysler Court, but some of the issues have been abated. Seipel will keep an eye on that area.

**FYI:**

The Town Board reviewed information from Charter Communications regarding cable lineup changes and from the Metropolitan Council regarding 2019 population estimates.

The Town Board Meeting adjourned at 9:50 P.M.

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Terry Holmes Chairman, Town Board

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Charles Seipel, Clerk – Treasurer