

Empire Township Meeting Minutes June 9, 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 26th, 2020, the Planning Commission Meeting of June 2nd, 2020, and the Park & Rec. Committee Meeting of June 8th, 2020. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Treasurer Report: The treasurer's report showed a General Fund Account balance of \$31,339.35 plus investments and an Escrow Account balance of \$10,059.65 plus investments. The report included the statement of cash flows as of 5/30/2020 and the cash balance report as of 6/9/2020.

An escrow payment in the amount of \$10,500 was made to Mark Elliot on 5/28/2020. A transfer of \$590,000 from the General Checking to General Savings was made on 6/9/2020. The Town Board discussed the possibility of investing in a new CD. Seipel will check on CD rates. Brian Hilgardner will work to determine the cost of the possible purchase of ditch easements, if those costs might come up in the next year.

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

Visitors: Michelle Bower, a resident on Castle Court, expressed concerns regarding children's safety at the trail crossing on Claremont Drive between Highway 3 and Cattail Lane. The crossing is not visible to oncoming traffic and there are typically numerous cars and trucks parked on either side of Claremont Drive, especially in the evenings, blocking the driver's view of children crossing the road. Michelle asked if any physical improvements can be made at the crossing and if educational outreach could be implemented. Michelle stated that she would be interested in assisting with educational outreach. Brian Hilgardner reported that he will check with the traffic engineer to seek input on increasing safety at the crossing. This will be brought up for further discussion at the next Town Board Meeting.

Bills to be Paid: Ed Gerten made a motion to approve the attached list of bills in the amount of \$78,353.50. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Committee Reports

Maintenance / Sewer and Water / Road and Bridges

Jeff Hince reported that he is experiencing issues in the Providence development with other utilities in the way of curb stops and water lines. More separation is needed between utilities and curb stops in future developments. Brian Hilgardner will check with other cities regarding their policies for utility locations in new developments.

Sealcoating on 170th and 164th Streets will begin on Thursday. A clear seal coat was applied to Chili Ave. this week.

Park & Rec

Denise Williamson reported that MDH guidelines for youth sports now allows pods of up to 25 for softball and baseball, but games are not yet permitted.

The Park and Rec. Committee recommends the following due to COVID-19 concerns:

- The Public Works Building be closed through the month of August to all rentals.
- No yoga class until autumn.
- The cancellation of the 2020 Empire Celebration.
- Sunday entertainment is cancelled through July, with August pending.
- The Town Board recommended that the concession stands at the ballfields be closed for the rest of the year.

The Township will keep an eye on MDH guidance for future changes.

Ed Gerten made a motion to accept the recommendations from the Park and Rec. Committee for 2020 closures in addition to closing the ballfield concessions for 2020. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Park and Rec. Committee recommended that the possibility of having Schwan's offer ice cream to residents be looked into. It is proposed that this would take place on the same evening that the Empire Celebration would have been held.

The Town Board recommended that this event take place and be available for 1 ½ hours.

It was reported that a story walk contest will be taking place during the month of July.

Engineering

Brian Hilgardner reported that the preconstruction meeting for the Highway 3 roundabout and turn lane project is scheduled for this Thursday. The roundabout portion will begin on July 7th and the turn lane portion of the project should be complete before then.

The installation of the curb at 19362 Canby Court was quoted by McNamara Contracting at \$7,500. It was reported that the curb has been mostly dry this year. Because this may be an issue associated with sump pump discharge during wet periods and it is not causing deterioration of the street, it was recommended that the Township not proceed with the curb replacement.

The Town Board reviewed the draft response to the Met Council regarding the future drainage ditch to the west of their property. The Town Board noted that the letter looked good.

Planning

Jane Kansier presented a resolution adopting the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to adopt Resolution 2020-6A; A Resolution Adopting the 2040 Empire Township

Comprehensive Plan Update, A Compilation of Policy Statements, Goals, Standards, and Maps for Guiding the Overall Development and Redevelopment of the local Governmental Unit. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

It was reported that the Planning Commission recommended that the existing IUP for automobile sales at 20485 Chippendale Ave. be extended until July 15th. This would allow the Commission to review automobile operations at the site after the property was transferred over to the automobile dealership on June 1st. The consideration of a new IUP would be considered at the July 14th Town Board Meeting. The applicant would need to submit a new application for an IUP if they would like to increase the number of vehicles to be stored on the property from the 30 vehicles allowed in the existing IUP. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to adopt Resolution 2020-6B; A Resolution Extending an Interim Use Permit for Automobile Sales at 20485 Chippendale Ave. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Jane Kansier reported that she has discussed potential development with a property owner on Highway 3 (Cahill) regarding future development. There are concerns regarding street access.

An application for an amendment to the solar section of the zoning ordinance has been submitted. This hearing will be scheduled for the July 7th Planning Commission Meeting.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

The Town Board reviewed a draft Covid-19 Operating Plan for Empire Township. It was recommended that the MnWarn program be contacted in the event that water and maintenance operators would be needed. The Town Board would need to appoint an interim clerk if the clerk and deputy clerk were not available due to illness.

It was reported that an amendment to Section 12 (Penalty) of the Nuisance Ordinance No. 280 will be needed in order to allow the Township to charge a penalty for violation of the ordinance. Ed Gerten made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 280-A; An Ordinance Amending Ordinance No. 280, An Ordinance Defining Nuisances, Prohibiting Their Creation or Maintenance and Providing for Abatement and Penalties for Violation Thereof. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Town Board Meeting adjourned at 9:45 P.M.

Terry Holmes Chairman, Town Board

Charles Seipel, Clerk – Treasurer