

Empire Township Meeting Minutes September 24, 2019

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 September 10th, 2019; the Joint Town Board and Planning Commission meeting of September 17th, 2019 and the Park & Rec Commission Meeting of September 23rd, 2019. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Treasurer Report: The treasurer's report showed a General Fund Account balance of \$27,348.23 plus investments and an Escrow Account balance of \$30,059.65 plus investments. A transfer of \$90,000 from savings to checking was made on 9/24/2019.

Visitors: A representative from the Providence Townhome HOA was present to discuss updates relating to the landscaping to be done at the townhomes. The Town Board reviewed a letter outlining the landscaping to be completed that Brian Hilgardner sent to the developer (Mark Pasvogel). The letter is based on the meeting that took place at the Townhome property, with representatives from the Township and the developer on Friday, September 13th. The Township has received a quote in the amount of \$5,695 from Jirik Sod Farm to place sod on the remainder of the property. After some discussion, it was recommended that the Township hold \$10,000 in escrow to complete the landscaping; provided that the landscaping will not likely be done until spring unless the developer completes the landscaping items that were provided in the letter from Brian Hilgardner yet this fall. The remaining escrow balance of \$25,000 will be held by the Township until either the final street lift is completed or the landscaping is completed.

Bills to be paid: Ed Gerten made a motion to approve the attached list of bills in the amount of \$123,748.54. Jamie Elvestad seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Committee Reports

Maintenance / Sewer and Water / Road and Bridges

Jeff Hince reported that a new culvert has been installed on Biscayne Ave., there were issues with trucks hauling heavy loads on the gravel roads to a development in Farmington East, more gravels has been placed on the roads, and McNamara has been cleaning valve boxes on streets affected by the street reconstruction project.

Park and Rec

Denise Williamson reported that the Park and Rec. Committee would like the ice hockey rink in Sachs Park to have better lighting and for someone to devote time to maintaining the rink this winter. Jeff Hince and the Town Board agreed that if maintenance staff would want to log overtime to maintain the rink this winter, that would be ok. The Town Board reviewed a concept plan and preliminary price estimate for the proposed ice hockey rink near the Public Works Building. It was noted that additional parking would be needed for the rink. Brian Hilgardner noted that there is a Minnesota outdoor recreation grant program that may be able to help with the expenses of constructing a rink. The Town Board asked staff to check into the possibility of applying for the grant.

Bolton & Menk Engineering

Brain Hilgardner reported that the 170th Street reconstruction project should be completed this week. There were issues in timing with the railroad flagger.

McNamara Construction will be providing a quote to fix the curb issues at 19362 Canby Court, but they are behind schedule.

The Town Board reviewed information from attorney Mike Couri regarding a proposed counteroffer for a portion of the Fischer Property associated with the proposed roundabout at Highway 3 and 170th Street. After reviewing a second appraisal and the attorney's comments, Jamie Elvestad made a motion to approve a counteroffer in the amount of \$21,700, with room to negotiate. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

The Town Board reviewed plans for a proposed yard expansion from Ames Construction for the yard on 170th Street. They would need a grading permit and an amendment to their IUP. The Town Board recommended that this request be brought to the Planning Commission for their determination in granting the grading permit at IUP amendment. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to bring the determination of the Ames Construction Yard expansion permit approvals to the Planning Commission. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Planning

Jane Kansier presented a memo regarding the Planning Commission's denial of a variance application from Techo Bloc for the construction of an additional business sign on the property. The Town Board reviewed a resolution to deny the variance request. Jamie Elvestad made a motion to adopt Resolution 2019-9A, A Resolution Denying A Variance To the Number of Permitted Signs in the L1 (Light Industrial) District. Ed Gerten seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Jane Kansier reported that the Township has received an incomplete IUP application for the construction of a monopole at a property on Vermillion Trail.

Old Business:

The Town Board is working on review of the draft personnel policy.

New Business:

The Town Board reviewed information on the Township's upcoming health insurance renewal. Seipel noted that the premium is increasing 9.8% in addition to increases in co-pay and subscriptions payments. After comparing the current plan to plans offered by other carriers, the Township's insurance consultant is recommending renewal of the existing plan. The Town Board recommended continuation of the existing health insurance plan with BCBS of Minnesota.

The Town Board reviewed information, including photos, of a nuisance ordinance violation on the property at 20265 Chippendale Ave. It was reported that there are several unused, unlicensed vehicles, including the storage of an inoperable camper on the property. Many of these vehicles have been sitting on the property for multiple years. In accordance with Ordinance 280, the Town Board recommended that a certified letter be sent to the property owner by the Township's attorney notifying the owner of the nuisance violation and providing twenty days to abate the nuisance.

The Town Board reviewed information on old escrow deposits that have not been paid. It was recommended that the owners of these escrow deposits be contacted and that the deposits be paid.

It was reported that an RV has been parking on the street side parking spot on Claremont Drive for several weeks. The Township has received complaints about the RV. The Town Board recommended that the Sheriff's Office be contacted to find the owner of the RV and a letter be sent requesting that the RV be moved off the street.

Terry Holmes reported on an update regarding the Vermillion Highlands property.

Terry Holmes also reported that there have been some concerns regarding overnight hauling at the Sachs pit. The Township is working with the site manager to prevent the use of J-Breaks from trucks hauling to the site. They were given permission to operate 24/7 until the first week of October.

FYI:

The Town Board reviewed information from Dakota County on the 2040 Transportation Plan Update and Solid Waste Ordinance Amendments. It was reported that the Planning Commission would like to have a joint meeting with the Town Board to invite representatives from the County to come and speak about both topics. It was recommended that Seipel try to schedule a joint meeting for Tuesday, December 3rd at 7:00 PM.

The Town Board also reviewed information from the Met Council regarding a notice of biosolids hauling and landspreading; an invitation to the Dakota County Capital Investment Forum on Friday, November 8th; a press release from the City of Farmington regarding the receipt of a grant for the Highway 3 trail; and from Charter Communications on cable TV channel lineup changes.

The Town Board Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Terry Holmes, Chairman Town Board

Charles Seipel, Clerk - Treasurer