



[mtbatownshipbusiness@yahoo.com](mailto:mtbatownshipbusiness@yahoo.com)

[www.marquettetownship.biz](http://www.marquettetownship.biz)

## BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, November 14, 2017 – 11:30 a.m. – Marquette Township Hall

### 1. Roll Call/Round Robin – 11:30 a.m.

### 2. Roll Call

#### a. PRESENT:

- Frank Stabile, Chairman (Superior Oasis)
- Peggy Loy, Co-Chairman (Century 21)
- Jenn Wallner, Treasurer (GMWWP, CPAs, P.C.)
- Ashley Krook, Executive Secretary (Superior Oasis, Days Inn)
- Tina Henson, Tru North Federal Credit Union
- Michael Morgan (First National Trust & Wealth Management)
- Scott Patrick (Carpet Specialists)
- Jerry Spruitenburg, Filling in for Todd Noordyk (Great Lakes Radio, Inc.)

### 3. Consent Agenda

#### a. Invoices

- Ashley Krook – Hold over until December
- Great Lakes Radio: \$100
- Hudson's Classic Grill: \$ 620

#### b. Invoices to be sent out:

- Michigan Interfaith Power and Light: \$ 400 (Their portion of the seminar cost)

#### c. Correspondence – None

#### d. **Mike Morgan moved to approve Consent Agenda. Jenn Wallner supported. Motion carries unanimously at 11:34 am.**

### 4. Regular Agenda

#### a. **Jenn Wallner moved to approve Regular Agenda. Tina Henson supported. Motion carries unanimously at 11:35 am.**

#### b. Membership

- **4 New and 47 total**
- **Potential New Business List for 2018**
  - a. Meijer Store and C-Store (Meijer Gas Station), Fraco Concrete Products, Riverside Toyota and Honda Car Dealership, Subaru Car Dealership, Ashley Furniture, Beam and Barrell, Kubota Dealership, Cosmo Prof (Cosmetology Supply Store), Sally Hansen Beauty Supply
- **Membership Drive** – Lists of potential new members and new businesses coming to the area were distributed. The board was asked to attempt to recruit any of these businesses that they may personally know. Ashley will keep a master list and will place initials next to the business that the board member will contact. It is important to try to build our membership and this is the time of year that we try to do so. Frank did visit the Kubota Dealership last week and mentioned the MTBA. Ashley is to do a short introductory letter/invitation to join and send to the new businesses that are already open. There was a brief discussion regarding the ownership of Fraco Concrete Products; Lindbergs (Crimmins) bought the plant in Harvey and the new retail store in the township. Jenn sent invoices out to current members for membership renewal in 2018. The membership drive outline was discussed. 87 total membership packets need to be sent out. Ashley and Frank will put packets together. Peggy Loy will send the packets out, pay the postage, and then invoice the MTBA for reimbursement for the postage.

### 5. New Business

#### a. **Board of Directors Election** – Scott and Todd up for reelection. Will be done in January 2018. We are currently

looking for new board members. We currently have 7 board members and can have up to 14. We would like to have 8 board members. Kurt and Jessie from the Guys Place were briefly discussed as potential candidates for board members. We are open to suggestions for new potential board members.

- b. **Joint Meeting with Marquette Township Board** – See meeting minutes below.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

### **a. Catch the Vision**

- Santa Comes to Township November 28

### **b. Beautification of the Corridor**

- c. **Annual Spring/Summer Picnic and Membership Meeting** – In January, we are going to have to really focus on this event and start planning it. Scott feels that we should team up with another service club to put the picnic on to guarantee attendance. Ashley mentioned putting on some type of tournament (bean bag, softball, kickball) to ensure attendance. Scott mentioned that if we were looking at some type of tournament, we would need sponsorship, advertising, promoting. Frank mentioned maybe having entrance fees and donating the money to sponsor a service club or if we team up with a service club, we could offer them 50% of the entrance fees. Mike brought up the continued development of the Lions Field and the possibility of donating the money to improve the Lions Fields (i.e. something we could tag the MTBA on and have a lasting plaque). There was brief discussion of what the Lions Field needs such as a new PA System and building to house it or playground equipment.

- d. **Follow up on Energy Seminar, discussion.** There was a roundtable discussion on the energy saving seminar. Jerry Spruitenburg attended and felt that he got a lot of good information. Todd and Jerry are currently researching changes to save energy. Jerry thought that the energy seminar gave him a different perspective on how to look at energy saving to include supplementing the radio towers with solar panels. Peggy felt that the seminar was strange. She felt that she was “in a class she didn’t want to be in” and was preached to. The presentation was not what she expected. She thought they were going to receive hard facts on what steps to take to save energy. Peggy was mainly disappointed in community participation. Tina agreed with what Tina said. She thought they would be more specific in what steps to take. Mike thought that the presentation was more of a call to action versus actual content. He feels that if we’re going to bring people into a seminar, the content needs to be geared more towards specific actions to take. Scott was pleased with the turnout to the seminar and wonders if people actually got anything out of the seminar. Scott felt that the presentation was done well; however, he didn’t feel that the seminar was not attended by the right people. This raises the question of whether we should move forward with doing seminars in the future and maybe shifting the content of the seminars to something more current. There was also a brief discussion on how we can give more back to our members.

## **7. Marquette Township Business Association Facebook Page**

## **8. Reports**

- a. Website
- b. Marquette Township Board Treasurer (Ernie Johnson)
- c. Marquette Township Planning & Zoning Administrator (Jason McCarthy)

**Adjournment: Scott Patrick moves to adjourn. Peggy Loy supported. Motion passes unanimously at 11:55 a.m.**

## JOINT MEETING WITH MARQUETTE TOWNSHIP BOARD

### 1. Roll Call/ Round Robin

### 2. Township Board Members Present:

- Kirk Page, Superintendent of Public Works
- Dave Wiegand, Trustee
- Ernie Johnson, Treasurer
- Jason McCarthy and Staff Member, Township Planning & Zoning Administrator
- Lyn Durant, Supervisor
- Randy Girard, Township Manager

3. **DDA: Mission** – They did meet November 13 as they've had a hard time getting a quorum the last 3 months. They had not approved the Parsons-Brinkerhoff Corridor Report but approved it last night. There are some things in the report that the township did not necessarily agree with financially. The focus was to take the lighting concerns from Commerce Drive and go east through the township or as far as Pizza Hut where the corridor is the darkest. The two roundabouts (one at Walmart intersection and one at Brickyard) that will be put in with MDOT on the west side should provide enough lighting in that whole area in conjunction with the lighting from the businesses. The township would be responsible for the cost of the electricity for the lighting.

The next step is engineering – how we can do this. The township will have to work with MDOT and the Road Commission to figure out what everything is going to cost and what we can afford to do. Then they have to get back in with the Board of Light and Power to work up an actual engineering plan – what they want to do and where. MDOT is doing the east-bound lane which is why the township is trying to capitalize on MDOT's project. The cost of the installation of the lighting will fall on the township; although, there is a possibility of utilizing DDA funds. The Parsons-Brinkerhoff report does mention lighting. The township is looking at the portion of the roundabout (they have to have an eighth of a mile on each side of the roundabout) so the distance between the two roundabouts will be minimal and the lighting will be made up by the ambient lighting from the businesses in that area. Going east down the corridor towards the restaurants and hotels is the primary focus of the DDA; getting as much lighting as they can in that area.

The DDA also discussed how to get people to cross north-south. The Parsons-Brinkerhoff study was taken as a package of recommendations from an engineering standpoint and a design standpoint. Now the DDA is working through those recommendations to decide what is feasible and what is not feasible. It has come down to the lighting and pedestrian pathways as the two primary focuses of that study to be addressed. As of right now, the DDA is in the process of waiting for a couple of final documents from their attorney. Then they will schedule some public meetings with the members of the DDA to discuss what is possible and what they want us to pursue. A big part of the discussion was the lighting and where the lights will be positioned. The township is looking at the engineering aspect and who to use. They only have next year to get this done. Randy also mentioned the MTA (Michigan Township Association) and maybe we could use their engineers or using Michigan Tech Engineering students. Jason McCarthy brought up the fact that this is a federal project which will require federal engineers. The DDA was talking about utilizing the Tech Students to do the ground work; to get data to get to the point where they can get going and some costing information to present to the DDA as a rough draft for approval. After they get a "rough draft" of the project, the township can bring the businesses in for a conversation. The township has decided that they don't need to worry about the west-end much. They're going to pull the median out and put more Michigan lefts in up there. They were going to go further up through Best Buy. This all depends on what the best bang-for-the-buck is. The DDA does not have the final design from MDOT and they don't know for sure on whether they have access to additional grant funds. The township has a meeting coming up later this week that may answer some of their questions. The DDA itself only has about \$ 35,000 total which is enough to get the preliminary work done, but in terms of actual construction, most of the funds would probably come from a levy. Therefore, the township is looking at expanding the DDA to have a bigger footprint which would add some businesses that are not currently in the DDA.

The MTBA wants to make sure that the items that the businesses find most important will be considered in the rough draft. The MTBA is very concerned with some type of safe **pedestrian crossing** on the east end of the township on the corridor. We've discussed many options and we know that the cost is high and geographically it might be hard, but it is very important to get pedestrians from the north to the south and vice versa and the MTBA feels that this is something that needs to be included in the plan. The DDA is still discussing how to accomplish this. The biggest issue with providing a crossing is the handicapped requirements; how do you get enough ramping space to get a safe grade. To get a long gradual approach is going to be difficult to do with the configuration of US-41 with the privately-owned properties.

One of the recommendations from the Parsons-Brinkerhoff was to look at the area in front of Superior Oasis and using the Michigan left in front of the hotels as a potential pedestrian crossing which would mean needing some type of mechanism to interrupt or stop traffic to get people across safely. The MTBA suggested a blinking yellow light there with a pole with a button the pedestrian can hit to turn the light red to allow crossing and stop traffic. One of the biggest drawbacks right now is that MDOT is not willing to take the position that that's not a traffic mover. MDOT is reluctant to put any type of traffic device along that road. Randy Girard has noticed that the two roundabouts in the city has caused traffic to dramatically slow down which is a good thing. Randy suspects that the traffic will continue to slow down with the two new roundabouts in the township which might give the township some ability to put some type of traffic device in the area in front of Superior Oasis that would allow selective crossing. There was continued discussion about the benefits of roundabouts and slowing traffic for safe pedestrian crossing. There was also some discussion about the dangers for pedestrian crossing due to roundabouts. There was brief discussion concerning the addition of turning lanes on the north side of the highway; however, that's not up to the township (adding turn lanes). The township needs to find out what they want to do and what they can do. It is the opinion of the MTBA that deceleration lanes are important.

The township is in discussion about and aiming to improve access management principles through the entire corridor which may or may not include deceleration lanes in combination with closing some of the driveways. It was suggested to take out some of the median and create a 2-lane highway with an added service road. Nothing has changed yet; but now the DDA has to reformulate and discuss putting a plan in place to complete these projects. The township is going to need a lot of participation from the business community and the MTBA to complete these projects. A huge concern for MDOT is how close some of the businesses are to the highway.

#### 4. Ordinances

- a. **Tiny Homes** – These have been unanimously supported by the Marquette County Planning Commission. This will be going to the Township Board at their next meeting for first reading. Tiny homes will be permitted in all residential zoning districts in the community provided they meet a set of criteria.
- b. **Short-term Rentals** – This issue has been put on the back-burner until the township figures out what the State Legislature is going to do. They currently have a senate bill and a house bill proposed that would eliminate the ability for local municipalities to have any regulation on short-term rental. The hoteliers are fighting this and the real-estate community is supporting this.
- c. **Sign Update** – There was an amendment made to allow joint sign structures so that several stores on a property/area, the planning commission can designate an area that they would deem as being a location for a joint sign. A good example of this is the Starbucks Plaza and the new Lowe's sign. This is designed to reduce the amount of sign structures in the community. There are other provisions in the amendment that require maintenance and easement agreement. Businesses can apply for a joint sign by filling out a sign application through Marquette Township. There are usually preemptive discussions before an application comes through.

5. **Beautification** – Peggy Loy is stepping down as Chairman of the Beautification Committee. Jason McCarthy's wife is in the process of applying for the position. The Township has \$ 2,000 in the general fund from township tax funds for Beautification. If there was a project suggested, the Beautification Committee would work with Randy Girard for the financial aspect. Due to the road work, the township is focusing mainly on the planters at the entry points of the township – 492, Wright Street, US-41, and Grove Street.

6. **Dark Store Update** – The Supreme Court ruled to support the decision of the Court of Appeals. The decision of the Court of Appeals was to send it back to the Tax Tribunal with some restrictions. Those restrictions were positive; however, they will not get us back to full recovery. In essence, the Supreme Court said that instead of adopting one method of determining value, you must use a blend of all three methods which will result in a lower tax, but it won't be as low as what the tribunal had originally identified. The township is estimating somewhere in the middle; they'll get some of the tax revenue back, but not anywhere near what they've lost. There was further discussion about the court case and what the Supreme Court decided to do. This was a partial win for the townships; however, the appeal is from 2017 forward and the townships will not be able to go back to recoup any tax revenue. There was also further discussion about the Tax Tribunal (how many members, who is serving, etc.) The Tax Tribunal is appointed by the Governor of the state. The Tax Tribunal meetings are public; however, the public is not permitted to speak at these meetings. Marquette Township lost \$ 3.5 million due to this. Michigan Township Association has filed a few briefs on this issue; however, they don't want to get involved too deeply. There was also a suggestion for all residents to get together to fight the Dark Store Theory because it's the residents that are losing township tax dollars. The House did pass a package that would've cured this issue, but the Senate refused to take it up. Several other states are adopting legislation to fight the Dark Store Theory. The township is still waiting to see what happens when Menards vs. Escanaba gets back on the Tax Tribunal docket. Further discussion was

had about the incoming Meijer Store. The Township is estimating getting \$25 per square foot versus the \$ 60 per square foot in tax revenue. The township is currently discussing reducing law enforcement in the township due to lost revenue from the Dark Store Theory.

The township is **starting a 5-year Master Plan Update** which is basically an all-encompassing look at the community from a zoning standpoint, future land use, recreation, and etc. One of the questions that is going to be posed to the Planning Commission is whether they want to continue to allow Big Box Stores in the community. The township could zone them out or charge a very large fee for the site plan review. The Dark Store Theory does not impact things like utilities (water, sewer), but they do impact departments such as the Fire Department (for example). The Fire Department lost \$ 56,000 per year out of their budget annually. The Fire Department and the Police Department both must provide service to the Big Box Stores even though the Big Box Stores do not pay their fair share of taxes. It's time to take a deep look at how we want the community to look moving forward because everyone wants to develop in the township because we have the traffic counts. There was further discussion about the future of malls. The Westwood Mall is currently in discussion. The Mall is currently half full, but the mall leadership knows that they're hurting and that they have to diversify their land use. There was further discussion about the Westwood Mall area and the future of malls in general.

There was discussion regarding looking at our current zoning districts and possibly rezoning to better suite multiple land use. Promoting new zoning was also briefly discussed. The MTBA feels that it is important to promote this new zoning across the nation to developers and for the township to plan for this type of future development so that this becomes the predominant future development. The MTBA also feels that the creation of unique shopping centers will make us a destination for tourists. The MTBA also feels that we need to promote our township more in regard to what is best for the future of our township and what is going to promote more people to visit our area. The more people that visit, the more opportunities we have to potentially increase our population. There was also brief discussion of how tourists become citizens and of how if you get too big of an influx of new citizens, the natives will eventually move out. There must be balance and interconnectivity between new citizens and UP natives.

7. **Future Mileages for Infrastructure Improvement** – The township is in budget discussions now; nothing has been decided yet. The consensus right now is we've sent the Superintendent of Public Works back with his budget where he had asked for increases and the township told him that they want to see what it looks like with no increases and no projects this year. He should be bringing that back to Thursday's work session. There are no discussions to run utilities further up the highway. Further discussion was had concerning the financial aspect of utility projects and where the financing comes from. The expansion of the DDA was also briefly discussed. TIFs were also briefly discussed.

8. **Lyn Durant officially adjourned meeting at 1:10 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

*Ashley D. Krook*

Ashley D. Krook, Executive Secretary