

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF OSHTEMO
Township Board Meeting
December 13, 2011

Township Board work session was held at the Township Hall. Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell
Clerk Deb Everett
Trustee Grace Borgfjord
Trustee Dave Bushouse
Trustee Scott Ernstes
Trustee Lee Larson

Also present were Township Attorney James Porter, Township Engineer Marc Elliott, Planning Director Jodi Stefforia, and 7 interested people.

PUBLIC COMMENT

James Turcott, 1149 Tanager Lane, representing the Quail Meadows Condominium Association, requested the Board's support in seeking a stop sign for Quail Run Drive at Skylark due to increased use of Quail Run Drive and excessive speed of some of the traffic.

KCSD ACTIVITY REPORT

Sgt. Todd Meyers was present and provided information on recent activity in the Township.

KALAMAZOO COUNTY COMMISSIONER REPORT

County Commissioner Brandt Iden provided an update on recent County activities.

DISCUSSION WITH FRIENDS OF THE PARKS BOARD

Trustee Borgfjord introduced Friends of the Parks Board members Jeff Parsons, Carol VanAntwerp, Peggy Warlick, Carol Ladd and noted Trustee Larson would be joining the Board in January. She advised their goal is to promote the Township parks and encourage their use through activities and programming, they are in the process of establishing a logo and web site, and will be planning dedication activities for the newly renovated Township Park on May 19, 2012. Board members thanked the group for their efforts.

DISCUSSION – SANITARY SEWER STRATEGIC PLAN

Planning Director Stefforia presented excerpts from the proposed Sanitary Sewer Strategic Plan regarding costs of a sewer connection versus replacing septic systems. She noted information from the Assessor indicates an increase in home values for those connected to sewer, sewer is a one-time capital investment while septic systems must be replaced.

UPDATE – POLICE PROTECTION

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell advised discussions are on-going with the Police Committee, consisting of herself, Trustees Bushouse and Ernstes, regarding police protection, they have met with Lt. VanDyken of the KCSD and will begin meeting with the citizens ad-hoc committee in January. She noted the Sheriff has indicated with the number of contract deputies decreased in the county, he will be able to add up to five (4.6) general county road patrol officers. It was also noted that while the number of contract deputies in the Township has been reduced, the revenue from the special assessment districts continues to decline due to the decline of property values, while the county has increased the cost of the contract deputies the Township is retaining; the committee is reviewing whether the Sergeant position should be kept or replaced with one deputy and perhaps a dedicated traffic officer; the Police Committee will continue to work on these issues and the Police Ad-Hoc Committee will take up a larger discussion on the long term direction of police protection in the Township.

The Board work session adjourned at approximately 6:35 p.m.

TOUR – FIRE DEPARTMENT ENGINE NO. 513

The Board and public were provided a tour of the newly refurbished Engine No. 513.

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell called the regular meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell
Clerk Deb Everett
Trustee Grace Borgfjord
Trustee Dave Bushouse
Trustee Scott Ernstes
Trustee Lee Larson

Also present were Township Attorney James Porter, Township Engineer Marc Elliott, Planning Director Jodi Stefforia, and 16 interested people.

Motion by Borgfjord, second by Heiny-Cogswell to approve the December 1st special meeting minutes. Carried.

Income to the General, Building, Fire, and Sewer & Water Funds of \$61,838.48 and disbursements of \$305,838.74 were reported. Motion by Borgfjord, second by Larson to accept the receipts and disbursements report. Carried.

CITIZENS COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ruth Dickie, representing the Oshtemo Rotary Club, presented the Board with a check from the Club for their first installment of their commitment to the refurbish of the Township Park pavilion and thanked the Board for the Township's support of Rotary Club events.

RECOGNITION OF FIRE DEPARTMENT "Everyone Goes Home" CERTIFICATION

Firefighter Christopher Huston of Bertrand Township, Regional Manager for the Everyone Goes Home Program, presented certification to the Fire Department in acknowledgement of all the members pledging to wear seat belts, not only while on duty but in their personal vehicles as well. He commented the aim of the program is to reduce the number of firefighter deaths in the line of duty.

PRESENTATION – FRIENDS OF THE PARKS/OSHTEMO SUNBURST 5K

Trustee Borgfjord acknowledged the contributions of the Oshtemo Sunburst 5K Run Committee for their efforts on behalf of the event. She noted members are herself, Nancy Culp, DeAnna Janssen, Michelle Nitz, Ron Martin, and Jeff Parsons; the event this year raised \$7,356.72. Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell thanked the group for their efforts and the Township's appreciation for their fund raising efforts for the Township parks and presented Consumers Credit Union, the major corporate sponsor, a framed 2011 run shirt.

2012 SEWER SERVICE CONNECTION FEES

A recommendation from the Capital Improvements Committee to increase the sewer connection fee by \$1.00 per front foot to \$18.50 and the parcel fee by \$200.00 to \$6,700 was before the Board, a 3% overall increase. No change was recommended for the sewer benefit fee or any water connection fees. It was noted the increase would occur where the Township has installed the sewer, not in developments where the developer installed the sewer.

Motion by Everett, second by Borgfjord to adopt a resolution establishing the sewer connection fees for 2012 at \$18.50 per front foot, \$6,700 parcel fee and \$2,000 benefit fee. Roll call showed Ernestes-yes, Borgfjord-yes, Everett-yes, Bushouse-yes, Larson-yes, Heiny-Cogswell-yes.

UPDATE/DISCUSSION – ITC TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell advised she intends to have this item on the agenda regularly for the next few months. Attorney Porter advised a letter had been sent to legal counsel for ITC inquiring if they plan to submit plans for the proposed transmission line to the Township for review or apply directly to the Michigan Public Service Commission; he advised there had been no response.

Planning Director Stefforia advised Attorney Porter had provided the Planning Commission with a detailed update at their last meeting; the Planning Commission passed a resolution supporting the Township Board's recent action amending the Utility Ordinance.

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell advised she was contacted by a Township resident who is an expert in native plants and pre-settlement vegetation; he expressed concern and knowledge of threatened and endangered species in the proposed transmission line path. She further advised she subsequently contacted both the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI) at Michigan State and the state law and environmental review process with regard to threatened and endangered species. The DNR advised ITC did apply for and did receive environmental clearance in July regarding threatened or endangered species. This approval was based on existing records in the DNR database. MNFI advised that the DNR findings can be contested if field evidence of species is presented to the DNR by qualified consultants. Ms. Heiny-Cogswell also advised she, Clerk Everett, Attorney Porter and Planning Director Stefforia had met with the Kalamazoo Gazette and reviewed all information the Township had received to date.

Micki Maxwell, 3020 South 6th, inquired if the Township would have been required to advise the public of the initial meeting with ITC last December. Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell advised as with any developer, it is customary for an initial meeting to occur with staff and sometimes a Board member. She advised in this case, Board members have been kept informed but there was little information from ITC to share. Attorney Porter commented he believes the goal of the initial meetings requested by ITC, in which no specific information was provided are now being used to claim they provided information.

ZONING ORDINANCE TEXT AMENDMENTS – FIRST READING

Planning Director Stefforia presented a recommendation from the Planning Commission for approval of two proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, the first to add car washes to the list of uses allowed with special exception use approval in the C, Local Business District and the second to address illuminated signs, requiring all signs be turned off at midnight when the premise is not open and abuts a residential zoning district and 9:00 p.m. when the premises is not open and the sign's illumination can shine into the window of any residence within 500 feet.

In response to Trustee Borgfjord's inquiry, Attorney Porter advised he felt "car" would be defined as a passenger vehicle. Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell commented she felt the sign ordinance language was generous and would have preferred something more restrictive, but would support the language as presented.

Motion by Bushouse, second by Everett to accept the text amendments for First Reading and set Second Reading for January 10th. Carried.

POVERTY EXEMPTION STANDARDS - 2012

Poverty exemption guidelines for property assessment appeals for 2012 as approved by the Michigan State Tax Commission were before the Board for consideration.

Motion by Everett, second by Borgfjord to adopt a resolution establishing the poverty exemption guidelines for 2012. Roll call showed Larson-yes, Bushouse-yes, Everett-yes, -yes, Borgfjord-yes, Ernstes-yes, Heiny-Cogswell-yes.

2012 BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell presented recommendations for appointments to the following boards:

Board of Review – Appoint Adelsteinn Olafsson as 2nd Alternate to a one year term expiring 12.31.2012

Planning Commission –

Reappoint Dick Skalski to second 3 year term expiring December 31, 2014.

Appoint Wiley Boulding, Sr. to a first 3 year term expiring December 31, 2014.

Downtown Development Authority Board –

Reappoint Ron Zuiderveen to a second 4 year term expiring December 31, 2015.

Appoint Fred Gould to a first 4 year term expiring December 31, 2015.

Appoint Andy Wenzel to a first 4 year term expiring December 31, 2015.

Friends of the Parks – Appoint Robert Bertrand and Lee Larson.

Changes in committee assignments – Metro Transit Representative – Trustee Bushouse

Public Media Network – Trustee Borgfjord

Safety Committee – Trustee Ernstes

The newly formed Citizens Ad-Hoc Police Committee will consist of the current Police Committee of Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell, Trustees Bushouse and Ernstes, staff members Attorney Porter, Assistant to the Supervisor Ed Hellwege, Fire Chief Mark Barnes and approximately 20 community residents and members currently being contacted.

Trustee Bushouse commented while he feels the current Fire Chief and department are doing a good job the position of Fire Commissioner should be filled. Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell advised this should be discussed with the full Board at a work session.

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell advised the current members of the Board of Review feel the alternates who attend the meetings should be compensated at one-half the full member rate and this should also be discussed at a work session.

Motion by Borgfjord, second by Larson to approve the appointments as presented. Carried.

HRA PLAN AMENDMENT

An amendment to the Township's Health Reimbursement Account was before the Board for consideration. Attorney Porter advised while the amount is not different from the current plan, a change is being made in the timing of the reimbursement with claims being reimbursed at 50%/50% immediately versus the current plan in which the Township pays the first 50% before the employee portion is required.

Motion by Everett, second by Borgfjord to approve the HRA Plan Amendment as presented. Carried.

2011 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Adjustments to the 2011 budget prepared by Clerk Everett were presented.

Motion by Borgfjord, second by Heiny-Cogswell to approve the 2011 budget adjustments. Carried.

JOB DESCRIPTION AMENDMENTS

Updated position descriptions for Supervisor, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Clerk's Assistant, Treasurer, Planning Director, Senior Planner, Associate Planner, Building Official/Building Inspector, Building Inspector, Building Department Administrative Assistant, Ordinance Enforcement Officer, and Violations Bureau Administrator were before the Board, adding the essential job functions to each description.

Trustee Bushouse commented with the information provided, he could not discern what the changes were and would appreciate the having the documents highlighted in some manner or a cover memo provided.

Motion by Bushouse, second by Larson to table the item to the January 10th meeting. Carried.

TAX APPEAL SETTLEMENT – DANFORD CREEK APARTMENTS

A recommendation from Attorney Porter regarding settlement of the tax appeal by Danford Creek Apartments was before the Board for consideration.

Motion by Bushouse, second by Everett to approve the tax appeal settlement as recommended by the Attorney. Carried.

2012 MEETING DATES

A schedule of meeting dates was before the Board for consideration.

5:00 p.m. work session and 7:00 p.m. regular meeting the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

6:00 p.m. public comment session and 7:00 p.m. regular meeting the 4th Tuesday of each even numbered month except December.

Joint meetings with the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals February 21st, May 15th, and September 18th.

Motion by Borgfjord, second by Ernestes to approve the schedule of meeting dates. Carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

Motion by Everett, second by Borgfjord to cancel the scheduled December 27th Township Board meeting. Carried.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell commented the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners will be considering the boundary route maps for a millage renewal for the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Authority on December 20th; their agenda and packet is available on the County web site.

Trustee Borgfjord recognized residents Dick and Justine Hertzell for regularly attending Township Board meeting.

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell wished all a safe, happy holiday season.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:25 p.m.

DEBORAH L. EVERETT
Township Clerk

Attested: LIBBY HEINY-COGSWELL
Supervisor