

THE CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF OSHTEMO
Township Board Meeting
February 9, 2010

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
Treasurer Nancy Culp
Trustee Grace Borgfjord
Trustee Dave Bushouse
Trustee James Grace
Trustee Scott McCormick

Also present were Township Attorney James Porter, Township Engineer Marc Elliott, and 4 interested people.

AT&T Property Donation

Senior Planner Bugge updated the Board on the AT&T right of way property along Atlantic Avenue that has been offered as a donation to the Township. She advised a Phase 1 environmental assessment was conducted with a recommendation for a Phase 2 assessment which AT&T has denied. Attorney Porter commented the risk is minimal based on the history of the property. Consensus was to proceed with acquiring the property; Attorney Porter will draft the necessary documents for Board review at the February 23rd meeting.

Fire Commissioner Position

Discussion was held regarding revision and clarification of the Fire Commissioner position. Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell and Fire Commissioner James Grace will bring more information for Board review at a future date.

Road Maintenance Projects 2010

The Board reviewed possible road projects for 2010 along with the policy adopted at the January 12th meeting which would assess property owners for seal coat of the chip and seal projects. Consensus was to return this item to the Road Committee for further review and recommendation.

Board Member Comments

Trustee James Grace requested the information compiled regarding the questions raised by Bernie Mein at the January 12th meeting about trustee compensation and benefits be clarified; specifically the name of the ad-hoc committee formed to study employee benefits reflect that information on wages was received by the committee, the time commitment for trustees, and that while there are no legacy costs connected to the retirement pension plan, they do exist for retiree health. Clerk Everett advised the information that was applicable at the time the questions were asked was provided but it can be updated to reflect items that have changed.

Trustee Borgfjord presented a donation to the Parks Fund which represents her payback of the percentage the Township funded pension was reduced for employees which could not be reduced for elected officials due to State law.

The Board work session adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.

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

PRESENT:

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell
Clerk Deb Everett
Treasurer Nancy Culp
Trustee Grace Borgfjord
Trustee Dave Bushouse
Trustee James Grace
Trustee Scott McCormick

Also present were Township Attorney James Porter, Township Engineer Marc Elliot, and 14 interested people.

Motion by Borgfjord, second by James Grace, to approve the January 12th regular meeting minutes. Carried.

Income to the General and Fire Funds of \$200,966.81 and disbursements of \$348,292.93 were reported. Motion by James Grace, second by Borgfjord, to accept the receipts and disbursements report. Carried.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell announced a public reception will be held on February 23rd from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to honor Building Official Bob Horton and Senior Planner Mary Lynn Bugge who are retiring at the end of February.

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell also announced the Township has received preliminary approval of Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant of \$97,000 for completion of sidewalks along West Main between US 131 and Drake Road. She thanked Township staff for their work on this effort.

CITIZENS COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Shashin Kothawala, 6914 Northstar, owner of Crystal Car Wash, requested the Board consider changing the sign ordinance as it relates to electronic signs.

MASTER PARK PLANS – TOWNSHIP PARK AND FLESHER FIELD

Ken Peregon and Kirsten Rimes from O'Boyle, Cowell, Blalock & Associates, consultants for the master park plans, reviewed proposals for the Township Park and Flesher Field.

Township Park - Proposed improvements include new paved trails, basketball court, tennis courts, new playground, new picnic shelter, refurbishment of existing picnic shelter, new restroom building, trail identification and maintenance, signage, and overlook area.

Larry LeBond, 5150 Pleasant Ave, advised he has been involved with the disc golf course since its inception and commented the plans do not include any improvements for the course; he had requested the addition of six more holes during the public input sessions on the plans, it is the biggest activity in the park and he has provided the Park Committee a list of possible improvements. He also commented the plan to move a tee to accommodate a trail will change the quality of that particular hole.

In response to board member questions, Mr. Peregon noted some of the suggested improvements could be implemented. Ms. Rimes commented adding the six additional holes at the area suggested by Mr. LeBond could affect the compaction around the drainage basin. Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell commented the conclusion is while there is not interest in expanding the number of holes for the disc golf course, some of the suggested improvements could be accommodated.

Kathleen Garland-Rike, 6180 Ashwood Court, commented she attended the public input session and felt the majority were not in favor of extending the disc golf course, but passive recreation that would preserve natural features.

Seth VanHeukelom, commented he is a 9 year user of the disc golf course, the plan is great, and some improvements would be benches by the tees and better erosion control.

Flesher Field - Proposed improvements include gazebo and garden area, new playground, new restroom/concession building, water feature, community gardens, wooded area trail development and relocating the parking areas, softball and wiffle ball fields.

Seth VanHeukelom, inquired if two soccer fields could be accommodated. Mr. Peregon commented they understood the purpose was an informal setting for practices but another field could be overlapped on the proposed softball field. Trustee Borgfjord advised she had talked with AYSO who are only looking to use auxiliary fields for practice, not official games.

Trustee Borgfjord thanked OCBA for their work on the plans and the interested citizens who attended the public sessions. She also commented the Township will be seeking grants to fund the improvements, the first DNR grant deadline is April 1st for which funding will be available in 2011, and ideas for fund raisers are being considered. She advised during the design process there were strong requests for a dog park and the Park Committee is looking at location, possibly on Stadium Drive or KL Avenue.

Trustee James Grace commented a Township match for funding could be difficult given the current economic climate.

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell noted these plans are long term, potential grants may require matching funds and general operating funds would not be used but should be budgeted for in the Parks Fund, discussion will need to take place regarding priorities, work on the natural features inventory for both parks will begin in the spring and will be funded by a grant from the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, the DNR grants are from an endowment fund, not state general fund money.

Trustee Bushouse commented he is concerned with the current economics and while not questioning the quality of the plans, has concerns regarding making a commitment at this time. He also commented there was low attendance at the public input sessions.

Clerk Everett commented any potential match would have to be reviewed for the Township's ability to match any required dollars but felt the grants should still be sought so the Township would have the opportunity for funds if it is affordable.

Motion by Borgfjord, second by Everett to adopt a resolution to approve the plans for the Oshtemo Township Park and Flesher Field as presented. Roll call showed James Grace-yes, Borgfjord-yes, Culp-yes, Everett-yes, Bushouse-yes, McCormick-yes, Heiny-Cogswell-yes.

After further discussion, consensus was to pursue implementing the plan for the Township Park first.

LIQUOR LICENSE OWNERSHIP TRANSFER – TEXAS CORRAL

A request to transfer ownership of the liquor license for Texas Corral from Steve Montanye Enterprises, Inc. to T.C. of Kalamazoo, Inc. was before the Board for consideration. Attorney Porter advised all necessary information has been received and reviewed.

Motion by Everett, second by James Grace to adopt a resolution to approve the liquor license transfer of ownership. Roll call showed McCormick-yes, Bushouse-yes, Everett-yes, Culp-yes, Borgfjord-yes, James Grace-yes, Heiny-Cogswell-yes.

FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE

An ordinance required by FEMA that the Township must have in place in order for residents to purchase flood insurance was before the Board for Second Reading.

Motion by James Grace, second by Borgfjord to adopt the ordinance. Carried.

REPLACEMENT PEO VEHICLE

Fire Commissioner James Grace presented a request from the Fire Department for replacement of the emergency vehicle that is also used for parking enforcement. He advised the current vehicle was taken out of service in November, 2009 due to mechanical issues; research has taken place regarding a replacement vehicle resulting in a recommendation for a Ford Explorer and requested the Fire Chief be directed to obtain competitive bids not to exceed the 2010 budgeted amount of \$25,000.

Motion by James Grace, second by Borgfjord to direct the Fire Chief to obtain competitive bids not to exceed \$25,000 for the purchase of a Ford Explorer as recommended. Carried.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK CHANGE

A recommendation from the Personnel Committee to amend the Employee Handbook, Section 2.3 requiring residency within 20 miles of the Township border for full time Fire Department personnel was before the Board.

Motion by James Grace, second by Culp to adopt a resolution to amend the Employee Handbook, Section 2.3 as recommended. Roll call showed James Grace-yes, Borgfjord-yes, Culp-yes, Everett-yes, Bushouse-yes, McCormick-yes, Heiny-Cogswell-yes.

DENTAL INSURANCE ORDINANCE AMENDMENT

A recommendation from the Personnel Committee to amend the Township's Dental Insurance Plan Ordinance to allow qualified retirees to participate in the dental plan was before the Board. Attorney Porter advised the Board would set the percentage which the Township would pay, if any; the proposal as presented is to allow qualified retirees to participate by paying all of the cost.

Motion by James Grace, second by Everett to accept the proposed ordinance amendment for First Reading and set Second Reading for February 23rd. Carried.

UPDATE – COMPREHENSIVE BENEFITS REVIEW AD HOC COMMITTEE

Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell presented an update of the ad-hoc personnel committee recently formed to perform a comprehensive review of township benefits. She advised the committee consists of two board members, two Township staff, and two citizens at large, has met twice, first developing a statement of objectives, and next to review draft data. She further advised they are in the process of compiling additional data. As discussed at the work session, Trustee James Grace requested that the name of the committee be changed because in February the draft data presented by staff included various board salary summaries and comparisons.

UPDATE – PUBLIC WATER EXTENSION PROJECT

Engineer Elliott presented information regarding a water main extension to include Wickford Drive north to West J Avenue, west to North VanKal Street, south to West Main, then east back to Wickford Drive to be funded by the KLA Group, noting there are no contaminants above allowable levels in the extension area; the project is a proactive precaution measure in the same manner as the water main extension constructed in 2009 on West Main. He advised the Township will be asked to contract for the project as with the 2009 project; bids will be sought in the near future and brought to the Board.

In response to Board members questions, it was noted Wickford is on the proposed list of road projects for 2010 so any work should be coordinated, this is a proactive measure; residents can connect to public water for the cost in place at time of their connection, leads will be placed, and a pressure reduction station will be needed on West Main.

OTHER BUSINESS

17TH ANNUAL WALK FOR WARMTH

A resolution supporting the 17th Annual Kalamazoo County Walk for Warmth to be held on February 27th was presented. The event raises funds to provide emergency heating assistance for those in need who do not qualify for aid from other sources.

Motion by Everett, second by Heiny-Cogswell to adopt a resolution supporting the 17th annual Kalamazoo County Walk for Warmth. Carried.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion by James Grace, second by Borgfjord to adjourn to closed session to discuss pending litigation because doing so in open session could negatively impact the Township's position. Roll call vote showed James Grace-yes, Borgfjord-yes, Culp-yes, Everett-yes, Bushouse-yes, McCormick-yes, Heiny-Cogswell-yes.

The Board adjourned to closed session at approximately 8:35 p.m.

Motion by Borgfjord, second by James Grace to return to open session at approximately 8:55 p.m. Carried.

Motion by Everett, second by Borgfjord to authorize the Township Attorney to proceed as discussed in closed session. Carried.

There was no further business and the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 p.m.

DEBORAH L. EVERETT
Township Clerk

Attested: LIBBY HEINY-COGSWELL
Supervisor