

CLARK TOWNSHIP BOARD OF TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8TH, 2023

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call: Schuster, Fitzgerald, Kozma, Clymer, and Rutledge

Other Present: Max Heil, June Patton, Diane Patrick, Mike Patrick, Chris Ritchie, Tim LaForest, Robin Pendery, Robert A Smith, Nora Cardinal, Joan Smith, Noel Weaver, Sarah Redding, David Dunn Gene Hamel, Brad Koster, David Nordquist, Paula Badour (Deputy Supervisor), and Linda Sherlund (Deputy Clerk)

Inquire if Public Comment are to Address Agenda Items: Brad Koster would like to speak regarding the Hessel Marina Project.

Approval of Agenda: Schuster made the motion to approve the agenda, Kozma seconded the motion. All in favor. Motioned carried.

This is a Special Board Meeting not a Public Hearing as published in The St Ignace News.

Clymer stated that he sent an email notice out to Hessel Marina Committee and the Hessel Marina Enhancement Fundraising Committee suggesting they send their comments on this project so the Board of Trustees would have them in writing if they could not attend.

Correspondence:

Bonnie Mikkelsen sent a letter of concern to move forward on the purchasing of the Neal House Acquisition. She sent a page of questions she would like the Township Board to address.

Rutledge would like to know if the Board of Trustees would like to answer Bonnie Mikkelsen's questions now or wait to see if they would be answered during the meeting.

Fitzgerald said she would like to see if they will be answered during the meeting.

Lynn Brown sent a letter of support for the Hessel Marina Acquisition.

Board of Trustees discussed her letter regarding businesses on the waterfront. She is concerned about what may happen to the property if the Clark Township does not purchase it.

Kozma stated that he was against a lime pit or mining and feels that is highly unlikely. He also felt business owners would want to own their property instead of renting or leasing a building.

Robert A Smith sent a letter of support for the Hessel Marina Acquisition.

Approved at Reg. Bd Mtg 4-19-23
Susan J. Rutledge
Mar. Chr

Old Business & Updates: Discussion/Presentation regarding the progress on the Hessel Marina/Neal House Acquisition.

Clymer updated the Board of Trustees and community residents on the history behind the Hessel Marina Enhancements/Neal House Acquisition.

A Hessel Marina Enhancements/Neal House Acquisition Booklet was given to all Board of Trustees prior to the Special Board Meeting. Handouts were available to the public.

Clymer updated the public on the Hessel Marina Enhancement Project.

After the Cedarville Harbor work was completed by Clark Township the Board of Trustees knew they needed to address the Hessel Marina.

The Hessel Marina Committee, (sub-committee) of the Recreation Committee was formed, to work on ideas for this project & Hessel Marina Enhancement Fundraising, also a sub-committee of the Recreation Committee was formed to raise money for the project along with the Les Cheneaux Community Foundation as fiduciary.

Paul Petersen, DNR Waterways, Commission approved \$40,000.00 pre-engineering grant. The Township hired Edgewater Resources to do the pre-engineering study. Master Plan was created by the Planning Commission.

Maureen Neal approached Mark Clymer in October 2021 regarding the purchase of her house located at 3047 W Lake Street, Hessel, Michigan 49745.

Edgewater Resources did a Supplementary Study on Hessel Marina in October 2021. This study was paid 50/50 by the Waterways Grant and Clark Township. This study needed to be done to see how the Neal House could be included in the Hessel Marina Enhancement.

On March 29, 2022, a purchase agreement for \$975,000 was signed and a check for \$80,000 for a deposit was given to the Selling Broker to apply to the option on the property. Clark Township paid \$50,000.00 and Little Traverse Conservancy paid \$30,000.00. An agreement was made that the Clark Township would have two years to come up with funds to purchase this property.

This is an eligible project for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant at a 75%/25% match. The due date for this application is April 1st, 2023. A Trust Fund grant is a recreation grant, and the property must be open to the public and used for recreation purposes. (Kayak Rental, Ice Cream Shop, & Coffee Shop).

Hessel Marina Sub-Committee of the Recreation Committee met on January 25, 2023 to discuss phases.

Phase I - Acquire Neal Home and Lake Frontage.

Fundraising - \$47,000 has been donated or pledged for the Neal House of the \$250,000.00 that is needed for the match for a Michigan Natural Resource Trust Fund Grant. Trust Fund Grant share is \$750,000.00.

Phase II- Build Second Yacht Basin and Remodel Garage into Bath House/Laundry.

Repurposing these docks and remodeling the garage into a bathhouse, showers and laundry will cost a million dollars.

Phase III – Existing Yacht Basin Enhancement.

The new plan is to add at least 30 slips; 15-day use slips and 15-seasonal slips.

Adding 1-2 family bathrooms and some picnic areas and shelter in place of the existing Marina Office.

Adding ten new electric pedestals to implement GFI protection is already underway. The cost for these electrical pedestals is about \$16,300.00. This item is on the agenda for the Clark Township Board Meeting in March, to accommodate a price increase since last year when the grant was applied for. The cost to the Clark Township and Waterway Grant is 50/50.

The LookBook – The Supervisor’s Office distributed the latest version.

LookBook – Overview of the Harbor Project. (In Handout)

At the February Clark Township Board meeting Rutledge told the board that she would like to have a special board meeting to go over questions the board may have regarding the Neal House Acquisition.

Discussion on the use of the Neal House.

Kozma was concerned about having ADA compliance.

Clymer stated that the house is ADA Compliant and has an elevator. Clymer stated the downstairs bathroom of the Neal home will need to be remodeled to meet ADA regulations.

Fitzgerald ask, “Who will manage this property?”

Clymer replied, “The Township may ask an existing property owner like Lakeview to manage the property or pay someone to manage the property.”

Veteran’s Affairs might be interested in renting the property.

Rutledge stated that the Veteran's Affairs will take time to get their paperwork to rent the property.

Rutledge asked, "Is it legal to rent houses that are owned by Clark Township?"

Clymer replied, "The Township was going to consider renting out properties that they received back for taxes not paid. "

Brad Koster stated that this house could be a "Yacht Club" but also open to the public that uses the Hessel Marina. Enhancement of the Neal House could make it better for the marina. "Boater's Destination Harbor."

Clymer stated that this house could be used the same way as the Township uses the Community Center or Recreation Center for the community's youth.

Robert A. Smith stated that the Township needs to make sure that we can check the boxes that need to be checked for the grant application to ensure the grant will be accepted.

Clymer stated that we could sell portions of the house or the whole house. He said this house and property has value.

Fitzgerald questioned, "If the grant will have to be paid back if we sell portion or all of the house?"

Clymer replied, "If the house was bought outright the Township could use the house for whatever they wanted."

Max was concerned if we had to pay the grant back that it would limit us getting any other grants from Michigan Trust Fund.

Clymer replied, "No."

Clymer states that the grant application is due April 1, 2023, and the Township should know by Fall of 2023, if Township has been accepted for the grant.

Diane Patrick liked the idea that boaters and their guests could rent at the marina.

Clymer stated the Great Lakes Cruising Club may use Hessel Marina and the Neal House for a destination when they plan boating trips.

Rutledge questioned, "Where will the marina get their 1.4 million dollars to renovate?"

Clymer said that the Township can apply for other grants, fundraising and take steps as needed. Prioritizing will be the key.

Rutledge asked, Will the Township need to ask the community for a millage?

Clymer replied, "No."

Fitzgerald asked, "What if no money is raised?"

Clymer replied, "We can only do what we can."

Max Heil stated that the grant is due in three weeks, "Does the match need to be raised prior to the application due date?"

Clymer replied, "No, by the acceptance date."

The Township Board would have to make a decision if not enough money were raised for the match for the grant.

Max Heil asked, "What if we do not get the grant?"

Clymer replied, "We would have to look for other resources."

David Dunn asked, "How much will it cost for utilities for the Neal House?"

Clymer replied, "The cost of heating, electricity would be about \$6,000 to \$8,000 per year."

Bathroom & Pavilion Area

Clymer stated that the existing building for the marina needs to be eventually torn down and possible, of a pavilion with bathrooms (like the ones at Snow's Heritage Park).

Renting out the Pavilion may be a possibility.

Other grants may be available for those improvements.

Till then the bathrooms may need regular maintenance.

Neal House

Schuster explained that the Neal House core plan was to get the garage/ bathhouse, recreation area, Marina Staff Office, and the boater lounge.

Schuster asked who wants to purchase the Neal House? Please show a hand. The majority of the hands from the audience were raised.

Go for the grant? Most of the hands from the audience were raised.

Lisa asked who received a personal invite? Most of the crowd were personally invited. Did you see the notice in the paper? Only a few seen the notice in the paper.

Kozma stated that Fitzgerald, Rutledge, and himself were against the purchase of the Neal House, but he did not feel it affected him in any way.

Hessel Marina

Koster stated that the Township level of access for the Emergency Service will increase. A stand-alone dock for both fire and ambulance equipment will be available.

The Township Board discussed the Emergency Service in detail.

How many people are waiting for boat slips?

Max replied, thirty-eight people.

Clymer stated that with the New Plan is for a possible 43 slips. If seasonal, could earn \$50,000.00 potentially.

Fitzgerald asked, “What if the Township goes with one of the other plans?”

Clymer replied, “30 slips now, 73 slips total.”

Rutledge stated with the old plan Hessel Marina would have 30 plus 15 new slips.

Max Heil, the earlier plan holds 20’ boats and I feel we need slips that are longer, more footage.

Kozma asked, “What will the fixed plan and what is the cost? What is the revenue? What is the tax burden?” I was against it from the beginning. Not a lot of waterfront property up for sale and not very many businesses. Business revitalization needs to be done prior to more docking.

Fitzgerald stated there is no growth potential.

Clymer replied, “Fixed plan may have to change. Engineering plan may have to be piece meal.

Kozma stated that the Hessel area has a parking issue.

Clymer states more docks will result in less car traffic if offered for day use.

Mike Patrick commented “More docks, parking will be more of a problem if rented seasonally.”

Koster stated it would be “A New Destination” Marina facility that is there. Singular, “A Big Deal.” Neal Property has a huge value. These boaters will use the businesses in town and surrounding areas.

Parking is a separate issue.

Shuttle service will take them to the Casino or elsewhere.

Kozma asked, “Shuttle Service?”

Koster replied, “Someone can start a service business.”

Seasonal slips and day docking slips could be determined by the state, not the Township.

Clymer stated that there is a courtesy parking on M134, and a second parcel is by Our Lady of the Snows Church purchased for parking. More areas are having parking away from the marina's due to wanting the area quaint.

Fitzgerald asked, "If you rent out the Neal House for businesses, where will they park?"

Clymer replied, "Congestion slows traffic down." "Street may need to be widen."

Joan Smith replied, "she does not feel widening the street would be a good idea and people that live there may be upset."

Joan Smith would also like an additional break wall for fishing.

Sarah Redding stated that the Township has been highly successful getting grants for the area.

Clymer stated that state funds can sometimes be used for federal grants, & vice versa.

David Dunn would like the Township to approach the Culinary School to see if they are interested in contributing funds and to learn about the hospitality to the Neal House.

Clymer stated that Hank Mast owns the Culinary School Building.

Fitzgerald asked, "Is there a plan for the winter for the Neal House?"

Clymer said the Township can rent it out to snowmobilers. Also, the Township could drain the pipes for the winter.

Neal House

Clymer replied, "No, investment of time only; Little Traverse Conservancy and mine."

Clymer stated that the Township could rent out the Neal House, Neal House appraised out at \$960,000.00.

Kozma stated that we are paying more for the Neal House than at what it was appraised.

Paula Badour asked about the results of the survey and the questions they asked about the marina and docking.

Clymer replied that there was no negative feedback.

Fitzgerald states she has no problem doing the Hessel Marina project. She is not ready to commit to the Neal House.

Rutledge stated that there are people that are against buying the Neal House and physically and financially responsible for it. Rutledge also stated that you can't know what people will do when millage is being voted on. If they have a bad taste in their mouth.

Clymer would like the people that Rutledge, Fitzgerald and Kozma spoke to, that oppose this project, oppose it in writing to the Township.

Fitzgerald feels that there is a lot of public miscommunications about this project and the money that is being used for this project.

Koster said that Rutledge has a good point, Township needs to communicate this separation that we have two lanes going the same way.

Heil stated that we could lose money if this project does not continue.

Fitzgerald stated that is better to lose the monies spent on this project and maintain what we already have at the marina.

Kozma said people donating might get tired of giving money to projects. Township spending a lot of money takes away from other projects that are here at the Township. Taxes are going up and there are several millages coming up in the future.

Schuster said that the people that donate will continue to donate to community projects.

Koster stated if we receive this grant, it is huge. Donators will be willing to donate, you will get levels of support above and beyond. "If you build it, they will come."

Kozma commented that the Township could sell the property and pay off the grant and house.

Koster stated that is just wrong to flip a house and make money, the money that the Township received a grant to make a profit.

Fitzgerald stated people need to know where the money is coming from to pay for the project.

Max Heil wanted the Board of Trustees to vote now, whether to support the project or not.

Fitzgerald said she is not ready to make a decision at this meeting.

Schuster stated that a Board of Trustee member needs to make a motion regarding this project at the next meeting which is March 15th, 2023.

Nora Cardinal stated that the meeting would have been better attended if it had been at the Hessel School House due to the project being in Hessel.

Fitzgerald stated that this meeting was to be a Special Township Board Meeting not a Public Hearing and the Special Board Meeting are usually held at 8:00 or 9:00 a.m. The Special Board Meetings are usually discussed with all members to decide on a day and time for the meeting, this was not done.

Rutledge also commented that none of the Board of Trustee members, except Clymer, knew that it would be a different time and the information sent to the paper stated it was public notice.

Clymer said the Board of Trustees at the last meeting did not request the special meeting to be on a certain date or time. He did send out the invitation to Hessel Marina Committee along with the information for the meeting.

Robin Pendrey stated that the Cedarville Harbor Committee did a wonderful job communicating to the public.

Robin Pendrey also stated that the money donated to Hessel Harbor Fund Acquisition can only be spent on the Hessel Marina Project. The Township pays the invoices and then a copy of the invoices is to the Community Foundation to get reimbursed by them.

Kozma stated that he received a donation letter from Dave Wallis and thought the letter was from the Community Foundation.

Robin Pendery stated that the letter was not sent by the Community Foundation.

Clymer stated that Ken Drenth is the head of the Fundraising Committee. Dave Wallis is the person that sent the letter to a select group of people.

David Dunn commented that he feels that the negative comments are coming from the front end and not the taxpayers.

Fitzgerald stated that Clymer sent out personal invitations to a select group that were in support of the Hessel Marina Enhancement /Neal House Acquisition.

David Dunn commented that it was in the paper.

Kozma stated that he spoke to the Planning Commission and Les Cheneaux Chamber of Commerce Board to let them know that there is a Special Board Meeting. He did not email anyone to personally invite them to the meeting. He stated that there were several people that he spoke to that were not in support of the Township buying the Neal House. He did not know why they did not come to the meeting.

Koster stated that if people are against something, you can't keep them out of a place.

Schuster stated that people that are involved in the community feel it is important to come to meetings, the others won't show up.

Koster stated that the people he talked to are supportive of this project and he has not had any negative feedback.

Clymer said he sent out a personal invite to the Hessel Marina Committee and the Township did receive feedback from Bonnie Mikkelsen.

Clymer asked the Board of Trustees if they would like to have another public meeting, the majority of which did not due to past history of public meetings.

Joan Smith made the suggestion to contact the St Ignace News to put the facts in the paper so the community knows what is happening with the Hessel Marina Enhancement/Neal House Acquisition.

Adjournment: Fitzgerald made a motion to adjourn special board meeting at 8:23 p.m. Kozma seconded. All in favor Motioned carried.