

MINUTES
LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
4338 BEELINE ROAD
ALLEGAN COUNTY
HOLLAND, MI 49423

January 12, 2011

ARTICLE I. CALL TO ORDER

Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer called the regular monthly Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

ARTICLE II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE

Trustee Bob Scanlan opened the meeting with prayer and led the pledge of allegiance.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Terry Hofmeyer, Wendy Van Huis, Ed Stielstra, Bob Scanlan, Gary Dewey

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Mark Lytle – Township Deputy Sheriff
Cal Haverdink – Graafschap Fire Chief
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the December 8, 2010 meetings. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Ed Stielstra and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve the minutes as submitted.**

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE IV. TREASURER'S REPORT/REVIEW & APPROVE THE BILLS

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed the bills for the month of December 2010. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve and pay the bills as submitted.**

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE V. CORRESPONDENCE

A. RYAN RIDGE RESIDENTS REQUEST

Supervisor Hofmeyer explained residents from the Ryan Ridge Condominium Association

submitted a written request to the Township asking for support in its efforts to petition the Allegan County Road Commission to accept surrender of the deed to Ryan Ridge Road and make it a public road.

Mr. Richard Stec of 6321 North Ryan Ridge Road represented the Association and reviewed the correspondence that had been submitted on October 16, 2010. Mr. Al Slenk of 6329 North Ryan Ridge and Mr. Tom Kiger of 6352 South Ryan Ridge were also present. There are six lots that have been sold and developed; one lot maintains the existing former farm house and nine undeveloped lots that are held by the Eldean Family, the original developer of the property. Mr. Stec explained that the Association would like to surrender ownership to Allegan County of the common road.

Terry Hofmeyer reiterated that the residents are looking for a letter of recommendation from the Township to the Allegan County Road Commission in support of the Association's petition to surrender the deed to Ryan Ridge Road to the County.

A motion was made by Ed Stielstra and seconded by Gary Dewey to support discussion of the request.

Ed Stielstra asked what concerns pertaining to the Township should be considered with this request.

Al Meshkin explained that the road surface is original and would need to be resurfaced in 2-3 years which would be at the Township's expense. The road is a little over one half mile according to Mr. Stec and the estimated cost would be approximately \$50,000.00.

Wendy Van Huis asked if the road would have to meet Allegan County's standard requirements.

Al Meshkin explained that when P.U.D.'s are requested, the Township does require the minimum requirements for public roads on private roads, except a bit narrower paved surface and cleared area. The current materials meet the County specifications. The road is narrower than the standard requirement. If additional work is needed to meet the County standards it would be considerably more. The base is 24-foot now with two 20-foot lanes and a road gutter. Ed Stielstra asked if they wanted to widen it, would it have to include an extensive base. Mr. Stec responded that if it would have to be widened, the current drains would also have to be moved.

Wendy Van Huis asked if there are certain questions that should be asked of the Allegan County Road Commission prior to making the recommendation. Al Meshkin suggested proposing a special assessment for the district. There are only six lots developed out of 16 so it is not 50 percent of the P.U.D.

Bob Scanlan asked when the road was built. Mr. Stec responded in 1998 and he had provided the drawings to Al Meshkin and Bill Nelson of the Allegan County Road Commission. The one exception Bill Nelson drew was with the width of the road. Bob asked if the residents have considered contributing the additional funds necessary to make the improvements. Mr. Stec stated that the six residents and Gator Development would be willing to contribute.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that the standards are set for 20 years and upwards. Al Meshkin stated that the original surfacing was probably a single layer. Mr. Al Slenk asked what causes the deterioration of the road. Al stated weather, speed and usage.

Ed Stielstra asked if there is any concern over the other nine lots. Terry Hofmeyer responded that he has no idea how the county will deal with that. Mr. Stec stated that he has had discussions with Herb Eldean who said he would support the process.

Bob Scanlan asked how we would deal with the cost to resurface when it is necessary. Terry Hofmeyer stated that it would be treated like any other public road in the Township. Ed Stielstra asked for clarification.

Mr. Stec responded that the residents would contribute equally if the road remained private.

Bob Scanlan stated that he would not be in favor of recommendation if the Township would have to pay for the repairs.

Wendy Van Huis asked if there would be additional costs beyond the estimated \$50,000.00. Al Meshkin stated that it would be up to the Township Board to approve requested repairs in the future. If it had been built as a subdivision, the road would be public and it would be the Township's responsibility and the tax revenue would be available.

Mr. Stec asked for confirmation that if the road were to be public, the County would maintain it. Al Meshkin stated that if the road is in need of resurfacing, the Township would have to approve and absorb the cost of the resurfacing.

Wendy Van Huis commented that the residents have been paying taxes all along.

Ed Stielstra confirmed that there are no special conditions that would increase the cost.

Terry asked if core samples have been done on the road. Mr. Stec stated that core samples have not been done. Mr. Bill Nelson of Allegan County did a visual overview. Mr. Stec offered to get a formal evaluation and quote from Tulip City Paving.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Bob Scanlan to table the motion to provide a letter of recommendation to Allegan County Road Commission on behalf of the Ryan Ridge Condominium Association until further information is available.**

Terry Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

ARTICLE VI. REPORT OF OFFICERS

- A. STATE REPRESENTATIVE GENETSKI – No report.
- B. COUNTY COMMISSIONER BURNS – Terry Burns

Commissioner Burns reported that Bill Nelson from Allegan County Road Commission is retiring and there will be a retirement party for him on Friday, the 14th at the Allegan Township Administrative Building. Larry Brown will fill the open seat. The RQAW Architects provided a new schematic of the proposed jail facility. The millage failed twice and this would be less than \$15 million and could be paid for through the revolving tax fund. There is surplus holding funds that equate to approximately \$1 million per year. Most of the office furniture is already there from the previous configuration. Terry described the facility model presented. Terry tried to convince residents that this reduced project is doable. In the current facility there is no ability to separate those with special conditions such as suicide watch. Terry will leave the schematic at the Township Office for resident review. A final quote will be available in the next week and is promised to be less than \$15million.

Keith Becksvoort of 4468 64th Street stated that he doesn't understand why the initial cost was \$30-\$32 million and now it is \$15 million. How can this be? Terry Burns responded that they had told the developer that the price had to be knocked back. The new design is smaller than originally proposed. Bob Scanlan explained that it is fewer beds but there is room for expansion. Terry stated that with this model they would be able to separate inmates by their special needs.

- C. PLANNING COMMISSION – Ed Stielstra

Ed Stielstra reported that the Planning Commission met on January 5, 2011 and further discussed the Zoning Ordinance making good progress. The proposal should be before the Board within two months.

D. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – Bob Scanlan

Bob Scanlan reported that the Zoning Board of Appeals did not meet in December.

E. PARKS COMMISSION – Chuck Strabbing

Chuck Strabbing stated that there was nothing to report only for residents to get out and enjoy the snow. There are a lot of people are using the parks, sledding at the mansion, seeing all kinds of wildlife throughout the Township parks. He encourages everyone to go out and walk the parks – just enjoy the beautiful area.

F. DEPUTY SHERIFF – Mark Lytle

Terry Hofmeyer introduced and welcomed Mark Lytle as the new Laketown Deputy Sheriff. Deputy Lytle reported that he previously worked in Lee Township where he has been recognized for numerous service awards. He stated that is looking forward to providing service to Laketown Township.

G. FIRE CHIEF AND FIRE BOARD – Cal Haverdink

The response calls for the month of December are as follows: 30 calls total, 20 calls from Laketown, consisting of 18 rescue and 2 fire, 9 calls from Fillmore, consisting of 8 rescue calls 1 and fire. There were 1 assist fire assist to Hamilton Fire Department.

H. DDA – No report.

ARTICLE VII. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS ON OLD AND NEW BUSINESS

Keith Becksvoort of 4468 64th Street read a letter addressing the issue of accepting the Gibson Church and its move to the Felt Mansion. The original amount to move the church was much greater than the current amount communicated. It is not only the initial move of the building but the maintenance and upkeep including heating, cooling, water, parking lots, etc. Are tax payers going to pay? There were a number of other projects that were started and never finished such as moving the old township hall, renovating Huyser Farmhouse, Felt Mansion renovations and the Township recreation facility. It all falls to the taxpayer. The small amount of money that has been raised to support this should be an eye opener. It is time to run the country and the township and not all of these extra projects.

Susan Mulac of 6520 Oakwood Lane would like to second what Mr. Becksvoort has stated in objection of moving the old Gibson Church.

Randy Becksvoort of 3930 Beeline Road wanted to tell Mr. Scanlan thank you for saying no to the \$50,000.00 paving project for Ryan Ridge Road. If the County accepts it maybe it should be prorated per the amount of time it was a private road and the Township pays for the amount of time it would be a public road. It is not very advantageous for the Township to take on the project.

John Mulac of 6520 Oakwood Lane expressed concern over moving the church if there is going to be expense to the Township residents to do it. Most residents probably don’t know how much is being used to pay for it. Why is it that the cup cake event funds raised at the Felt Mansion were used for the church and not for the mansion? Others may be concerned about what route would be taken to move the church. It is a concern of a lot of people.

Susan Mulac wonders if the church had not been offered to the Township, would it ever have been taken into consideration to try to move it. The church is kind of a landmark so why can’t people have the wedding in the church where it is and then go to the mansion. Why does it have to be moved? The park is beautiful and shouldn’t be disturbed. It would construe what is already there and it seems a little over done and over enthusiastic. Would it really boost the wedding and reception business at the Felt Mansion? The Felt Mansion stands alone and it has its look. It would

be very sad to have the church moved onto this property and it would not be good to spend the money to do it.

Randy Becksvoort stated that he does agree with Keith Becksvoort about the church not being moved. He knows there are board members that sit on the Friends of the Felt Mansion and he appreciates that. He stated that he appreciates their passion but feels that passion may obscure the representation of the Township residents.

Keith Becksvoort asked if anyone remembers what the original figure was to move the church. Terry Hofmeyer stated that he does not remember. He said in round figures he recalls some estimates but it is substantially less. Al Meshkin stated that the actual move is approximately \$10,000.00. The initial figure was \$100,000.00 if we paid to have everything done and included all of the proposed improvements. If volunteers are coordinated to scrape and paint, set a foundation, and do other projects much like the original Felt Mansion project was done, it would be much less. Keith stated the old Township Hall was going to be moved just to the north and wasn't done. The Huyser Farmhouse is another undone project that doesn't look any better and this place, think of the money that could be spent here. There is only \$8,000.00 raised so it shows people don't want it. Keith stated the mansion is not self sustained.

Susan Mulac stated that she agrees with this, she doesn't understand where this money is coming from. In your minds this sounds like a good idea. When the economy is the way it is for everybody, the \$500,000.00 bond issue and now the \$155,000.00 that is going to be used for the heating and cooling it is too much money. It is supposed to be paid back from the Felt Mansion rental revenue but how do we know that it is. The Holland Sentinel notice stated that the Township has the power to tax property owners to repay these bonds. It has turned into a huge cost to the taxpayers. Had you ever considered the expense? There are people losing their homes and trying to put food on their tables. Money is being spent that we just don't have. You keep borrowing the money and leaning on the taxpayers to pay it back. When the mansion starts to sustain itself it might be different. There are no guarantees in this economy so you shouldn't take for granted that people are ok with this. People probably don't understand how much this is all costing. You put on the bottom of the tax bills if we want to donate to the Felt Mansion but we are already doing that in our tax dollars but don't get a tax credit for doing so. I am really concerned about the money you are spending that is not necessary.

Chuck Strabbing of 6328 144th Avenue said he is torn, he is very proud of the work that has been done at the mansion and has mixed feelings. He does not feel that we will make that much more money but if we could pay to move it he thinks we could do great things with it on the property. It has some use and it could be set in a position that would not cost us a lot of money and there is a lot of potential. It is difficult to put a price tag on some things like the mansion. Some of the other townships and counties spend much more than Laketown Township. We have a lot of things on our plate with the Parks Commission but we work hard to get grant money and be the best stewards with the budget we are given.

ARTICLE VIII. OLD BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. ANNUAL MEETING RESOLUTION

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed Resolution 2011-01 to set the Annual Township Board meeting for March 9, 2011 at 7:00pm.

A motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the Resolution 2011-01 scheduling the Annual Township Board meeting for March 9, 2011 at 7:00PM.

Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.

UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

B. TOWNSHIP BOARD SALARY RESOLUTIONS

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed Trustee Salary Resolution 2011-02 noting that as of April 1, 2011, the salary of the Township Trustees shall be \$3,500.00.

A motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the Trustee Salary Resolution 2011-02 setting the salaries at \$3,500.00

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed Clerk Salary Resolution 2011-03 noting that as of April 1, 2011, the salary of the Township Clerk shall be \$15,000.00

A motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Bob Scanlan to approve the Clerk Salary Resolution 2011-03 setting the salary at \$15,000.00.

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Terry Hofmeyer explained that this is a modest increase to bring Wendy Van Huis to the level of other officers.

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed Treasurer Salary Resolution 2011-04 noting as of April 1, 2011, the salary of the Township Treasurer shall be \$15,000.00.

A motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve the Treasurer Salary Resolution 2011-04 setting the salary at \$15,000.00.

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

Supervisor Hofmeyer noted this is a \$500.00 reduction from the current salary.

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed the Supervisor Salary Resolution 2011-05 noting as of April 1, 2011, the salary of the Township Supervisor shall be \$15,000.00

A motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve the Supervisor Salary Resolution 2011-05 setting the salary at \$15,000.00.

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

C. BOARD OF REVIEW APPOINTMENTS

Supervisor Hofmeyer explained the Board of Review is a three member board that meets to hear the appeals of local residents concerning their tax assessments. Currently the board is comprised of Don Van Huis, Warren Rasmussen and Bob Jaskulski.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Bob Scanlan to reappoint Don Van Huis, Warren Rasmussen and Bob Jaskulski to the Board of Review.**

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

D. MOVING OF GIBSON CHURCH

Terry Hofmeyer explained this is to approve the Township's acceptance of the building for \$1.00 as was offered by the Gibson Christian Reformed Church Council.

A motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to approve the Township's acceptance of the old Gibson Church building for \$1.00.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that he sees the addition of this building as a great asset to the Felt Mansion. He feels it is an opportunity to save a landmark that cannot remain at its current location. He envisioned this would be primarily a volunteer effort. We cannot have volunteers move it but we do have volunteers to set a foundation. It will also need a new roof and we have indications that we may have volunteers to also assist with this and possibly also provide materials. We realized with the Felt Mansion there is an extent to how much volunteers can do before we might need skilled labor. The church would not need that much extensive work as the mansion did. When you read legal notices in the paper we must declare that the taxpayers will be liable as it influences the interest rate of the bond. The Felt Mansion is a miniscule part of what is spent on the parks in the Township. If you look at what we have in Laketown Township, we are fortunate. The Parks Commission works hard at obtaining grants and funding to keep our parks forward thinking innovative. They continue to do good things for the Township

Bob Scanlan stated that he would second everything Terry said.

Gary Dewey seconded Bob Scanlan's remark.

Wendy Van Huis stated that being a member of Gibson Church it has been a struggle to represent the residents but she honestly thinks this is a good thing for the Township. There are a lot of volunteers that will support this effort and there are other donations coming in. Volunteers will come when the church comes. The church cannot stay where it is and it would be burned or razed as it no longer meets the need that we have in our ministry. She feels that in the long-run it will be an asset to the Township and the Felt Estate.

Ed Stielstra expressed his feelings about the initial monies not creating an open door for the church or mansion from the General Fund. He doesn't want to see it when it comes to the point of now needing more money from the Township. He does not see this as a first line signature on a blank check. Ed asked Wendy what the time table for moving the church would be. Wendy stated she feels the church would like to see it moved by this spring. The church would fill in the hole left behind at no expense. Ed stated that the route down 65th street would be a concern. The alternate route would be up 140th to 64th to 138th. Terry stated that the steeple would be taken off which would reduce the height. Wendy said it would cost \$8,000.00 to move it. Ed asked if that includes any necessary tree trimming and moving of utility wires. Al Meshkin stated that it does not include the fee from Consumers Power. The mover is reducing its price and would include the removal of the trees which would be minimal. Ed asked if the Parks Commission is in total favor of the location on the property.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that what may be confusing to some people is that the original consideration had been to place the church to the east of the mansion. It is now planned to be to the west and south of the mansion building.

Ed Stielstra stated that he would be in favor of a motion to table. Wendy Van Huis stated that the church would like an answer by the end of January.

Bob Scanlan asked what tabling it would do if we have the money to move it.

Ed Stielstra responded that it would allow for further input and ability to visit the proposed site.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that this has been visible to the Board for approximately one year. Terry mentioned hearing two callers on the Talk of the Town radio show state that they felt it would be a great idea to have a church venue at the Felt Mansion and the other grateful that there are those that

are willing to save a historical landmark. He also received comments from others that are willing to make donations. He feels that there will be more volunteers and interest. Terry stated that he is amazed at how many original pieces of the mansion that went out into the Holland area that came back once it is publicized. The same thing might happen with the Gibson Church.

Ed Stielstra stated that Terry was correct in stating that the article in the Holland Sentinel was good publicity and he received a call from someone who had read it as well.

Terry Hofmeyer asked that Al Meshkin officially advise the church that the Township will accept the offer of the building.

**Supervisor Hofmeyer called for a vote on the motion.
UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED**

ARTICLE X. CITIZEN’S COMMENTS - None

Shirley Visscher of 6283 136th Avenue thanked the Board for passing the church move.

Susan Mulac of 6520 Oakwood Lane asked if trees would have to be cut down at the Felt Mansion to do this. Al Meshkin responded that there will not be trees moved. Susan stated that every year she sees more and more growth in the park and would not want to see any trees removed.

John Mulac of 6520 Oakwood Lane asked if the stretch of 138th Avenue would be a problem for the church move because it is state land. Terry stated there is 66 feet of right of way so there would not be a problem.

Gary Dewey commented that we are concerned about trees because they are long-term fixtures in the community but buildings are also historical and we cannot just destroy them. Having been to Europe and Asia, he has seen how they will go to any extreme to preserve history and we are too quick to discard it.

Keith Becksvoort stated that he agrees that buildings should be saved and mentioned in other areas like South Olive they have saved the steeple of their historic church and it looks good.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that we get the church, steeple and the bell which will all be part of the structure once it is moved.

ARTICLE XI.

A motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Wendy Van Huis to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 P.M. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

Wendy Van Huis, Township Clerk

Diane Ybarra, Recording Secretary