

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

RESCHEDULED REGULAR MEETING
April 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.

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Al Meshkin – Township Manager
Diane Ybarra – Recording Secretary

ARTICLE II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Clerk Wendy Van Huis opened the meeting with prayer and led the pledge of allegiance.

ARTICLE III. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board members reviewed the minutes of the March 9, 2011 meeting. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve the minutes as submitted.**

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

ARTICLE IV. TREASURERS REPORT/REVIEW & APPROVE THE BILLS

Supervisor Hofmeyer reviewed the bills for the month of March 2011. Following discussion, **a motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Gary Dewey to approve and pay the bills as submitted.**

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

ARTICLE V. CORRESPONDENCE - None

Supervisor Hofmeyer reported that he has received communication from the Michigan Historical Preservation Society recognizing Laketown Township for three awards to be presented at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts on May 20, 2011. One award is for the Township's development of a preservation plan for the Township, a second award is for the community's involvement and Township's participation in the restoration of the mansion and the third award is a "Jewel" award

specific to the renovation of the water garden on the Felt Estate. More information will be provided for those interested in attending the awards ceremony.

ARTICLE VI. REPORT OF OFFICERS

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

Terry Burns reported on the reapportioning of the Allegan County districts. There were two plans proposed that would allow for nine representatives and one plan for seven representatives. There should be a decision made by Monday, April 18. Terry recently attended a meeting in Lansing and heard Governor Snyder speak on revenue sharing and other programs. Terry advises the townships not to plan for any state revenue. It was noted that the Pure Michigan program and related projects are supported at \$75 mil by the Governor. Terry reported that the proposed jail project will go to bid to find out exactly what the costs would be. The revolving tax bill should fund the jail at a scaled down model. Terry volunteered to represent the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council on the Michigan Association at Large Council. Serving in this role will provide more insight of what is going on in Lansing.

- C. PLANNING COMMISSION – Ed Stielstra

Ed Stielstra reported that the Planning Commission met on April 6, 2011 and the following items were discussed: requested Attorney Ron Bultje prepare a resolution report to approve the Lewis Special Use Request; approve the Laketown Building Authority Special Use Request to move the Gibson Church to the Felt Estate; approve the Laketown Building Authority Special Use Request to use the Gibson Church in conjunction with events held at the Felt Estate.

- D. ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS – Bob Scanlan

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

- E. PARKS COMMISSION – No report.
- F. DEPUTY SHERIFF – No report.
- G. FIRE CHIEF AND FIRE BOARD

The response calls for the month of March are as follows: 27 calls total, 21 calls from Laketown, consisting of 19 rescue and 2 fire, 6 calls from Fillmore, consisting of 3 rescue calls and 3 fire.

- H. DDA – No report.

ARTICLE VII. CITIZEN COMMENT'S COMMENTS ON OLD AND NEW BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE VIII. OLD BUSINESS - None

ARTICLE IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. OUTDOOR DISCOVERY CENTER / MACATAWA GREENWAY CONTRACT

Terry Hofmeyer explained this is basically a renewal agreement for partnership with the Outdoor Discovery Center / Macatawa Greenway.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Wendy Van Huis**

to approve the Outdoor Discovery Center / Macatawa Greenway Contract.

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

B. FRIENDS OF THE FELT ESTATE CONTRACT

Terry Hofmeyer explained that this is an agreement between Laketown Township and the Friends of the Felt Estate to partner on fundraising efforts. The agreement includes an appropriation of \$35,000 to the Friends of the Felt Estate to support fundraising and operations. In the past, the appropriation has been returned to the Township with a sizable profit.

A motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve the Friends of the Felt Estate Contract.

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

C. DUST CONTROL

Terry Hofmeyer explained there are three streets needing dust control treatment. The locations are: 63rd Street south of 144th Avenue, 62nd Street south of 142nd Avenue and 66th Street north of State Park Drive. The work will go out for bid and be handled by the Allegan County Road Commission. Al Meshkin noted that the total area treated would be less than one mile.

A motion was made by Wendy Van Huis and seconded by Ed Stielstra to approve the Dust Control work to be done.

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

D. QUALIFIED ENERGY CONSERVATION BOND RESOLUTION

Terry Hofmeyer explained that this bond would support the Felt Mansion's Capital Improvement Project by financing the construction and equipment to reduce energy consumption by at least 20%. Al Meshkin provided an explanation of how the bond interest is calculated over time with the federally subsidized tax credit.

Following discussion, **a motion was made by Gary Dewey and seconded by Bob Scanlan to approve the Qualified Energy Conservation Bond Resolution.**

Ed Stielstra asked what the total utility expenditures are currently. Al Meshkin responded approximately \$13,000 annually. It is difficult to make the comparison using dollars as it should be viewed as past and future energy consumption. An additional grant is being pursued to install a solar array which could potentially reduce energy costs for the mansion zero dollars.

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

ARTICLE X. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

Keith Becksvoort of 4468 64th Street mentioned that he spoke to Ed Stielstra concerning the \$105,000 bond. He asked how much money the Township is going to stick into the mansion project. He recalls the initial meetings with Patty Meyer wherein she stated that no Township money would be put into the mansion. All of the work would be done by volunteers and materials would be donated. The Gibson Church is another project that will need a whole lot of work to move and renovate it. The Huyser Farmhouse sits with a new roof but it is wasting away. How much more can we keep going here? It is like a boat with a hole in it, sinking in the water. Most people

are not here tonight because they don't get the paper so maybe didn't know the meeting date change otherwise there would be more here to speak. Keith asked for further clarification of that status of the previous bonds secured for the mansion 5 years ago and how much of that has been paid off. Al Meshkin responded that the initial bond was for \$525,000 and it is now after three years it is down to \$475,000. Keith commented that no one says no to the spending in the Township. Most of us don't do this in our own homes. The federal and state governments are all in trouble and we will be soon.

Andrew Geurink of 4467 64th Street spoke about the whole project of the mansion and how he felt it should be a private sector project and not a government funded investment. He commented that the Township should not be involved in the mansion project.

Terry Hofmeyer stated that he feels that each of the members of the board do look at the proposed projects and feel they are viable projects. In regards to grants, they are available and if we can get them, we should. I do recall at the onset that we envisioned the work would be done by volunteers. As the project continued to proceed, there is work that volunteers cannot do. It is true that the federal and state governments may be in rough financial shape but the Township is in pretty good shape having planned for the downturn three or more years ago. I would like to think that we are ahead of some other entities. We are on a solid financial ground. I think we should try to maintain the jewel that we have as people enjoy the facility and he feels very proud of it. We have a good group of volunteers that have engaged in the project. Everything else we do to improve it makes it more attractive and will only draw more attention to the Township.

Wendy Van Huis commented that she agrees with everything that Terry has said. There is a difference between spending and investing. The mansion has become a gem to the community. It is well thought of and has put us on the map. The mansion has truly grown to be a beautiful place. Wendy likened the investment to that of a college education, in the end whatever we put into this project mansion will pay off.

Bob Scanlan would agree that we had initially thought we had a vision to do it with volunteers and little to no cost to the Township. Volunteers and donations can only go so far and we realized it was worthwhile to continue the project. It is a very well known venue and has been a benefit to the Township and its residents.

Ed Stielstra stated that he appreciates Keith's opinion about the mansion being a boat with a hole and sinking in the water. He feels that the board will continue to examine the expenditures for projects moving forward. He asked for special consideration to look at every project on its own merit and not just because we have always supported it and we need to one more time. He feels he speaks for the board when he states that each project is carefully looked at. As far as turning it into a private project, the way we obtained the property from the State of Michigan it is not possible as we are obligated to keep it open to the public. I struggle from time to time if we are doing the right thing but we cannot turn it into a private enterprise at this point without the state potentially telling us to give it back.

Keith Becksvoort stated that he appreciates the board's view and he does appreciate the mansion, too. There are things in projects like this that are hidden and not anticipated. When it took off, if someone had been down this path before in a restoration project like this, one should have known that it would take a lot of money to do so. Now the carriage house is being sought along with a working farm project. It will not be a money maker to make it a farm. It will take money to do that. The carriage house will also cost more money. At what point do we stop?

Bob Scanlan stated that the unforeseen expenses he had referred to was the potential realized of what the mansion could be.

Keith Becksvoort asked about the requested \$35,000. Didn't we give \$10,000 and did we get that back? Al Meshkin explained that for the last two years \$10,000 had been requested and each year it was paid back plus. Last year the mansion actually paid the Township \$17,000 not including the money raised to move the church. Keith asked why \$35,000 is being asked for; why not use the \$10,000 and \$17,000 instead of paying it back to the Township.

Wendy Van Huis said we wanted to prove the fact that we are good for paying the money back. Keith Becksvoort again commented on the request for more money.

Al Meshkin explained that it is to show the money goes out and it comes back in as a result of the mansion gaining revenue from the rental business and fundraising events.

Terry Hofmeyer commented on the Frank Lloyd Wright mansion in Grand Rapids and how it was underwritten by Steelcase. There were unforeseen expenses in that project as well and it is a very successful restoration.

Andrew Geurink asked how Laketown Golf & Conference Center feels about competing with another place that is government funded. Al Meshkin explained that the mansion and the conference center actually work well together as they are very different venues. They often make references for each other depending on the client's interest and capacity needs.

Terry Hofmeyer agreed the venues are quite different both with unique offerings.

Ed Stielstra had previously expressed the concern about the competition but not seen evidence of it being an issue.

Al Meshkin stated that the mansion activity is actually an economic engine for the area because people come and stay in the local hotels; patronize restaurants, shops and more. We have visitors from all parts of the nation and even some international business.

ARTICLE XI. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Bob Scanlan and seconded by Ed Stielstra to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 P.M. UNANIMOUS DECISION – MOTION APPROVED

Wendy Van Huis, Township Clerk

Diane Ybarra, Recording Secretary