

Draft: 05/11/11

Approved: 6/13/11

GRATTAN TOWNSHIP BOARD
Regular Meeting of May 9, 2011

1. Call to Order

Township Supervisor Frank Force called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

F. Force led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call

D. Timmons read the roll call. Members present: Supervisor F. Force, Treasurer S. Freeman, Clerk J. Fues, Trustee D. Heffron and Trustee P. Knoerl. Members absent: none. Township Fire Chief Lou Kirkbride also attended the meeting.

4. Approval of the Agenda

F. Force added under drains as item B under sewer and trash clean up day under board communications. J. Fues added 2011 PDR applications under PDR. J. Fues moved and D. Heffron seconded to approve the agenda as amended. All ayes. The motion carried.

5. Officers Report (Clerk's Report)

Approval of Minutes

J. Fues moved and S. Freeman seconded to approve the minutes of the April 11, 2011 regular meeting as presented. All ayes. The motion carried.

S. Freeman noted one minor correction to the April 28, 2011 minutes. J. Fues moved and S. Freeman seconded to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2011 special meeting as amended. All ayes. The motion carried.

Budget Amendments

There were no budget amendments.

Accounts Payable

J. Fues moved and S. Freeman seconded to approve accounts payable in the amount of \$161,707.08 (checks 35471-35535 inclusive). All ayes. The motion carried.

6. Consent Agenda

Payroll

Treasurer's Report (all funds)

Correspondence

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J. Fues moved and S. Freeman seconded to approve the consent agenda as presented. All ayes. The motion carried.

7. **Working Agenda**

Hearing of Public

There were no public comments.

Department Reports

Fire Department

There were 2 structure fires, 8 medical calls, 1 mutual aid given, 1 illegal burn, 2 trainings and 2 training meetings for a total of 16 in the month of April.

Fire Administration and Safety Committee

F. Force gave a brief review. L. Kirkbride said the fire department would like to use an area tower to mount a repeater. He checked with owners of the radio tower on Belding Road, but their costs were high. F. Force and J. Fues said they would check the resolution for that tower and contact the owners regarding this matter.

Zoning Officer Report

F. Force said there is 1 investigation at this time.

Safety Board of Appeals

There was no meeting.

Sewer Report

Kent Trierweiler, Infrastructure Alternatives, reviewed the April 2011 monthly report. He said electrical and mechanical contracts for the sewer upgrade project have been signed. He said they are ready to go as soon as the township tells them to proceed. F. Force asked if irrigation has begun. K. Treiweiler said irrigation has begun at the Grattan site. He was not sure if irrigation has started at the Grattan/Vergennes site. K. Treiweiler said he will schedule a meeting with Williams and Works to discuss the preconstruction irrigation schedule at the Grattan/Vergennes site. He said Williams and Works estimates 6-8 weeks to complete Grattan/Vergennes upgrades. D. Heffron said last Sunday 4 guns at the Grattan site were shooting short, flooding the field. K. Treiweiler said there have been start up issues with the sprinkler heads.

D. Heffron asked what the irrigation schedule will be this season. K. Treiweiler said they will irrigate according to discharge permit guidelines. He said when tipping buckets are installed at the Grattan site operators will be notified when there is too much water on the land. The operator can then turn off the irrigation system by phone. D. Heffron asked the Board to get an irrigation plan from Michigan State University. Board members discussed and F. Force agreed to contact a Michigan State University Cooperative Extension for information.

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P. Knoerl asked if tipping buckets will be installed at the Grattan/Vergennes site. Estimated costs for purchase and installation of those buckets are between \$12,000 and \$15,000. F. Force noted that Mark Nettleson, township attorney, said contingency funds might be able to be used for this purchase.

Under Drains

F. Force said Ross Excavating recently checked under drains at the Grattan irrigation site. He told F. Force it was the worst tiling job he has ever seen. D. Heffron said he visited the site and agreed. Ross Excavating provided proposals for work on under drains totally approximately \$30,000. There was discussion about fixing the under drains and cleaning a ditch. It was noted that repairs to under drains must be completed before crops are put in. F. Force suggested having the ditch cleaned out this year and under drains repaired after crops are removed. P. Knoerl said the township should check with Prein and Newhof to see if they have the design for under drains at the Grattan site and who the contractor for that work was. F. Force will contact Prein and Newhof regarding those questions. J. Fues said the ditch at that site is the responsibility of the County Drain Commissioner. D. Heffron said willows and brush at the Grattan site have plugged drains. He said there should be a spraying program at that site.

Planning Commission

F. Force said the Planning Commission held 2 public hearings. A special land use request by Brian Heethuis was tabled so Commissioners could do another field visit. Commissioners approved a resolution recommending Township Board approval of a rezoning request from A1 to A2 by Jody Hall.

Zoning Board of Appeals

There was no meeting.

Building Department

There were 2 new building permits, 5 other building permits, 17 electrical permits, 1 plumbing permit and 3 mechanical permits for a total of 28 in the month of April.

Unfinished Business

PDR Update

D. Heffron said the application cycle ended April 30, 2011. He said funding will be the same as last year.

2011 PDR Applications

J. Fues said there are 6 PDR applications for farms in Grattan Township. He asked for Board input regarding a new section on the application concerning township contributions. Board members discussed and agreed to note that the township is willing to contribute a minimum of \$2000 per farm accepted into the PDR program.

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J. Fues moved and D. Heffron seconded to accept PDR application from Gerard and Barbara Poulias for parcels 41-12-19-100-025 and 41-12-20-100-023 totaling 120 acres (105 acres farmed). All ayes. The motion carried.

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to accept PDR application from Heffron Family Protection Trust for parcels 41-12-11-100-024 and 41-12-10-226-003 totaling 60 acres (57 acres farmed). Ayes: J. Fues, S. Freeman, P. Knoerl and F. Force. Nays: none. Abstain: D. Heffron. The motion carried 4-0-1.

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to accept PDR application from John D. and Margaret M. Hefferan Trust for parcel 41-12-32-100-012 for 220 acres (98 acres farmed – 16.5 acres exclusion around existing home site). Ayes: J. Fues, S. Freeman, P. Knoerl and F. Force. Nays: none. Abstain: D. Heffron. The motion carried 4-0-1.

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to accept PDR application from Raymond A. Weeks for parcels 41-12-35-200-003 and 41-12-35-400-008 totaling 110 acres (94 acres farmed). All ayes. The motion carried.

J. Fues moved and D. Heffron seconded to accept PDR application from Dennis Malone for parcel 41-12-25-200-002 totaling 156.5 acres (156.5 acres farmed). All ayes. The motion carried.

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to accept PDR application from Clayton Lovins for parcel 41-12-05-400-001 totaling 75 acres (51 acres farmed). All ayes. The motion carried.

Budget Issues

There were none.

New Business

Firefighter Candidate- Zacharias J. Tisdel

F. Force said firefighter candidate Zacharias J. Tisdel was interviewed by the FASC. L. Kirkbride said the FASC interviewed the applicant and approved his application. J. Fues moved and D. Heffron seconded to offer Zacharias J. Tisdel a position on the Grattan Township Fire Department as a firefighter. Roll call: Ayes: F. Force, S. Freeman, D. Heffron, J. Fues and P. Knoerl. Nays: none. The motion carried 5-0.

Hall's Rezoning Request- Public Hearing

F. Force said a revised resolution from the Planning Commission recommending approval of Jody Hall's request for a rezoning from A1 to A2. He said the Board would only be considering the rezoning, not the proposed splits. Steve Hanson, representative for Jody Hall briefly explained the proposal. He said parcels to the north and east of the property are zoned A2; Mr. Hall's request would not be spot

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zoning. He also said the property is located near 2 busy roads and is a good candidate for A2 zoning.

J. Fues asked if the commercial greenhouse on the property was operated last year. J. Hall said it was, but it will not be open this year. J. Fues said at the end of this calendar year the special land use for the property will “go away” if the greenhouse is not opened this year. J. Hall asked for verification on that expiration. F. Force will find out about the special use expiration.

J. Fues said the township’s master plan determined this parcel is good farmland. He asked the applicant if they considered smaller splits to leave a larger piece for farmland. S. Hanson said they did look at that. Mr. Hall said the problem is he can’t sell the property.

D. Heffron was opposed to rezoning this parcel. He said the proposed development is the worst of the worst. He said the Hall parcel is adjacent to the Kropf orchard, which will impact surrounding property. J. Hall said there is a 400’ buffer zone from the Kropf orchard. There was a discussion about what the PDR program pays for land. D. Heffron said PDR payment is based on the difference between the agricultural value and development value of the land. He said land owners come out ahead with the PDR program. There was discussion about current sale prices for agricultural land. S. Hanson said people have looked at this property, but no one has made an offer.

J. Fues said he did not agree with the applicants reasoning for rezoning. He said the property is located near 2 busy roads and said this parcel is the 3rd site recommended in the township’s master plan for commercial zoning. D. Heffron said commercial operations do not interfere with agricultural operations.

F. Force said the applicant has the right to split the property whether it is zoned A1 or A2. He said property to the north is zoned A2 and has better soils than Mr. Hall’s property.

D. Heffron said if the township grants this request it should include a condition that the existing orchard is cut down. He said the orchard is a haven for insects. F. Force said he had issue with that request, as there is an unused orchard on township property at the Grattan sewer site.

S. Freeman had no comments.

P. Knoerl asked how much of the property is orchard. J. Hall said the orchard is between proposed parcels C & D. He said he has removed dead trees from the orchard.

S. Hanson said disclosure regarding farms in the area will be given to prospective buyers.

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J. Fues moved and S. Freeman seconded to consider approval of the ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the Township of Grattan for the application of Chris and Jody Hall for conditional rezoning from A1 agricultural district to A2 agricultural district. Roll call: Ayes: F. Force, J. Fues and S. Freeman. Nays: P. Knoerl and D. Heffron. The motion carried 3-2.

It was noted that the public hearing had not been opened. Board members discussed holding the public hearing and making another motion regarding the Hall rezoning. F. Force moved and S. Freeman seconded to open the public hearing. Ayes: F. Force, S. Freeman, P. Knoerl and J. Fues. Nays: D. Heffron.

There were no public comments.

F. Force moved and S. Freeman seconded to close the public hearing. The motion carried.

F. Force moved and S. Freeman seconded to consider approval of the ordinance to amend the Zoning Ordinance of the Township of Grattan for the application of Chris and Jody Hall for conditional rezoning from A1 agricultural district to A2 agricultural district. Roll call: Ayes: F. Force, J. Fues and S. Freeman. Nays: P. Knoerl and D. Heffron. The motion carried 3-2.

Sewer Hook-Up Fee Amendment

F. Force asked Board members opinion regarding including charges for the 2011 sewer assessment for new sewer hook ups. Board members discussed the matter and agreed to continue using the current charge of \$1200.

New Mower Deck

F. Force said the mower deck used at the sewer sites is no longer working. He provided 2 quotes from Weingartz Golf and Turf for mower decks. Board members discussed the matter. D. Heffron said willows at the Grattan treatment site should be removed and that location should be sprayed to keep the weeds down. F. Force will get a quote for that work.

J. Fues moved and P. Knoerl seconded to approve purchase of a mower deck from Weingartz at a cost of \$2,422.00. All ayes. The motion carried.

Township Policies and Procedures- Red Flag Rules

J. Fues said the Board previously reviewed red flag rules and determined they would implement red flags as needed. BSA software now offers the option for ACH payments. This will require the township to retain information covered under red flag rules. He asked Board members to review the existing township administrative policies and procedures handbook for any other suggested changes. The matter will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

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8. Board Member Communications

Meeting Dates

The second monthly Board meeting date (as needed) is May 23, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. The next regular Board meeting date is June 13 2011 at 7:00 p.m. The next Sewer Advisory meeting date is June 21, 2011 at 6:00 p.m. Kent County "Lunch on the Grill" is May 17, 2011 from 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Township Trash Clean Up day is May 21, 2011 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business, F. Force declared the meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Jim Fues, Township Clerk

Date

Franklin J. Force, Township Supervisor

Date

Diane Timmons
Recording Secretary