Approved 09/13/2022 - CG

Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting held August 18, 2022

Call to Order
Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Roll Call of Board Members
Board Members present in person: Popp, Goss, Benak, Glenn, Vollmuth
Board Members absent: None
Others present in person: 10, plus 2 Fleis & VandenBrink representatives
Others present via Zoom: 6

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda
Set

Declaration of Conflict of Interest
None declared

Public Comment
Public comment began at 9:01

Popp read a comment from Bob Campbell, president of the Elk-Skegemog Lake Association (ESLA) regarding the boat launch project, boat wash station and suggested to reject proposal with no boat wash station.

Rod Rebant commented on including a boat wash station, significant traffic change and community engagement.

Vicki Beam commented that she agrees with the previous commenters.

Dana, camper and boat launch user, commented on increasing the boat launch dock and boat wash station.

Jan Garvey, ESLA board member, commented on project cost and funding, boat wash station, increased traffic and historical data of launch use.

Linda Slopsema, riparian owner and ESLA board member, commented on invasive species, hot water boat wash station, boat launch data and counts, costs, repair known problems and create an advisory team.

Carl Wroubel commented on extending dock length and boat wash station.

Public comment ended at 9:19 a.m.

Agenda Items as Listed in Special Meeting Notice

TOWN HALL MEETING DETAILS

Proposed date is 9/22 at 7:00 p.m.
The school is available for $250 and has been reserved.
Benak and Goss will provide Sundberg with mailing lists.
Vollmuth and Glenn will help test and set up sound system.
Popp will set up a dedicated Gmail account for comments.
Postcard invite to include ARPA information, where, time, address and Gmail account.
Glenn and Vollmuth will work on language for the postcard.
Glenn will work with Mitchell Graphics to print and mail.
Clerk will issue a PO for printing and mailing.
Have note cards, pencils and a drop box available at the town hall meeting for written comments.
Popp and Glenn will do all setup at the school.

BOAT LAUNCH / ENTRYWAY IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Goss gave a brief history and status update on the project:
There is a boat wash station included in the project plans as presented.
Project has been in the works since 2019.
There was public input received prior to and during the public hearing held in January 2021.
The entire board voted in favor of the improvement plan.
Second boat wash station has been discussed.
Clerk wrote a GTB 2% grant request and was awarded $20,000 for a boat wash station.
Goss compiled and shared boat launch use data.
There have been no boat launch improvements since 1998.
There has been a 20% cost increase and a 20% contingency added.
New grant opportunities are available and we have shovel ready projects.
No taxpayer monies are to be used, only park and launch user fees.
The boat launch is a huge asset to the township.
The Park Fund account balance was approximately $327,000 as of the end of March 2022. At the end of July, there is over $400,000 in the Park Fund. There is enough park money available for this project.
The township has a contract with the state for this project and was awarded $200,000 of matching funds. Funds have already been spent, with $33,365 eligible for 50% reimbursement from the state.
The parking area can be worked on ahead of the boat launch.

Fleis and VandenBrink (F&V) representatives are available for questions and noted the length of the launch will be an additional 10 feet, bringing it to 45 feet. The additional depth will allow for bigger boats to launch.

Discussion ensued including:
Scaling down of the project and still meet Waterways Grant compliance
Inbound boat wash
Additional grant opportunities
Boat launch numbers
The need to get bids for accurate costs

Safety and efficiency in entering the park, launching boats, parking and retrieving boats
Staging dock vs. launch dock
Do the project in phases
Launch length, water depth and dock length
Available park funds
The board, as a whole, is in charge of the project

Motion by Goss to have Fleis & VandenBrink revise the plan to accommodate an inbound boat wash station at the current additional parking area and to provide those plans for the 9/13/2022 township board regular meeting; second by Benak.
Roll call: Vollmuth-no; Benak-yes; Popp-no; Glenn-no; Goss-yes. Motion failed.

F&V recommended they review the scalability and changes of the launch with Waterways and come back and make a report to the board at the September or October meeting.

A special meeting will need to be called.

Motion by Goss to allow Fleis & VandenBrink to come up with the plan for the inbound boat wash, to review scalability of the launch with Waterways and any other changes to scalability of the project and come back and make a report at a special meeting of the township board; second by Popp.

Discussion ensued including:
Total cost of the project
Grant funds and timing of use

Re-read of motion.

Popp requested specifics on what "scalability" board members are looking for. Goss noted F&V scalability notation.

Glenn recommended rebuild existing, repair, inbound boat wash and additional parking.

Vollmuth said rebuild, remodel, scale down.

Benak noted that this project has been to this board since 2019 and has been unanimously supported in several stages. Benak would like to see F&V bring back options as stated by Popp and Glenn for parking, boat launch and boat wash station.

Re-read the motion.

Roll Call: Goss-yes; Vollmuth-yes; Glenn-yes; Popp-no; Benak-yes. Motion carried.

F&V indicated that the docks are movable and can be used as a staging dock if preferred.
F&V noted that they will take scaling information to update the plans and requested.

Board Comments/Discussion 11:56 a.m.
Vollmuth would like information ahead when dealing with projects.

Public Comment

Public comment began at 11:57 a.m.

Dan Belanger commented that funding is from park user fees and is not a taxpayer funded project. He also commented on the pavilion, bathroom facilities, beach, free to the taxpayers because the township runs a campground, upgrade the public part of the park, township is not a bank to hold funds, park money is not taxpayer money, take care of what we have, spend the money on the park, be good stewards of the money.

Linda Slopsema commented on inbound boat wash, agree with much of what Belanger said, implementation of "lot full" status, doesn't feel the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee had input on the project.

Heidi Vollmuth, private citizen, commented on bringing the plans back, eliminating port-a-johns, park money is not "free money", safety, planks, trailer and paving the road.

Shelly Rybarsyk commented on Middle School National Honor Society helping with setup of the town hall meeting.

Popp noted there are many things that need to be fixed at the park.

Lois MacLean commented on Park and Recreation Advisory Committee input, grant monies, park user fees and addressing toilet problems.

Connie Hymore commented on funding, safety, repair and boat ramp use.

Scott Smith, seasonal resident, commented on additional park upgrades, restrooms, Hi Pray Park, addressing maintenance type items, people come to this area for the waterways, the township change and board members are elected to do what your constituents want you to do.

Denise Peltonen commented on not being part of the initial upgrade plans, widen entrance and noted that a boat wash takes about 2 minutes.

Vicki Beam posed a question regarding the money, camping rate fees, needs and wants of the campground – show us the money.

Vicky commented on previous public comments, non-boaters and non-campers use the park, additional parking, traffic and plan for road maintenance.

Public comment ended at 12:22 p.m.

Adjournment

Motion by Vollmuth to adjourn; second by Glenn.
Roll call vote: Benak-yes; Glenn-yes; Goss-yes; Vollmuth-yes; Popp-yes. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lois MacLean
Recording Secretary