

MORTON TOWNSHIP

STRATEGIC PLANNING – SPECIAL MEETING

MARCH 7, 2009

Meeting was called to order by Supervisor Jim Quinlan at 9:00 A.M. at the New Fire Hall. This meeting was meant to be an informational, prioritize ideas, projects and to strategically plan out the next 5 years.

Pledge of Allegiance: By all in attendance

Roll Call: By Clerk Yo Bellingar

Member of the Board present: Jim Quinlan, Y. Bellingar, D. Behrend, M.Kuzma, and J. Burkle

Public present: 41 signed in and approximately 10 others also attended.

Treasurer D. Behrend was pleased to report that 95.5% of the Summer Taxes and 94.6% of the winter taxes have been collected for 2008-2009.

Jim Quinlan explained to the public the reason for this special strategic planning meeting was to get input and ideas from the public on what direction to move forward in the next five years.

Pre-designed signs on the wall helped to guide the discussion along and keep the length of the meeting as short as possible.

Signs Posted on the wall Read as follows:

“What services are currently provided ”

ASSESSMENTS

BOARD OF REVIEW

ELECTIONS – 2 POLLING PLACES, MECOSTA & FIRE HALL AT C/L

SPRING CLEAN-UP – MAY 23, 2009 9-12 P.M.

ZONING & PLANNING

- BUILDING – TOM RUELLE
- MECHANICAL
- ELECTRICAL
- PLUMBING

CEMETERY – MOWING & MAINTENANCE

LIBRARY – BUILT 1991 – MARY ANN LENON – DIRECTOR introduced staff and mentioned the plans for a new addition which is waiting for funding

ROADS – COUNTY OWNS ROADS. Participating money available from County

- **BLACK TOPS**- One Mile Costs One Million Dollars
- **SEAL COAT** -

Estimated cost of M-20 at Schrader Creek \$3-4 Million Dollars and trying to get stimulus funds. Township usually pays 25% up to 50% for road repair with \$200,000 in the budget.

SIGNAGE – Strongly suggested lower Speed on Buchanan and Pierce Road.

CAUTION LIGHTS – Safety lights to illuminate busy or dangerous intersections

CONTRACTED MAINTENANCE- 3 LOCATIONS & POSSIBLY THE LIBRARY

- **CLEANING**
- **LAWN CARE**
- **SNOW PLOWING**
- **MAINTENANCE**
- **BUILDING**
- **EQUIPMENT**
- **TRAINED AS FIRE & RESCUE RESPONDER**

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT – Introduced Fire Chief Allen Sutherby – announced they have meetings every other Wednesday and following they have ongoing training.

- 2- FIRE HOUSES
- 2 -PUMPERS
- 2-TENDERS/TANKERS
- 1-LADDER TRUCK
- BRASS FIRE RIGS
- 95' MID-MOUNT LADDER TRUCK
- HOOVER CRAFT

- **CERT PROGRAM** – Group has taken training and waiting for scheduling to take final examination

- **SCUBA DIVING TEAM NEEDED** – MULTI LAKES IN THE AREA

- **EMT** – MEDICAL RESPONDERS

- **PARAMEDICS** – NONE AVAILABLE – USUALLY WORK IN EMERGENCY ROOMS

WHAT SERVICES THE TOWNSHIP COULD PROVIDE

PUBLIC WORKS – RESEARCH TO HAVE ONE FULL TIME EMPLOYEE TAKE CARE OF:

- Township Hall, Fire Station, Fire Hall C/L, Cemetery and possibly collaborate with Library
 - Plowing Snow

- Mowing
- Cleaning
- Maintenance
- Trained Fire Fighter and/or First Responder

RECYCLING

- Cost approximately \$500-\$600 per day collected
- Subsidize or pay as you use
- Location/Duration/Cost – Donation (Semi Truck Trailer Donated)
- Twice a Month 9-12:00 P.M. = \$1200 per month
- Monitors/volunteers
- \$150 Cost of Driver per trip to Big Rapids to unload
- \$150 Cost to Unload in Big Rapids, Mecosta Co. Recycle Center
- Show of Hands – Majority interested to pursue as a convenience for the community

HISTORICAL COMMISSION – Meet monthly on 1st Monday, 10:00 A.M. at the Township Hall

Director explained the back ground and history of our community becoming a first to have Native Indians, Black, White, immigrants from Poland, Germany, and Ireland.

JOINT PROJECTS 5 YEAR PLAN INCLUDE-

- **2009** –Open Old One Room School House at School Section Lake Co. Park
 - Use as a functional classroom.
 - Need \$20,000 to finish furnishing,
 - DVD,
 - Volunteers,
 - Suggested to offer FREE CAMPING to a Care Taker of the School
- **2010** –Build Log Cabin Museum at a cost of \$75,000
 - Location suggestions
 - School Section Lake Co. Park
 - Mecosta Village
 - Canadian Lakes
- **2011**- Museum Furnished and Open to the Public

Linda Howard noted that Remus Historical Society have given donations to Mecosta Area.

Other suggestions:

- Apply for Funding from the Arts Stimulus Money
- Use a Railroad Diner Car to Serve Dinners
- Working with Village and Township Projects
- Article put in C/L Communique and The Pioneer Group Newspaper

YOUTH & FAMILY PROGRAMS – Director reported following:

- Mecosta Youth Center – Non-Profit after school programs working together with the local schools. Participating students, mostly Elementary ages and some Jr. High

- \$30,000 Donated by the Chapel of the Lakes to start the building and donated transportation with their bus to help kids get to and from school.
- \$30,000 Needed to complete the project
- Volunteer Mentors needed for the kids without parents

SKATE & BIKE PARK – Parents reported 1 out of 6 kids Skate Board or Roller Blade

- Proposed laying a concrete flat slab 50' x 70' with an estimated cost of \$3,900 could be converted to a picnic area.
- Build portable ramps \$300 - \$10,000
- Suggested Sites: Village of Mecosta Park (15' back from sidewalk) or Youth Center
- Large Skate Board Parks are located all over the state and as close as Mt. Pleasant and Midland

STREET & OVER HEAD SAFETY LIGHTS – Matt Klein reported that Safety studies show they prevent accidents

- Show of hands Everyone wants to be a priority

INSPECTION FEES – Should we update General Fund by subsidize or should fees be raised? As they stand, the fees are not covering expenses.

- Mechanical
- Building
- Plumbing
- Electrical

Fees should be based on Normal Standards, township subsidize during recessions and should be updated (Majority of hands)

RECREATION – Reported that we cannot apply for Grants without a 5 Year Master Plan in place.

- Swim Classes
- Bike Paths
- Trails
- Clean the streams for fishing, canoeing, etc.
- \$2,500 Cost to put together a Master Plan and will take 6 months

Show of hands showed majority to go ahead and get the Master Plan.

PUBLIC SAFETY -

- Underwater Marine Program
- Constable
- Zoning Enforcement
- Search & Rescue
- Surface

FIRE DEPARTMENT – Proposal for a Full Time Fire Chief

- Chief Allen Sutherby reported average of 5 Fire Calls monthly, 75% Rescue rather than fire. Capital Improvement to investigate increase in mileage. Show of hands, TOP Priority
 - Recruit and Retain

- Pay more to keep trained Fire/Rescue
- Write Staffing Grants
- Day Shift needed Full Chief and/or Trainer
- Put on prevention programs at schools
- Infrastructure – Support
 - ISO Ratings down to improve community and lower Insurance
 - 2 years of documents and reports to fill out Fire Dept./Rescue reports
 - 2 years of documents for all equipment

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Do Something about: HOMES, FARMS STRUCTURES AND GROUNDS

- Vacant, condemned Homes
- Barnes collapsing, dangerous
- Sheds “ “ “ “
- Trash & Junk Pilled in yards, back of property, JUNK Ordinance?
- Form a group of Volunteer to clean up, but suggested they get \$100 off Taxes?
- Form incentive to clean up property
 - Fine Homeowners
 - Put Lean on property to be collected at Sale of property
 - Planning & Zoning Enabler can issue a ticket, homeowner must go to court

CALL NUMBER 211 – Suggested to start in Mecosta, Newaygo, Lake and Osceola Counties

- Number to call if you are evicted or having troubles and need advice (Upper Penn. charges each person \$1 per year on taxes)

NON-PHOSPHOROUS FERTILIZER- Use on lawns to Stop Lake Weed Growth

- Write an Ordinance against using Phosphorous on lawns, laundry, dishwashers, water softeners
- DEQ Check to see if already written
- Use Worm Castings – 100 % organic

LIST OF PRIORITIES AS IDENTIFIED AT MEETING

Committees to be appointed to investigate

- Youth and Family Services – Skate Park
- Road repairs and installation of street safety lights

- Review building permit fees structure
- Hiring a full time Fire Chief
- Hire a full time public works employee

ITEMS THAT DESERVE MORE STUDY AND INVESTIGATION INCLUDE:

Committees will be appointed to investigate

- Mecosta – Morton Historical Society Projects
- Recreation Plan that will include Rails to Trails, parks, river and stream improvements, swim classes, etc.
- Recycling
- Public Safety Issues