

Approved as amended, 10/15/12

Casco Township Board of Trustees

Regular Meeting Minutes of September 17, 2012, 7:00 p.m.

Present: Overhiser, Ridley, Graff, Winfrey, Cowie; and approximately 30 people. Overhiser called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and led in the pledge of allegiance.

Overhiser invited **public comment:**

Jim McKenzie spoke about availability of Township minutes within the 8 days required by law. He had explored some costs for making documents available online in a way that wouldn't compromise privacy. He said second home owners want access to information and requested that Township explore a new strategy for getting documents online.

Board members responded with a brief explanation about the part time nature of the staff, the management of minutes, and that not all minutes are available electronically. The website has been updated.

David Diny asked the board to check adjacent Townships for what they put on their websites. He requested that more senior service news be put on the website. He wondered about the process for reviewing minutes and how accurately they reflect what occurred or what was said at meetings. He recently met with the assistant assessor. Mr. Diny stated that there was no way the assessor came to his house on the day he said he did. He raised questions about photographs related to property assessment information.

Several residents from the Washington Street area expressed concerns about Developer Mr. Jonna, who wants to develop land next to Baseline Middle School, now perhaps with medium density. Mr. McKenzie wants to find a way to hold Casco Township accountable for flooding on Washington Street.

Connie Schaeffer, a Washington Street resident, agreed with the comments.

Marcy Fitch hadn't heard anything back from Becky Rininger since August 27. Overhiser had a letter from Ms. Rininger, which he read aloud.

Minutes:

Graff moved approval of special meeting minutes of July 31, 2012 with one amendment on page 3, *at no cost to the Township for the next five years*, supported by Winfrey; MSC.

Winfrey moved approval of special meeting minutes of August 6, 2012, supported by Graff; MSC.

Graff moved approval of the Regular August 20, 2012 minutes, supported by Cowie, with the following amendments:

- p. 1, *the crowd in attendance was most interested in the TOPIC OF HIGH DENSITY AND CREATION OF A HIGH DENSITY TEXT AMENDMENT AND*
- p. 3, *He believes the R5 zoning change would be a mistake and would continue*
- p. 4, end paragraph with Drain Commissioner Becky Rininger.
- New paragraph: The Planning Commission will take up THIS MATTER ~~the effort of this matter.~~

These minutes were approved with the above amendments.

Treasurer's report:

General Fund	\$462,023.27
Parks Fund	\$4,319.27
Senior Services	\$20,244.31
Fire Department	\$639,112.61
Road Fund	\$249,264.23

Winfrey moved and Ridley seconded approval of bills, including General Fund orders #21642-21685 in the amount of \$75,417.74; Collected tax orders #2756-2762, \$504,012.62; Parks Fund orders #290-301 in the amount of \$9,839.80; and seniors fund orders #325-329 in the amount of \$4,411.13. MSC.

Planning commission: Judy Graff reported that on Wednesday 9/12, the Planning Commission recommended to deny adopting chapter 9-A of the Zoning Ordinance, amending it to include a High Density Residential district. This decision was based primarily on drainage issues and safety (and adequate police protection).

Parks & Recreation: Bruce Brandon, Chair of Parks Committee, reported that the committee picked up trash at the Nature Preserve (though there wasn't much), and saved the silt fence. There is an old storage building and a few cement blocks on the site.

The Committee wants to know if the 28 acres will have any foresting activity. The tree harvesting at the Transfer station site is not completed.

There is a desire to fencing off the Blue Star frontage of Maple Grove to match the Nature Preserve and tie it together as one site. The proposal is to install a 3 rail split rail fence, extending from the remote control gate to the Maple Grove driveway, approximately 660 linear feet, at a cost of approximately \$7755.00, to be installed within the next 2-3 weeks. Winfrey moved approval, Graff supported; MSC.

A question was asked about the intention of the fence; Pam Blough explained the purpose of the split rail fence on the bluff edge. Winfrey asked about installing warning signs, but consensus was that we do not want to have "do not" signs all over.

In public comment, Peter Klan favored "warning, steep bluff" signage.

A question was raised about the bidding process for the split rail fence. The Township had competitive bids prior to now; Katerberg Verhage is still doing work on site, and we extended the opportunity to them as a change order.

Bob Baker, in public comment, wanted to make sure the Parks & Recreation committee knows about The Alliance for the Great Lakes.

The ribbon cutting for the Nature Preserve is Friday, 9/21, at 11 a.m.

Seniors: Susan Katt promoted the Casco Senior Care Program newsletter. She announced upcoming programs, including flu shots & pneumonia vaccine, on October 3, 10 to 12 noon. A Dementia course starts in the end of October. A Medicare D consultant is available on Oct 23 & Oct 30.

David Diny asked several questions about how programs are set and whether the organizations that lead them are compensated. Susan Katt answered the questions.

County Commissioner: Tom Jessup reported that Commissioners are in the middle of budget decisions. He also announced an upcoming meeting with Georgia Pacific Corporation, to clean up the Kalamazoo River for \$150 million. There is a question if that's enough money to get the job done.

The County re-applied for a State grant for the Drug court. They are also pursuing grant funding to keep patrols on the road.

In public comment, David Diny asked about the ACRDC (Allegan County Resource Development Committee) and if Jessup is still on the board. ACRDC provides volunteer transportation for Allegan County. So far it has not been successful; they have discontinued services.

Discussion ensued about this matter, with several questions from the public and concern over the use of tax funding. Overhiser has been in contact with Rob Sarro, Sherry Owens, and Don Black about the matter. Casco is not just going to accept what's happened.

David Diny questioned why there are no open meetings conducted by the ACRDC, and they don't publish any financial statements. Jessup responded that, as a non-profit organization, they don't fall under the open meetings act.

Mr. Diny also asked how often does the GA food service contract comes up for renewal; he asked if Mr. Jessup had ever seen any validation of the nutritional value or quality of the food served to the elderly.

Dan Fleming questioned the implications of the public wanting the government to feed and transport people.

Jessup summarized that the Commissioners will be approving the budget, which shows a 14-15% reduction in last 4 years. The budget will be discussed on Oct 11 at 7 pm.

ZBA: no report

Old Business:

High Density: Graff moved to accept the recommendation from the Planning Commission to deny adopting the zoning ordinance text amendment for a High density Residential district, based on safety and drainage issues; Ridley seconded. In a roll call vote, Ridley, Graff, Winfrey, Overhiser, and Cowie vote yes. MSC.

Office update: Seniors will be moving to the Township Hall. A quote to remodel the fire station kitchen into an office, and relocate all functions currently occurring at the church, has been received from John

Brush. The quote includes putting in windows, shelving, and a door for \$8500, and includes a work table and shelving allowance. Cowie moved approval of the bid; supported by Winfrey; MSC. Ridley abstained from the vote as Brush is his relative.

Discussion ensued about making sure there is a 60" turning area for entering the proposed senior office, which is the diameter needed for persons using a motorized cart. There may be need for a double door (or a bigger door).

Marcy Fitch, in public comment, asked if the Furnace/Blower could also be addressed during the building renovation, as it makes too much noise during meetings. Cowie responded that someone is coming to install an amplifier system/microphones on Monday.

Coastal Management Zone Grant: Cowie announced that correspondence has been received from the Coastal Management Zone Grant, that the Township's application for beach stairs and a viewing platform has been recommended for funding. This is a 50% match program, and the grant is for approximately \$46,000.

Mandatory Sewer hookup: Overhiser reported that notices for the mandatory hookup were sent out in the Spring. This process has resulted in few hookups to date, but many inquiries. There has been a lot of straightening out of records. People have until August 2013 to hook up.

Diane Schlanser, in public comment, feels that the Water/Sewer Authority was mismanaged; she got a letter even though she's been hooked up. Her neighbor had been hooked up but hasn't been charged. She can hear sounds of dishwashers and washing machines through the sewer in West Wing. She is angry about the mismanagement and feels there should be an audit in the city of the water/sewer system.

Overhiser acknowledged that there are some, but probably not many who've hooked up who haven't paid. The process has identified about 100 POTENTIAL parcels that ~~are not~~ COULD BE hooked up.

Schlanser's feeling was that the number of non-complying customers was higher, based on her own experiences talking with people.

Overhiser responded that there have been attempts at reconciling problems, and the scope of the financial contribution that wrongly connected customers would've made pales to the scope of the whole debt of the bonds. And it is also true that Washington St is a target area for identifying persons incorrectly hooked up to the system.

Bob Baker attributed the problem to decisions made in 1997, when Don Maxwell funded the project through the Township instead of through bonds. He feels that Overhiser is stuck with bad math from Maxwell & Jessup. We now have a \$20 million water filtration plant. The Water/Sewer authority has no higher authority to stop them from doing what they're doing. Mr. Baker is suspicious of the City's controlling manner over the Authority.

Overhiser cautioned about making projections. Some kind of commercial growth on Blue Star Highway, North Shore drive, or the proposed rezoning of Baseline Road would help with Water/Sewer finances.

Overhiser further reported that the study is underway about drainage—it needs to be done for the whole area. He went on to say that the Board didn't get into the Water/sewer business because it wanted to, but Lakeshore residents demanded it because they needed sewer service. There was annexing going on and people didn't want to be annexed.

Baker favors integration with the Planning Commission and the Water/Sewer authority, to coordinate growth and disseminate the need to grow.

Overhiser responded that no one was seeking out a high density development, but the Township needs something to lower the water/sewer bill. Bills need to be lowered and the Township needs to be paid back. Something more than single family homes is needed.

Baker criticized the Chair of the Planning Commission for acting beyond his job description.

Overhiser described that the discussion changed when the school went in. The Township struggled to find an area for medium density. Baseline Rd. would've been ideal, but the school owned it. When the school became open to selling it, the opportunity for a medium density (or higher) presented itself.

Discussion ensued about the process of mandatory hookups and the current endeavor to identify sewer customers hooked into the system without paying into it. Overhiser will get a count of how many have been caught after illegally hooking up.

Monte Brenner commented that when water/sewer went in, there was a real estate market crash. Cherie Brenner said she wished she could hook up to water/sewer, but it does not go that far northward.

Carol May asked if there can be some kind of moratorium on putting things in until we solve the flooding issues.

Overhiser responded that a moratorium is not necessary; now, any developer developing the site on Baseline Road would have to build it according to drain commission specs and also sign a 433 agreement that would put the developer on the hook if anything went awry with the drainage.

Dennis Jim McKenzie provided an update on a new drainage plan involving Mr. Super's land, Mr. Jensen's land, a ravine, and detention and retention ponds.

Overhiser is willing to tour Benignos and Martin Super's land on a rainy day. He reminded those present that with additional customers on the water/sewer system, the debt retirement payment could go lower.

Marcy Fitch asked about capacity issues related to the water/sewer system. (There is adequate capacity.) Overhiser responded that a lift station could accommodate another 100 homes.

Bruce Barker said some water/sewer projections were based on historically platted lots.

Dianne Ostermann commented that, just because you build it doesn't mean they'll come; she wanted to ensure there is a desire for whatever is built.

Overhiser responded that there are no guarantees of occupancy, but we do have safeguards related to police protection.

A question was asked if the density goes to 6 units/acre, how will that solve a problematic parcel that has drainage issues? Overhiser responded that a 433 agreement would require a developer to fix any drainage issues caused by the development

Pam Blough stated that it doesn't matter if it's one house or a development, any drainage plan would have to be approved by the drain commissioner. It has to be designed—site drainage and density aren't the same thing. It has to be a designed water system.

Bruce Barker talked about the lengthy testimony the Planning Commission took on this project over 5 months.

Roads: Repaving requests have been received from Glenn Shores subdivision and Miami Park (especially Lakeview).

Appoint Electrical Inspector: Overhiser proposed appointing Gord Bosch, out of Holland, according to same terms as Dick Burrows, who is retiring. Mr. Bosch would coordinate well with Alfred, and he uses a cell phone. Overhiser moved to appoint Gord Bosch as the Casco Township Electrical Inspector, supported by Cowie; MSC.

Millage rates: Resolution #120917, attached, outlines amounts to be collected this year. The Operating & Roads are both the maximum; Fire & Ambulance are both lowered by half from the prior year. The Recycling fee is per household, unchanged. Cowie moved to adopt the resolution; Ridley, Graff, Winfrey, Cowie, and Overhiser voted yes.

Correspondence: Allan Overhiser read aloud a letter from Marcy Fitch dated September 12, 2012, outlining thoughts about the Township's expenditures and her own desire to not have density increased.

Motion to adjourn moved by Graff at 9:58 pm, supported by Winfrey; adjourned.

Respectfully,

Julie M. Cowie
Clerk

Attachments:

Drain Commissioner letter dated 8/28/12

Resolution 120917, 2012-2013 Fiscal Year Millage Rates

Correspondence dated August 2012, "This is an official correspondence" related to R-5 High Density Zoning, received from Celia Kotarak, 7409 Washington Street, Larry Kotarek (same address), Derek Schlonsky, 28 North Shore Drive N; Roy & Paula Condotti, 19 Columbine