

# Township Board Minutes January 12, 2021

## CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Supervisor Dignan via tele-conference.

## INVOCATION/PLEDGE

Supervisor Dignan provided a brief invocation and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## ROLL CALL

Kenneth Dignan, Supervisor	Present
Kathleen Manley, Clerk	Present
Lenore Zelenock, Treasurer	Present
Janet Chick, Trustee	Present
Nate Muchow, Trustee	Present
Joshua Nelson, Trustee	Present
Jacki Otto, Trustee	Present

Also present:

**Public Safety Director William Wagner**  
**Township Manager Steven Aynes**  
Township Controller Yvette Starbuck  
Township Attorney James Fink, Fink & Fink PLLC  
**Township Planner Natalie Bond, McKenna Associates**  
**Recording Secretary Lisa Lemble**  
**Members of the community**

## CONSENT AGENDA

- **Department and Manager Reports**
  - **Check Disbursement (12/8/20 - 1/7/21)**
  - **Payment of Open Bills (1/13/21)**
- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Nelson seconded, that the consent agenda for January 12, 2021, be accepted as presented.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

Each Trustee indicated they were located in Northfield Township, Washtenaw County, in the State of Michigan.

## ADOPT BALANCE OF AGENDA

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Chick seconded, that the balance of the agenda be adopted, moving the McKenna Associates presentation of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan to precede Old Business.

Zelenock said she does not believe changing the order of agenda items is a good policy.

**Motion carried 6—1 on a roll call vote, Zelenock opposed.**

## PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Marissa Prizgint, 32 Schrum Drive, asked questions about the sale of Township property to Al Dente Pasta Company and agenda item request form for Board meeting agendas.

## BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/ MANAGER'S CLARIFICATIONS

Dignan noted the Al Dente Pasta property purchase request will be discussed later in the meeting, and the agenda request form will be available online.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, that the minutes of the December 17, 2020, Special Board Meeting be approved as presented.

Zelenock noted she had previously requested a name spelling correction.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

## CORRESPONDENCE

*People's Express Quarterly Report.* Zelenock explained this report was requested quarterly by the Board and noted the demand has increased every year. She and other Board members noted demand is mainly within the Township and they are also delivering food, and the service is needed and very much appreciated.

## PRESENTATION:

### Update from McKenna Associates Regarding the 2021-26 Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Natalie Bond, McKenna Associates, gave a slide presentation and made comments, including:

- Having a Parks & Recreation Master Plan is important to be eligible for a variety of grants, including from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.
- The recent survey, completed by about 225 people, identified priorities of the public, including natural features preservation, connectivity with the community, lakefront access, and greater safety and walkability.
- The Committee identified priority projects, including creating a border-to-border trail, creating a Riverwalk, and collaborating on the North Village park plan and project.
- The Master Plan must be submitted to the DNR by February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Otto said she feels it is vital that the size of the park in the North Village be stated in this Plan.

- ▶ **Motion:** Otto moved, Chick seconded, that the size of the park, which includes the lakefront, the park, the parking, and trails within Northfield Community Park, which is located in North Village, be no larger than 12 acres and no smaller than 10 acres, providing approximately 50% for park development.

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Dignan said Livonia Builders is still interested, but in a smaller project, and Dignan said he feels this proposal will fit in with that interest. Zelenock and Chick said the Board needs to keep the public informed of decisions like this and solicit input from the public as well.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Affirm Board Member Representative and Committee Appointments**

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Zelenock seconded, to affirm the Board member representative and committee appointments of the Board of Trustees to various other Boards settled on at a previous meeting. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**2.**

**Boards and Commissions Appointments**

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Zelenock seconded, that Scott Chisholm be reappointed to the Board of Review for a term expiring December of 2022. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Chick seconded, to appoint L.J. Walter to the Board of Review for a term expiring December of 2022. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Chick seconded, to appoint Vicki Higgins to the Board of Review for a term expiring December of 2022. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Chick seconded, to reappoint John Zarzecki to the Planning Commission for a term expiring December of 2023. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, to appoint Scott Gustafson to the Planning Commission for a term expiring December of 2023. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Chick seconded, to appoint Adam Olney to fill the term on the Zoning Board of Appeals previously held by Scott Gustafson, expiring December of 2021. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, to appoint Rachel Smith to the Zoning Board of Appeals to a term expiring December of 2023. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, that James Balsillie be reappointed to the Zoning Board of Appeals as an alternate for a term expiring December of 2023. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Zelenock seconded, that Julia Henshaw be reappointed to the Land Preservation Committee for a term expiring December of 2023. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, to appoint Marissa Prizgint to the Huron River Watershed Council for a term expiring December of 2022. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, to appoint L.J. Walter as an alternate to the Washtenaw County Broadband Task Force for a term expiring December of 2022. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**
- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Chick seconded, to appoint Marta Larson to the Washtenaw County Urban County Executive Committee for a term expiring December of 2022. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

Dignan said he is very pleased to see people becoming newly involved and grateful to those continuing to serve. He noted people are still needed for the Board of Review, DDA, Land Preservation, and Huron River Watershed Council.

**3.**

**Discussion of Ethics Policy**

Zelenock said this policy was adopted by the prior Board and suggested that the new Board also adopt it.

- ▶ **Motion:** Zelenock moved, Otto seconded, that the Board of Trustees approve the Ethics Policy as presented.
- Muchow suggested that Board members also sign the policy. Zelenock accepted that as an amendment to her motion, and clarified this is a policy of the Board.
- ▶ **Amended motion:** Zelenock moved, Otto seconded, that the Board of Trustees approve and sign the Ethics Policy as presented. **Amended motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**NEW BUSINESS: ACTION ITEMS**

**1.**

**Consider Renewal of People's Express Contract**

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, to continue the contract with People's Express in the amount of \$10,000 for the duration of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

Otto recommended that this be either a multi-year or automatically renewing contract. Dignan suggested adopting the proposed contract and amending it at a later date to make it automatically renewing.

In answer to a question, Doug Anderson, People's Express Director, said age information about riders is recorded only at the driver's discretion. At Muchow's request he provided information about the history and services of the

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non-profit. Board members thanked People's Express for supporting the community.

Zelenock said as a member of the People's Express Board she will be abstaining from voting.

**Motion carried 6—0—1 on a roll call vote, Zelenock abstaining.**

**2.**

**Resolution 21-635:  
Fiscal Year 2021-21 Budget Amendment #1**

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Otto seconded, to adopt Resolution 21-635. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote. Resolution adopted.**

**3.**

**Al Dente Pasta Proposal for Purchase of  
0.5 Acres of the North Village Property**

Dignan said the owner of Al Dente is proposing this purchase because the operation needs to expand or move, likely out of Northfield Township. He said he believes the owner and the Township planner need to determine whether the proposed land area will support the expansion, and he asked Aynes to set up a meeting among them.

In answer to a question from Chick, Dignan said it is his understanding that the zoning is proper for the use. Board members indicated they are willing to consider a future proposal for a possible sale. Chick noted the land is valued at about \$50,000/acre.

**4.**

**Authorization to Take Legal Action for Recovery  
of Earnest Money Due to Buyer not Proceeding  
with the Sale of 75 Barker Road**

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Zelenock seconded, to proceed with legal action to recover earnest money due to the buyer not proceeding with the sale of 75 Barker Road, not to exceed legal fees of \$1,000 plus actual expenses incurred. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**5.**

**Authorize Public Safety Director to  
Hire/Fire Employees under his Direct Supervision**

- ▶ **Motion:** Dignan moved, Nelson seconded, to authorize the Public Safety Director to hire and fire employees under his direct supervision.

In answer to a question from Wagner, the Board confirmed that this will also cover promotions. Wagner said he will include in his monthly update to the Board his intent to hire, fire, or promote personnel. Wagner said he will include that in his monthly report.

**Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

**NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**1.**

**Update from McKenna Associates Regarding the  
2021-26 Parks & Recreation Master Plan**

[Presentation made prior to Old Business].

**2.**

**Discussion of Fitness Park Proposal**

Otto explained that she reached out to National Fitness Campaign (NFC) after seeing a news report about their intent to install 15 "fitness courts" in the area in cooperation with Priority Health. She said NFC needs to know by February 1<sup>st</sup> if the Township is interested for the next round of projects, but they will also begin accepting proposals this May for 2022. She explained that the cost to the Township would be \$150,000 plus the cost of installing the concrete pad.

The Board agreed it would be a great community asset and discussed the extent and cost of upkeep, liability, making sure the public is informed, and sources of funding. It was agreed that this would have to wait for the 2022 project year since the North Village park planning is not yet done.

**3.**

**Discussion Regarding Independent Contractors**

Otto recalled that the Board previously determined that independent contractor agreements are needed for the janitorial service, recording secretary, and videographer to be in compliance with the Township's personnel policies.

Aynes said the recording secretary has signed a release making it clear she is an independent contractor but has questions about supplying the insurance recommended by the Township attorney, the videographer does not feel an agreement is required, and the janitor—who is currently a Township employee—does not wish to be an independent contractor.

The Board agreed these agreements are needed. Aynes noted agreements are already in place with the mechanical, plumbing and electrical inspectors, and the building and assessing staff are under contract with their employers.

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Muchow seconded, to direct Township Manager Aynes to work with those people who need to be designated as an independent contractor or an employee and get the appropriate documents signed within 30 days. **Motion carried 7—0 on a roll call vote.**

Zelenock asked how volunteers are handled. Chief Wagner said volunteers he used several years ago—approved by action of the Township Board—were covered under the Township's general liability policy. Aynes said he will follow-up regarding other volunteers, such as at the Community Center.

Marissa Prizgint noted later in the meeting that Meals on Wheels volunteers sign waivers with the County.

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**TRUSTEE/LIAISON REPORTS**

Dignan reported that in addition to his conversations with Livonia Builders about North Village, the North Territorial and Whitmore Lake Road PUD proposal is moving forward, many downtown buildings are being renovated, there has been significant interest in bringing other new businesses to the Township.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- The next Board of Trustees meeting will be January 26<sup>th</sup>.
- The public can make comments until January 26<sup>th</sup> on the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.

**PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Adam Olney, 9215 Lakeview Court, thanked the Board for his appointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals, and suggested a non-lakefront location for Al Dente Pasta.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/  
MANAGER CLARIFICATION**

Board member comments included:

- Updates to the Township website are underway and will be ready to use in several weeks.
- Aynes recommended setting a new day for the public input meeting regarding the lakefront portion of the

North Village park. He noted one was planned last year, but not held due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Chick said she will be asking that a discussion on the Communication Plan be placed on the on next agenda, specifically concerning how it can be determined in advance whether the Township attorney needs to be present at a meeting. Aynes noted that to save money Township attorney Fink has agreed to be on call and join Board meetings in case he is needed.
- Board members congratulated and thanked appointees to boards and commissions. Dignan asked that Aynes make sure these people are provided with background and training materials, and urged all Board members to get any information they need from staff related to their duties as Trustees.
- Dignan recommended to those interested to look at the 200 feet of beachfront on Walled Lake as an example of what could be done with the Township's similarly-sized beachfront in the North Village park.

**ADJOURNMENT**

- ▶ **Motion:** Chick moved, Otto seconded, that the meeting be adjourned.  
**Motion carried 7—0 on a voice vote.**

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 P.M.

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Submitted by Lisa Lemble.

Corrections to the originally issued minutes are indicated as follows:  
Wording removed is ~~stricken through~~;  
Wording added is underlined.

Approved by the Township Board on \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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Kathleen Manley, Clerk

Official minutes of all meetings are available on the Township's website at [http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township\\_board\\_of\\_trustees/](http://www.twp-northfield.org/government/township_board_of_trustees/)