

Minutes
Park Township Environment & Energy Committee
April 23, 2009

Environmental Chair Jerry Hunsburger called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm Thursday, April 23, 2009.

Present: Doug Yonker, Julia Johnson, John Barwis, Doug Wehrmeyer, citizens; Bill Chappell, Driesenga and Associates; Paul Geerlings, County Drain Commissioner; Skip Keeter, Park Township Board

Absent: Mike Toscano, Park Township Board; Bill Cole, Park Township Planning Commission

The Meeting minutes follow:

Chair Hunsburger introduced members and restated the committee's goal, which is to recommend steps to move forward on the preliminary plan submitted by Driesenga and Associates.

1. Committee discussed limitations on the use of Township funds:
 - A. Township funds may be used to ensure the health, welfare and convenience of the public
 - B. Township may need drain assessment districts to fund improvements in areas most affected by the abnormally high water table.
2. Drain Commissioner Geerlings discussed past practices in Park Township and the use of special assessment districts.
 - A. Park Township policy has been to service county drains at large once they're built.
 - B. There are drain districts within Park Township but no tax assessments to residents.
 - C. Establishment of a tax assessment district to fund drain improvements requires a petition signed by five residents asking that it happen. A petition has been submitted to the Drain Commissioner by residents in the Estate Drive area.
 - D. Petitions are forwarded to a Board of Determination which meets when called by the Drain Commissioner. A Board of Determination is appointed for each petition. Because of the high water table throughout Ottawa County there are currently 15 petitions to be considered. Ordinarily the Board of Determination is appointed to review one petition.
 - E. Because of the extreme nature of the flooding on Estate Drive in Tall Grass, and along Quincy Street, Commissioner Geerlings will ask for guidance on moving that petition ahead with the intent of bringing relief to the entire affected area.
 - F. A petition to establish a new drain district would require signatures of at least 10 property owners of the township with at least 5 owning land that will be located in the drainage district and therefore who would be liable for a portion of the costs related to the drain construction.
 - G. All County Drains in Park Township are gravity fed with the exception of one drain on the South side of Lake Macatawa.

3. Bill Chappell discussed the findings of Driesenga and Associates and possible solutions to the problem areas. Based on input to Park Township by affected residents, the map of extensive high water and flooding issues is being expanded and will be addressed in Driesenga's plans. Mr. Chappell's preliminary recommendations include the following:
 - A. Replace the Drain 37 crossing at 152nd Ave. This may involve lowering the culvert.
 - B. Lower the Drain 37 crossing at Riley St. and clean the drain downstream.
 - C. Lower the culvert at Quincy one foot.
 - D. Deepen the drain three feet just south of Riley St.
 - E. Cleaning out the ditches will help but Drain 37 still needs to be deeper.
 - F. There is an abandoned drain on the South side of Quincy which might provide relief to the Estate Drive/Tall Grass/Quincy area.
 - G. Mr. Chappell and Mr. Geerlings both feel that Pine Creek can handle the additional runoff.

4. Mr. Chappell suggested three possible permanent solutions to the water table issues in the Estate Drive/Tall Grass/Quincy area:
 - A. A new drain to Lake Michigan
 - B. Install ditches along Estate Drive
 - C. Improve Drain 37.

The committee also discussed the intersection of Post and Greenwood. Mr. Geerlings reports there are both county drains and road commission drains serving that area and they are being inspected.

The committee instructed Mr. Chappell to come back with the ideal plan and timelines. The target is a comprehensive plan prepared for the next Board of Trustees meeting on May 14.

The next meeting of the Environmental/Technology Committee will be at 7:00 pm Thursday, April 30.

Mr. Hunsburger adjourned the session at 8:45 pm.

*Respectfully submitted by:
Skip Keeter, Park Township Clerk*