



## **Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association**

### **Minutes March 09, 2024**

**Directors Present:** Lucy Burby, Steve Lawrence, Melanie Most, Linda Schoonover, Jim Stieber, Dennis Szymanski, Leonard Verlinden, Jennifer Weaver, Stacy Williams;

**Excused:** Craig Baloga, Fred Cardinali, Gordon Couture, Jerry Freeman, Margaret Marchwinski, Lois Whipple;

**Unexcused:** Susan Bryson, David Martin, Kathy O'Connor;

**Guests and Members Present:** Nancy Bonacquisti, Joe Bosy, Artie Bryson, John Dickson, Roger Favrow, Sandy Favrow, Carol Funke, Steve Gartland, Kathy Harrison, Karen Nihranz, George Rose.

Steve Lawrence brought the meeting to order at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall at 9:30 am with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The February 2024 meeting minutes were presented. **Linda Schoonover made the motion to approve the February 2024 meeting minutes, Leonard Verlinden seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, minutes to be placed on file.**

#### **Executive Committee Reports**

**Treasurer Report:** Jennifer Weaver presented the February 2024 Treasurer's Reports. Jennifer reported that the balance in the checkbook for February 29, 2024 was \$23,379.69 with total cash on hand being \$95,962.97. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Jennifer Weaver at [JennyW@hisdfa.org](mailto:JennyW@hisdfa.org).

**Dennis Szymanski made the motion to approve the February 2024 treasurer's reports, Linda Schoonover seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, reports to be placed on file.**

**Secretary Report:** Although Interim Executive Secretary Margaret Marchwinski was not present for the meeting, she still prepared a statement which Melanie Most read to the meeting attendees. The 2024 Membership Newsletter and Renewal Application was completed and sent to the printer for processing. Printing and postage totaled \$1,467.85. A total of 543 newsletter packets were mailed by Inland Press (formerly known as Graphics East) using their bulk mail permit. A total of 66 addresses were undeliverable by the bulk mail permit and were mailed first-class by Margaret for the members that go down south for the winter who either forward their mail or have it held. Several members were emailed their membership packets per their request and newsletters were also emailed to members that had already paid their membership dues early. Carol Funke completed and mailed the Browne's Field Welcome Sign Board panel lease agreements.

The HISCEFA is still looking for a replacement for the Executive Secretary role going forward since Margaret is no longer available to continue in this position. If you are interested in serving your community by taking on this role, please speak to any Director for more information.



Communications: Letters of support were sent to Senator Hertel and Representative DeBoyer per the request of Supervisor Bryson regarding Clay Township's request for state funding to purchase a Marsh Master to help control phragmites overgrowth.

A letter of resignation from Jerry Freeman was received through the mail. Melanie read the letter to the meeting attendees. The HISCFA thanks Jerry for his many years of commitment and dedication, and regretfully accepts his resignation.

Browne's Field: Dennis Szymanski stated that he placed six dog-leashing signs around Browne's Field at the dog waste stations, and additional signs were placed in higher-traffic areas as well. Towards the end of March or beginning of April, the potholes in the long driveway/parking lot at Browne's Field will be filled in. Additionally, a small amount of grading will take place to aid in the draining of the parking lot where the debris pile accumulates as a result of burning during Island Cleanup Days. Dennis attended the Clay Township Board meeting on the mainland this week to talk about the situation during Island Cleanup Days: the township burns large items and there is always debris left behind. The Township is not good about circling back to clean up the leftover debris like they intended. The Clay Township Board agreed that they would stick with burning wood but not mattresses and couches. Kathy Harrison reached out to Dennis about changing out the lock at the main water station, and Dennis agreed to make sure the key remains the same although the lock will be replaced. Some work at the Browne's Field Pavilion has taken place: the wall facing the ferry is now complete, and a window has been added. Dennis will finish trimming out the window and add some paint when the weather warms up. Someone noticed that the lights were on in the pavilion during the night, and they are, indeed, supposed to be illuminated at night as a vandalism deterrent, in conjunction with illuminating the flagpole at dusk.

Government Affairs: Although Lois Whipple was not present at the meeting, she provided an update about the water levels, posted to social media by Paul Wargo, which Melanie read to the meeting attendees. The Army Corps of Engineers predicts the water level will drop even further than previous forecasts. The new 6-month forecast has the water level in July 2024 a full 8" lower than last year.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- *Walking Path Status:* No updates since last meeting.
- *Calendar Updates:* The HISCFA.org website has been updated to reflect many calendar entries for HISCFA events as well as several other community activities. Check the sub-heading CALENDAR in the dark-blue bar to see those events.
- *Adopt-a-Highway Event:* This annual event will take place this year on Saturday, April 20th from 10am-12pm. The meeting location is in the St. March Church parking lot. Lunch will be provided after completion of the cleanup. Details will be released as the date gets closer, so watch social media for more information. Volunteers are needed to help with this MDOT-sponsored cleanup; HISCFA membership is not required to participate.
- *Browne's Field Repairs:* During the February 2024 meeting, Dennis Szymanski presented several items that needed to take place at Browne's Field. Each of those items were in a proposal state at that time, but a decision is needed as to whether or not to start pursuing action on those items. Dennis indicated he would like to accomplish a few projects soon, and obtained quotations for these actions. These projects include gutters and downspouts on the pavilion (~\$3,000), debris/brush/stump removal along the perimeter of the field/baseball/fence area (~\$4,000), and laying down dirt around the pavilion (after gutter installation) and



placing dirt over a special pad to park the band stage (~\$5,000). Stacy Williams raised a point to inquire why the HISCFA should spend so much money for a special parking pad for the community stage to be parked on the grass instead of just parking the stage on the parking lot. Dennis indicated that running so much electrical from the pavilion all the way to the parking lot may not be feasible due to such an extended length of cords needed. Steve Lawrence asked how much it would be to run another line towards the parking lot (to support utilizing the parking lot for stage placement) as opposed to installing the special parking pad. Dennis stated he will investigate whether running additional power might be more cost-effective. It was decided that the dirt will still be placed around the pavilion but placing the special pad will not be done at this time. **Linda Schoonover made a motion to accept the quotations for work at Browne's field including gutters/downspouts, dirt around the pavilion, and debris/brush/stump removal along the perimeter of the field; Dennis Szymanski seconded. All in favor; motion carried.**

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- *Electronic Payments:* Stacy Williams suggested that the HISCFA look into accepting different types of electronic payments for advertising, donations, and for submitting entry fees for things like the annual car show. Discussion took place about how to best go about this as an organization, and Melanie Most mentioned it must be tied to the Association and not to an individual/director. Jennifer Weaver indicated that the HISCFA's bank participates in Zelle, and it might be possible to link a PayPal account as well. As a result of the discussion, it was agreed that it is worth investigating. If it's feasible to create these electronic payment options associated directly with the HISCFA, it will be reported back to the Board at the next available opportunity and/or next meeting when the information becomes available.

**Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson:** Supervisor Bryson mentioned there are many grants that are being written lately, and he thanked the HISCFA for their letter of support to the State of Michigan for the purchase of a Marsh Master. Supervisor Bryson stated that he was recently finishing up the paperwork for a DNR Trust Fund development grant of approximately \$500,000 for Township to start developing the Harsen's Island nature park/kayak launch which was finally approved by EGLE. That grant includes a \$100,000 match from Clay Township. There was a FEMA grant that was applied for to support new radios for the Clay Township Fire Department for a total of \$283,000. There is also a federal earmark grant for Phase II of the HI Wastewater Treatment Plant for \$2.25M. Different options are available to get ARPA funds from the county for different projects like new radios for the police and fire department vehicles, in addition to a large list of other things including purchasing our own mobile stage for the Township to own instead of borrowing the stage from the county (saves \$500 per event). In order to offset some of the costs, Supervisor Bryson intends to sell advertising on the stage at different events. Supervisor Bryson is also wanting to put 17 stations of outdoor exercise equipment around the walking path at the mainland Township park. Another grant will be written for that as well.

Yesterday there was another call with Gary Peters and the US Coast Guard, where the USCG reported that they are temporarily closing down several CG stations, including the St. Clair Shores station, due to lack of manpower. Ultimately the USCG will still respond, but it will be up to two hours' response time since they're coming from farther locations (Detroit / Port Huron). They will be relying on our township's fire department to assist if necessary. Supervisor Bryson indicated he'd be looking for a port security grant to purchase a new fire boat because the one that we have is top-heavy, old, and not well-suited for the needs of our area and department. For the Township park playscape upgrades, there was a Spark Grant for \$584,000 to support that endeavor and is currently out for bids. The board will be awarding the bid on April 15th, and part of the scope of the project is to deliver the existing two



playscapes to Browne's Field (approximately an \$80,000 value). An EGLE permit is being applied for to support the wastewater treatment plant, and after giving them 13 different proposals, they finally (verbally) accepted. Supervisor Bryson also mentioned that they are looking at possibly redesigning the collection system from a gravity feed (would need to be 18 feet deep by the time it gets to Sans Souci, necessitating replacing the entire road) instead to a low pressure, low volume feed (requiring a depth of only 4 feet, but can go farther). In the long run, it will be cheaper - looking at going from the Catholic church to the end of Circuit Drive at the grande point cut. The St. Clair County Road Commission is looking at replacing Mayberry Cut bridge at Walker's Landing, as well as quotes for phase II of the ditching project on LaCroix near the post office. M-154 will be repaved with asphalt in 2025; they wanted to do a chip seal, which supervisor Bryson protested, and instead he successfully got a \$2M line item for paving. This will likely include wider shoulders to accommodate bicycle traffic. Next year the township will be looking at replacing the culvert for the Krispin Drain under Krispin Rd. which is estimated at \$65,000. Approximately 60-70% of the metal is gone from the current culvert. The Director of EGLE has promised that he will come out for a tour this spring to discuss the proposals on the table to get his eyes on those sites. Those sites include the proposed location for the Algaewheel plant, The Old Club, the nature park / kayak launch, and a few other locations both on the Island and the mainland.

Regarding upcoming events, Clay Days / Powwow is scheduled for May 11; the Block Party is May 18 as well as Island Cleanup weekend. Boats and campers will NOT be accepted this year, but those items can be taken directly to the landfill if you choose to do that. It will be possible to burn wood but not large items like couches - those items will be crushed and put into the dumpsters. There are four music in the park events scheduled at Browne's Field this year, with two events still looking for sponsors.

A guest asked Supervisor Bryson about blight on the Island, most notably the structure adjacent to the driveway of the Lions' property. Regarding blight, it's a few-year process for removing structures that have landed on the dangerous buildings list because it has to go through the court system.

Another guest asked about the probability of the former golf course potentially becoming a destination for camping, whether that was feasible (it is), and what other plans are being discussed for that private property. The owners of the golf course are going through EGLE to determine the feasibility of building homes and having a 9-hole golf course. The same question was raised by another guest about the former Boys' Club private property. The owner of that property has been spoken to about those existing structures as well, and he has expressed some interest in tearing them down but there is nothing official yet.

**Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose:** During the month of January, Chief Rose attended two meetings: the Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association and the St. Clair County Fire Chief association where general business was discussed.

The Clay Township Fire Department (CTFD) conducted a CPR class for the Algonac Daycare Center for the caregivers. Special thanks to firefighters Hudgens and Higgins.

It's been a warm month; we were lucky with no ice in the river or lake, and the ferry did not shut down. Looks like an early spring; just a reminder that the Township will be issuing burning permits. If the weather changes and we get no rain, we may not issue permits due to conditions. Burn Permits are free and can be obtained over the phone by calling the Fire Department at 810-794-9347.



The CTFD was inspected by the State of Michigan EMS Division for their medical license renewal. The CTFD met all the requirements, and thank you Firefighter/EMT-P Sherrard for his assistance.

Chief Rose indicated that he, Lt. Carr, and Sgt. Matthews attended a CPR Instructors class at the TRI-Hospital EMS Education Center. We now have three new instructors.

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ A guest asked whether the HISCFA could look into getting a shred truck present at the Island Cleanup event, since the individual who did this in the past (formerly during Trunk-to-Trunk Sales) is no longer interested in doing this.
- ✓ A guest asked whether there could possibly be any large-scale development opportunities on large parcels like the former Boys' Club property and the golf course property. Supervisor Bryson indicated that any potential development would have to go through the proper channels like permits, Clay Township, EGLE, planning commission, etc. The guest asked about the former communication from EGLE that large-scale development on the Island is not desired (by EGLE), but Supervisor Bryson indicated that the owners of the golf course are currently going through wetland delineation because a large portion of that property is more than likely considered wetlands. If the owner(s) of the property decide to put a proposal together, it will come before the Township for approval. It was noted that city water is available at that location.
- ✓ A guest asked whether SS Downtown Inc. is affiliated with the HISCFA, but the discussion took place to clarify that they are their own entity and host their own meetings. They also have a website and publish meeting minutes. Their next meeting is Monday, March 11, 2024. Supervisor Bryson mentioned that the Township wanted to form a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) in the Sans Souci area where taxpayer monies could be captured and invested back into the community, similar to the DDA on the mainland along M-29. However, the State doesn't allow a municipality to have two DDAs. The Township is putting forth legislation to change that law to justify when a municipality is split by a body of water (one side and the other) the legislation would then allow for a second DDA. There is a lot of support for this change by the Michigan Townships Association, Michigan Municipal League, etc.

Next meeting will be Saturday, April 13, 2024 at **9:30 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

**Lucy Burby made the motion to adjourn; Linda Schoonover seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 10:20 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

[MelanieM@hiscfa.org](mailto:MelanieM@hiscfa.org)



## APPENDIX

Fire Department Incident Reports for Harsen's Island (February 2024)



# Clay Township Fire & EMS

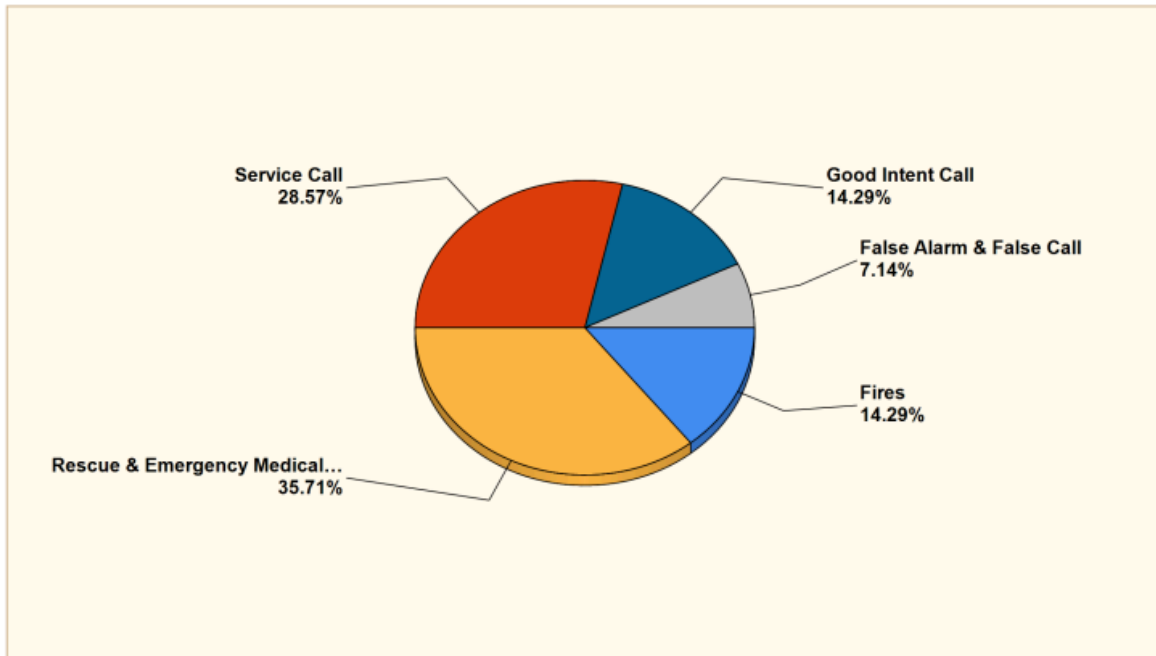
Clay Township, MI

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## Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 02/01/2024 | End Date: 02/29/2024



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	2	14.29%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	5	35.71%
Service Call	4	28.57%
Good Intent Call	2	14.29%
False Alarm & False Call	1	7.14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
111 - Building fire	2	14.29%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1	7.14%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	4	28.57%
550 - Public service assistance, other	1	7.14%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	3	21.43%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	2	14.29%
746 - Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	1	7.14%
<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS:</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100%</b>