



## Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association

### Minutes April 13, 2024

**Directors Present:** Lucy Burby, Fred Cardinali, Gordon Couture, David Martin, Melanie Most, Linda Schoonover, Jim Stieber, Dennis Szymanski, Leonard Verlinden, Stacy Williams;

**Excused:** Craig Baloga, Steve Lawrence, Margaret Marchwinski, Jennifer Weaver, Lois Whipple;

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

**Guests and Members Present:** Artie Bryson, Cheryl Cardinali, Toby Couture, Erik Dougherty, Patty Dougherty, Roger Favrow, Sandy Favrow, Carol Funke, Steve Gartland, Angela Ketelhut, Chuck Kukawka, Larry Miller, Daniel Neumann, Karen Nihranz, Ashleigh Palescuk, George Rose.

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

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

#### **Executive Committee Reports**

**Treasurer Report:** Jennifer Weaver was not present to provide an update for the Treasurer's Report. Melanie indicated that Jennifer committed to having both the March and April Treasurer's Reports available at the May meeting for approval. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Jennifer Weaver at [JennyW@hiscfa.org](mailto:JennyW@hiscfa.org).

**Secretary Report:** Melanie Most read the Interim Executive Secretary Report on behalf of Margaret Marchwinski who could not be present at the meeting. She indicated that election materials were sent out to all the Directors for the special election for the vacant executive position of HISCFA President. There were approximately 384 membership dues payments that have been received and processed since March 1st, and a total of 49 Thank You notes were sent to members who made donations in addition to their membership dues payments.

*Note: The HISCFA 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:** Three 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, Phase 2 funding of the new innovative Algae Wastewater Treatment Plant for Harsen's Island, and for the DNR Trust Fund Development Grant for the Harsen's Island Nature Park. Additionally, the signed pavilion rental agreement was received from DC Farm & Greenhouse for their flower sale taking place on May 11, 2024 at Browne's Field. There was no mention of what they will donate (if anything) to the Association,



since their rental agreement was facilitated at no cost to them. Finally, several emails and phone calls were received/made to members regarding membership questions and concerns over the past month.

**Browne's Field:** Dennis Szymanski reported that gutters/downspouts have been installed on the pavilion at Browne's Field. A total of two 125-foot continuous gutters and 12 downspouts (6 on either side) were installed. Grading on the driveway is scheduled to take place this Thursday, weather permitting. An invoice for Fertilizer Plus was discussed: the HISCFA has used them for several years, and it was \$1,990 for two applications (same as last year). Dennis suggested that the HISCFA continue to use them in the future for this service. **Stacy Williams made a motion to continue using Fertilizer Plus for fertilizer application on HISCFA property; Lucy Burby seconded. All in favor; motion carried.** Dennis indicated that flags at the pavilion and baseball field are in need of replacement. Dennis received a quotation from Rocket Enterprise, Inc. for a total of \$320 for two flags including shipping, but he will pick them up himself since he will be in the area soon. This will save \$25 for delivery charge. **Dave Martin made a motion to proceed with replacing the flags, Fred Cardinali seconded. All in favor; motion carried.**

Dennis is asking for support to check in on the trash cans at Browne's Field once or twice a week now that the weather is getting warmer. This activity will need to be supported throughout the coming months through the fall. Water at the Bates Cut water station as well as the outside taps at the main water station will be turned on by May 1st at both locations. The water station lock was replaced inside the water station for increased ease of use. The large advertising signboard is in need of repair imminently. The recent high winds have caused one of the signs to come out due to the large-scale repair that is needed on the metal supports where the signs are placed.

There was some questions over billing with DTE and that the HISCFA was paying for a light at the turnaround (near Muscamoot Bay), which is very obviously not near any of the HISCFA property near the North Channel. Those properties include Browne's Field, the Park-n-Ride, and the main water station. DTE provided unique account information so that the HISCFA can identify/reference the specific line item where we are being billed for it. It can range between \$23-42 per month. There was discussion about whether to continue paying that or allow another organization to pick it up, but if it changed hands, the rate would go up to around \$90/month because the current rate being paid is an old, guaranteed rate. It was concluded that the HISCFA would continue to pay for this service as a courtesy to Island residents over concern for safety in the area. The reason this even came up was because the light was reported as being out (along with many other lights around the Island that were reported to be out), so at that location at the turnaround they replaced the light, then replaced the fixture, and now the transformer is in need of replacement, which should be completed within the week.

Rainy weather is delaying the application of dirt around the pavilion, but it will be completed as weather permits. Wood around the base of the tennis courts is rotted and in need of replacement, but it was decided to remove the wood altogether because that wood is really not needed any longer. It was originally used as a barrier for lawn mowing and weed whipping, but because the rocks are so compacted in that area, it is no longer a concern. The painting around the new window at the pavilion will need to take place when the weather warms up. The old red barn has a large piece that is rotted out, but in general the barn is in need of some TLC. Dennis temporarily re-attached the piece for the time being, but time and effort will need to be dedicated in the future to preserve its livelihood.

**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:



As expected, we did not get the surge in March we got last year. Therefore, the lake is 10” lower than this time last year and we are only 3” higher than early March. The 6 Month Forecast indicates the water may only rise 4” from where we are right now, leaving us at least 8 or 9” lower this summer than last year.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Walking Path Status:* No updates since the February 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. On the website, you can check the sub-heading CALENDAR in the dark-blue bar to see those events. Furthermore, the car show has been canceled this year, and has been updated on the Association’s website, Nextdoor, and Facebook.
- *Adopt-a-Highway Event:* This annual event will take place next week on Saturday, April 20th from 10am-12pm. The meeting location is in the St. Mark Church parking lot. 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. If you are interested in volunteering, please arrive at St. Mark Church next Saturday April 20th at 10am, or contact Craig Baloga at 248-880-2861 if you need more information.

### NEW BUSINESS

- *Special Election for HISCFA President:* During Director elections at the close of last year, none of the current directors expressed interest in stepping into the President role after former HISCFA President Craig Baloga stepped down from the position. The Association reached out to its membership and community, asking that anyone with interest in becoming President please step forward to express that interest. I’m pleased to report that Chuck Kukawka provided a letter of interest and resume to the Board of Directors for consideration for the role of President. It is worth noting that Chuck was formerly elected to 2 terms as a director of the HISCFA from 1991-1996, and also served as the Recording Secretary from 1995-1996. Chuck also currently serves as Treasurer of the Bruckner Island Middle Channel Improvement Association. The HISCFA Board of Directors were given ballots for the opportunity to vote for Chuck as President, and under this current special election, Chuck Kukawka would serve a term ending December 31, 2024. If he agrees, he will be placed on the 2024 Annual Election of Directors ballot for terms beginning in 2025 that is voted upon at the next annual membership meeting scheduled for either August or September, 2024. Melanie asked Carol Funke to read the results of the vote that were coordinated by herself and Margaret Marchwinski. Carol reported that the results of the vote were Yes: 12, No: 0. **David Martin made a motion to accept Chuck Kukawka as the current President of the HISCFA with term ending December 31, 2024; Dennis Szymanski seconded. All in favor; motion carried.** Chuck introduced himself and thanked everyone for voting for him.
- *Field Day Raffle Prizes:* Discussion took place with respect to the prizes for 2024 Field Day. **Fred Cardinali made a motion to approve the proposed raffle prizes for 2024 Field Day in the amount of \$750 for first prize, \$400 for second prize, and a book of ferry tickets (value = \$200) for third prize; Dave Martin seconded. All in favor; motion carried.**
- *License Application:* The Association needs to get the licensing initiated for the events which require them, in order to get started on raffle tickets for all of the events this year. **Stacy Williams made a motion for the Harsen’s Island St. Clair Flats Association’s application for a special license to serve alcohol on**



**the dates of August 3, 2024 and September 14, 2024; both events to take place at Browne's Field on Harsen's Island, Michigan; Dave Martin seconded. Ayes: 10. Nays: 0. Absent: 7. All in favor; motion carried.**

- *Browne's Field Rental responsibilities:* It is unclear at the moment who is currently the point of contact for accepting applications for the rental of Browne's Field, and who is performing the cleaning before/after rental events. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, communicating with renters, collecting and returning deposits, unlocking the storage if tables/chairs are rented, ensuring that the trash is taken out afterwards, and maintaining the rental calendar so there are no overlaps in scheduling. Lucy Burby decided that due to her proximity to Browne's Field and her involvement with some use of the field/pavilion, that she would take on this responsibility.

**Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson:** Supervisor Bryson mentioned that bids were opened for the playground upgrade project for the Clay Township park on the mainland. Included in the bid is moving the current play structures (both the large one and the small one) to Browne's Field on Harsen's Island. That activity is tentatively scheduled to take place in July this year, but he will know more once he speaks to the contractors about it. Supervisor Bryson thanked the Association for their letters of support (mentioned in the Communications section of these minutes). He is feeling pretty confident that the \$250,000 grant will be awarded for the Marsh Master. Although it was a bad thing that happened on the Island recently with the phragmite fires, it was perfect timing and a perfect example of why this machine is needed so badly. A grant application was submitted for the proposed Harsen's Island Nature Park for \$400,000, and then \$150,000 in matching funds from the Township will be provided if the entire \$400k grant is received. The whole project is estimated at approximately \$550,000. The estimated timing for the grant to be awarded is around November 2024. There are plans in place to erect a Welcome to Sans Souci sign, and the township is working with Sans Souci Downtown, Inc. to accomplish that. It is in the township's budget to purchase a new mini-pumper for the fire department, estimated to cost around \$350,000. This will be able to go across smaller bridges whereas the current mini-pumper is too heavy to do that. Supervisor Bryson wanted to give kudos to Chief Rose and his whole crew for their work on the fires that occurred on the Island last week along Columbine Rd. and Krispin Rd. The township has submitted the discharge permit with EGLE for the proposed Wastewater Treatment plant; changed the engineering from gravity feed to a low pressure system capable of going from St. Mark Church along the South Channel through Orchid/Monroe and end at the North Channel. 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, and the tentative date for that visit will be June 14th. To preserve the character of Sans Souci, Supervisor Bryson has asked the planning commission to do an overlay zoning restriction as to what type of development can be permitted in the area.

**Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose:** During the month of March, Chief Rose attended two meetings: the St Clair Flats Association and the St. Clair County Fire Chief association, where general business was discussed. Fire Boat #2 was painted by Sunstation Boats; he would like to say thank you to them for the outstanding job. We are now waiting for the graphics to be installed. The Clay Township Fire Department will be getting Fire Boat#1 out of winter storage, touching it up and then putting it into the water in the next week or two. Regarding the mini-pumper that Supervisor Bryson mentioned (above), \$305,000 in ARPA money was awarded to the Clay Township Fire Department to go towards the purchase of that resource.

Just a reminder: water is still cold on the lake and river so if you decide to go for a boat ride please let someone know where you are going and when you will be coming back, wear proper clothing, and always wear a life jacket.



There are three new employees who have been hired recently: Allen Stout was hired in March, and Evan Seguin and Patrick Jagodzinski were hired in April.

Regarding the marsh fires that broke out on Sunday April 7th, the fire along Krispin Road was accidental and was the result of a residential yard cleanup fire that the wind caught and spread to adjacent land. Approximately 27 acres were burned in that fire in the reserve area. The fire that broke out along M-154 burned around 75 acres, and is currently under investigation. Mutual aid was called in from Ira Township, Algonac, and Marine City.

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ Gordon Couture indicated that he has been in contact with Steve Carroll with the Algonac State Park about bringing gravel to the Snooks Boat Launch site (near Brown's Bar). He indicated he wants to get the gravel over there, but he needs to find a way to do it without making potentially 5 or more ferry trips. Supervisor Bryson indicated that he has contacted Steve in the past and has informed Steve that he can get supply stone from the county road (already on the Island). Supervisor Bryson told Gordon to contact Steve again to coordinate with Artie about use of that material on the Island.
- ✓ Roger Favrow mentioned that since the HISCFA is responsible for a lot of miscellaneous expenses on the Island, the Association should seriously consider raising the cost of dues, perhaps to \$75 or whatever seems appropriate.
- ✓ Lucy Burby indicated that she's working with Sans Souci Downtown, Inc. to host a Road Rally on June 8th. Lucy requested to be able to use Browne's Field parking lot and pavilion to begin and end the event there, with the total use of the location to occur between approximately 10am-1pm. The road rally will include 10 locations and then meet back at Browne's Field for prizes. There are no other known conflicts with the use of this location, so this proposal is acceptable.
- ✓ Chuck Kukawka mentioned there will be an event by performer Don White on May 5th at 3pm at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall. Tickets are \$20 apiece, and the Lions will open the bar and possibly have an event to serve tacos for dinner after the completion of the performance.
- ✓ Supervisor Bryson mentioned his involvement with the Algonac-Clay Community Foundation, and they're having a Cinco de Mayo event on Thursday May 2nd. It is a fundraiser for scholarships and tickets are \$25 apiece. \$30,000/year in scholarships will be given away to deserving students for scholarships and service groups for their needs. This event will take place at the VFW in Algonac.

Next meeting will be Saturday, May 11, 2024 at **9:00 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

**Dave Martin made the motion to adjourn; Lucy Burby seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 10:23 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

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



## APPENDIX

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



# Clay Township Fire & EMS

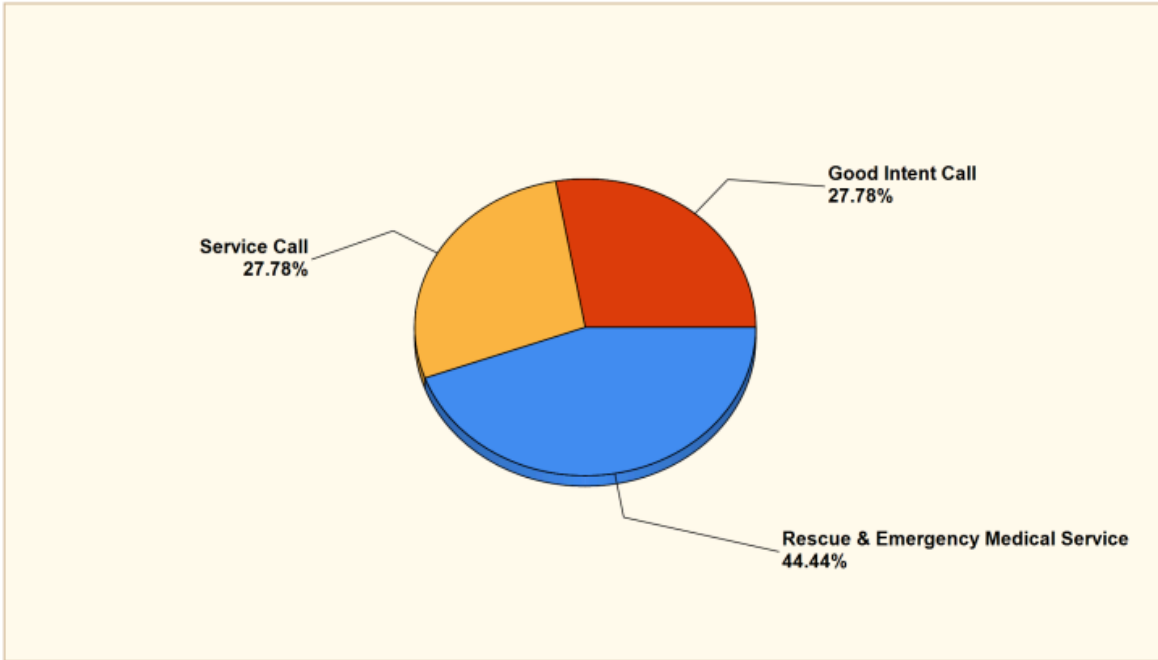
Clay Township, MI

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## Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 03/01/2024 | End Date: 03/31/2024



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	8	44.44%
Service Call	5	27.78%
Good Intent Call	5	27.78%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	3	16.67%
320 - Emergency medical service, other	1	5.56%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	4	22.22%
500 - Service Call, other	1	5.56%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	4	22.22%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	5	27.78%
<b>TOTAL INCIDENTS:</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100%</b>