



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

### **Minutes January 06, 2018**

**Directors Present:** Todd Brady, Susan Bryson, Neva Covalle, Barbara Crown, Patrick Feighan, Jim Laethem, Melanie Most, Harold Stieber, Jerry Thiel, Lois Whipple;

**Excused:** Craig Baloga, Jerry Freeman, Donna Halacoglu, Mike Hilla, Art Koster, David Martin, Kathy O'Connor, Dennis Szymanski, Leonard Verlinden, Rosemary Wieczorek;

**Guests and Members Present:** Paul Atkinson, Mike Balan, Artie Bryson, Dave Carruthers, George Covalle, Jim Decker, John Golan, Donna Krispin, Dave Lozon, Lynn Lozon, Steve Mahac, Doreen Miller, Linda Schoonover, Debbie Thiel, Dan Turke, Bob Williams.

Patrick Feighan brought the meeting to order at the Sans Souci Landing at 10:02 am with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The November 2017 meeting minutes were presented. **Barbara Crown made the motion to approve the November 2017 meeting minutes, Susan Bryson seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, minutes to be placed on file.**

#### **Executive Committee Reports**

**Treasurer Report:** Harold Stieber presented the treasurer's reports for November and December 2017. Harold reported that the balance in the checkbook for December 31, 2017 was \$17,062.11, with total cash on hand being \$40,078.88. Many large disbursements come at the end of the year for money that the Association collects throughout the year. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Harold at stiebha@gmail.com.

**Lois Whipple made the motion to approve the November and December 2017 treasurer's reports, Susan Bryson seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, reports to be placed on file.**

**Secretary Report:** In November, a thank-you note was received from the Osgood family for a gift basket that was sent around Thanksgiving once Denne Osgood got out of the hospital at that time. Additionally, there was a \$500 donation received in 2017 by the Thiel family to be allocated towards Browne's Field.

**Communications:** There are no updates to report at this time.

**Government Affairs:** Patrick Feighan commended Artie Bryson for his work with the Coast Guard to prevent a disturbance of the ice in the North Channel for the ferry crossing. Additionally, the Association worked diligently to obtain a meeting with Dan Lauwers and Phil Pavlov regarding MI House Bill 4807. There is a township meeting on January 8<sup>th</sup> on the mainland at the township hall, at 7:00 pm.

**Browne's Field:** The field is buttoned-up for the year, and there were some holiday decorations placed on the field this year. Some additional decorations were purchased for next year as well.



## OLD BUSINESS

- *No old business at this time.*

## NEW BUSINESS

- *New President:* There is a motion needed for President of the HISCFA, necessitated by the death of President Denne Osgood. **Patrick Feighan made the motion to appoint current HISCFA Board of Director and Past President Barbara Crown to the position of President of the Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association effective January 31, 2018; Lois Whipple seconded; all in favor; motion carried.**
  - *Note:* the HISCFA bylaws allow for electronic conferencing and voting. Those directors not able to attend are requested to vote their response ASAP via email to the Executive Secretary Neva Covalle: neva-mills@sbcglobal.net.
  - All directors present voted Yes. Electronic "Yes" votes were received by several members not in attendance at today's meeting. Therefore, in accordance with the bylaws of the HISCFA, the motion passes unanimously.
  - As of 1/31/2018, the Executive Board will consist of:
    - President: Barbara Crown
    - Vice President: Patrick Feighan
    - Treasurer: Harold Stieber
    - Executive Secretary: Neva Covalle
- *Open Director Position:* Due to Denne Osgood's passing, there is an open position on the HISCFA Board of Directors, term expiring 12/31/2018.
- *Annual Dues Increase:* The board voted unanimously during the November meeting to raise the annual membership dues from \$40 per year to \$50 per year. In light of the recent ferry rate increases and other financial concerns, several board members have discussed tabling the raise for this year. Further discussion is needed on this topic. As the age of our members (volunteers) increase, many things that were once done on a volunteer basis are now farmed out by outside help. Our general fund is breaking even (approximately) each year, so Harold suggested to maybe allocate the increase in dues to a specific project (e.g. walking path, restrooms, etc.). To put it in perspective, a \$10 increase per year equates to about \$8,000 in added income for the Association since there are yearly around 800 or so members. Susan Bryson posed the question to the group as to whether the \$10 increase would make or break their membership. The dues have been \$40 since 2014, when they were increased from \$35 at that time. The general consensus from both directors as well as members is that the change to \$50 dues for membership will stand. There is no motion needed since there was already a vote in November.
- *Annual Membership Letter:* Barbara Crown would like to get a committee together to work on the Annual Membership Letter. Barbara does this every year but would like to get the committee to possibly re-write the letter and maybe change the format so it will become more reader-friendly. The committee will also review the survey that Christine Baloga has drafted. The survey will address the concerns of members of the Association and what they would like to see and also expect of the Association. Susan Bryson suggested to perhaps add a tear-out to the Delta News. However, the membership letter goes out to everyone on the island, not just the current members. Artie Bryson suggested talking to the township assessors to get the list of property owners to make the mailing comprehensive. This committee meeting will take place in the next week or so.



- *Ice Jam Preparedness Plans:* There were some questions that came up regarding the use of personal airboat transportation in the event of an ice emergency. Susan Bryson spoke on behalf of Bob Bryson whose personal airboat has been used in years' past to shuttle residents to/from the island when ice jams occur and the ferry is not running. Susan stated that landing at the lower mainland parking lot is still possible, despite the large sheets of seawall that are being worked on at the present time. Landing on the island will be located near the stone yard close to the Park-and-Ride parking area. The fare will still be \$10 per trip, and only as conditions permit. When the temperature is too cold, service may not be possible. Patrick Feighan made mention of the fact that last year there were two accidents involving airboats during the winter: one on the Middle Channel, and one on the South Channel. Patrick reminded everyone that it is at the boat owners' discretion as to whether or not it is safe for them to operate and there is no guarantee airboat service is possible.

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ Artie Bryson clarified the protocol for shutting the ferry down. The ferry owner, David Bryson, calls the Clay Township dispatch, and the dispatch notifies the WINS system so that notifications can be sent out to those who have signed up for them. Artie assured everyone that he has a good rapport with the Coast Guard and there is an understanding that the Coast Guard will not break ice in the North Channel unless absolutely necessary (e.g. flooding in north Algonac). Residents will be notified if this will occur. The main thing that residents need to do is sign up for the WINS notifications for the ferry closures. When those notifications occur, you MUST click the link (or reply) as it suggests, otherwise you will no longer receive notifications.
- ✓ Artie also mentioned that in the event of an ice jam, many trucks are already stationed on the island with equipment including SEMCO, DTE Energy, the water department, and a police car. The equipment is already here; it's just a matter of getting the personnel over.
- ✓ One resident mentioned that the WINS system did not work on New Years' Day when the ferry shut down for a few hours. Artie mentioned that there was an issue at the county with password resets upon changeover to the new year. This issue has been resolved and will not happen again in the future.
- ✓ Melanie Most also mentioned an example of the power of social media. Melanie posts to Facebook on behalf of the Association, and the post about the ferry rate increase accumulated over 12,000 likes and nearly 80 shares.
- ✓ Steve Mahac, former director and member, was in attendance at today's meeting and introduced Dan Turke and John Golan from China Township. Dan Turke is running for Dan Lauwers' position as a State Representative (Lauwers has reached his term limit, term ending 2018), and Dan Lauwers will be running for State Senate in 2018. Dan Turke and John Golan have successfully worked with Lansing to finally get a bridge repaired on St. Clair Highway which has been out for about three years now. Nobody was willing to do anything about it because of funding. Dan and John have made several trips to Lansing and have finally gotten \$2.7 million allocated for funding for this bridge, with a completion deadline of October 1, 2018.
- ✓ Monday January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 is the next township meeting at the Lions Hall, which is also a public hearing about the proposed purchase of property for a kayak launch site near the Schoolhouse Grille. This will cost the township approximately \$14,000 for 9 acres of vacant property, along with DNR trust fund grants and a county match.
- ✓ The new flyer for the car show will be ready on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. The date for the car show will be on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
- ✓ Great Lakes Islands Coalition – Harold has been representing the HISCFA on this topic, and the first meeting took place in September, and there have been 2 phone conferences since then. Meetings are ongoing and information will be shared as it becomes available.



- ✓ There has been some interest for a sledding hill at Browne's Field. Megan Beindit has agreed to create a committee to accomplish this, and has some contacts she's working with on this subject. Patrick Feighan stated that there was some room in the Browne's Field budget to accommodate limited funding if required, and he also provided a location recommendation within the field itself.
- ✓ Jerry Freeman's mother has passed away, and arrangements are being made and will be made public when available.

Next meeting will be Saturday, **February 17<sup>th</sup>**, 2018 at **9:30 am** at the Sans Souci Landing. Please note that this is delayed by one week due to availability of directors to run the meeting, and the location has been changed.

**Barbara Crown made the motion to adjourn; Neva Covalle seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 11:01 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary