



Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association

Minutes November 13, 2021

Directors Present: Craig Baloga, Lucy Burby, George Covalle, Steve Gartland, Steve Lawrence, Margaret Marchwinski, David Martin, Melanie Most, Jane Mount, Harold Stieber, Dennis Szymanski, Jerry Thiel, Lois Whipple;

Excused: Deborah Addy, Susan Bryson, Jerry Freeman, Donna Halacoglu, Jim Laethem, Kathy O'Connor, Leonard Verlinden, Rosemary Wieczorek, Terry Wiggins;

Guests and Members Present: Artie Bryson, Jacob Bryson, Colleen Berger, Fred Cardinali, Neva Covalle, Kathy Harrison, Ralf Hiebl, Kurt Marchwinski, Karen Nihranz, Linda Schoonover, Joanne Shirkey, John Zobel, Sue Zobel.

Craig Baloga brought the meeting to order at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall at 9:01 am with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The October 2021 meeting minutes were presented. **Jerry Thiel made the motion to approve the October 2021 meeting minutes, David Martin seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, minutes to be placed on file.**

Executive Committee Reports

Treasurer Report: Harold Stieber presented the October 2021 Treasurer's Reports. Harold reported that the balance in the checkbook for October 31, 2021 was \$46,966.49, with total cash on hand being \$119,845.71. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Harold Stieber at HaroldS@hiscfa.org.

Dennis Szymanski made the motion to approve the October 2021 treasurer's reports, David Martin seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, reports to be placed on file.

Secretary Report: Margaret Marchwinski reported that she has been meeting with Christine Baloga to advance progress with Wild Apricot to revamp the membership database and website. Craig Baloga indicated that there is third-party financial oversight (company name Affinity) to report financial transactions with the government, which requires a significant amount of personal information to be supplied. There are some efforts being made to avoid having to provide such information, since the HISCFA is already a registered 501(c)3 organization. Currently, there is a fee to charge credit cards for HISCFA membership payments, and using Wild Apricot would help streamline this process, as well as provide user-driven updates to membership information.

Communications: There were no official communications received this month.

Browne's Field: Dennis Szymanski reported that the pond pump was fried and perhaps a recent power surge damaged it. Additionally, now one of the flagpole lights is not working, and the other one is intermittently working. The pump manufacturer indicated that there is no one locally that can repair it. A replacement/backup pump will need to be obtained in order to keep the pond level managed. Dennis indicated that he has been using his own pump throughout the week to manage the pond level in the meantime. There is more investigation that needs to take place



with DTE to determine why the other electrical issues at Browne's Field are taking place. Harold Stieber indicated he will be filing a claim.

Government Affairs: Lois Whipple reported that the Great Lakes International Joint Commission (GLIJC) that released an article that stated: Lake Superior and Lake Michigan-Huron have both continued their seasonal declines in October. As a result of the continued drier than average weather and water supply conditions, water levels on Lake Superior remain slightly below the seasonal long-term average. The full article can be found here: <https://www.ijc.org/en/labc/update-lake-superior-outflows-and-expected-conditions-november-2021>.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson: Supervisor Bryson reported that both the new fire trucks are online (one on the mainland, and one on the Island). The new airboat has also been received and there is training underway for use of this new equipment. Emergency sirens have been planned to be installed within the township, and to complete the township it's going to take five additional sirens. There are three on the mainland which were covered by the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) since it's within that district. The County Commissioner indicated that the County can pay for two of those (of the five), and also the Township is looking at three sirens on the Island. Funding for the water main replacement along M-29 is underway, with an additional feed to Harsen's Island. The easements are being worked on, which is approximately a \$4.5M project. The township is anticipating no increase to the water rate because they are retiring the debt from doing the water plant 20 years ago, so that charge will be rolled into the new debt, and then water rates will stay the same. This project will give the whole system better water pressure and better water quality. The Harsen's Island Nature Park / Kayak Launch property is still currently awaiting a DEQ/EGLE permit. There were some questions about whether city water would be brought down to the Flats, but to reiterate, the residents of the Flats would need to contribute to assist with the feeds down the private roads. Previously, this was cost-prohibitive and the residents no longer wanted to pursue this due to excessive costs.

Guest Speaker, Champion Auto Ferry representative Jacob Bryson: As most people know, Champion Auto Ferry recently put in for a rate increase. The ferry rate increase was granted yesterday (November 12, 2021). The full fare price is going from \$12 to \$15 (cash rate). The discount commuter price is going up \$1, from \$9 to \$10 per ticket, increasing the book rate from \$180 to \$200. Single wheel, single axle trailers will also increase by \$1 (can still use a ticket for this). Motorcycles are going up \$1: from \$6 to \$7. Motorhomes (e.g. self-driven RVs) will now be charged as a commercial truck, and commercial truck rates will stay the same (\$30/axle). No change for walking the ferry (pedestrians remain free). This pricing structure is an attempt to minimize the impact to the year-round residents. All of the extra revenue is going towards fighting the inflation that everyone is being hit with right now, and wage increases (to become competitive again) to retain personnel they currently have and getting more people in the spring. The rate increase is effective January 1, 2022. New tickets will not be sold until January 1, 2022. Current yellow tickets are valid through the end of this year (December 31, 2021). Beginning January 2022 and throughout 2022, you can use the yellow ticket with an additional dollar (when applicable). However, yellow tickets will no longer be accepted beginning January 1, 2023. If you have remaining yellow tickets in 2022 and you do not wish to provide \$1 with yellow tickets on the ferry deck when crossing, you can come into the ferry office and exchange your yellow tickets plus \$1 (per ticket) in exchange for the new tickets.

Jacob Bryson reported that Champion Auto Ferry has a captain who recently came off of an extended medical leave, so the ferry will be able to extend the hours of the second boat beginning Monday, November 15, 2021. This will accommodate two boats from 6am to approximately 6pm or 7pm. Progress on the ferry docks/ramps has been slow



since Jacob has been busy driving the boat as much as necessary to help accommodate the traffic. However, now that an additional captain is returning to work, Jacob can return to the shop to continue progress for the dock/ramp construction. Work in the shop has been taking place to pre-fabricate as much as possible. Additionally, the new docks are going to be several feet longer which will ease the angle of the ramp to lessen scrapes/bottoming-out from low-clearance vehicles. Work is estimated to be completed in the spring, but it is both weather-dependent and of course progress-dependent. At the moment, there is neither a short-term nor long-term plan to re-route incoming traffic in the lineup/approach the mainland ferry.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose: Chief Rose was not present, but prepared a statement which was read to the group. During the month of October, he attended only one meeting – the HISCFA meeting. He did not attend the St Clair County Fire Chief’s Association due to the meeting time change, which is now during the daytime. With running the day-to-day operations of the fire department, he will try to make as many of the Chief’s Meeting as he can.

Pump testing was conducted on Eng#1, Eng#2, T-3, and WT-1 in October. All vehicles passed their pump tests. Safety inspections were also completed on all department vehicles.

October was Fire Prevention Month, and the fire department conducted classes for the Algonac Childcare, Millside Elementary, and Algonquin Elementary, with over 450 kids participating. Chief Rose would like to thank Sergeant Carr, Firefighters Huber and Keren, and Lieutenant Tews for giving the classes.

Fire Boat #1 has been pulled out of the water due to an engine issue, and it is being evaluated. Fire Boat #2 is still in the water for any water rescues.

The Fire Department attended the Scarecrow Festival and passed out candy and fire department hats and hand-outs.

Finally, Chief Rose would like to thank Chris O’Regan for his help on fixing the roof at station #1.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Browne’s Field Restrooms / Fundraiser:* Craig Baloga indicated the committee is still working with independent contractors to pursue responses and ultimately quotations. The HISCFA still has line-of-sight on six contractors, but it seems that the HISCFA may need to pursue a mix of independent contractors as well as Island residents and volunteers to finally complete this task. The committee is continuing to obtain figures to populate the information required to fulfill grant applications.
- *Pantry in the Park:* In the May 2021 HISCFA Meeting Minutes, there was a motion to approve the installation of a “Pantry in the Park” at Browne’s Field at a team-decided location based on the master plan for the field. There was discussion about where would be the best location to place this feature, and it was determined that adjacent to or near the barn, facing the fence line, would be best. This would be accessible for easy donations since it is near the parking area, and the area has sufficient-enough lighting to see in the dark, but not overly bright to still be discreet. Craig Baloga indicated that there are several Island residents that have expressed interest in assisting with maintaining/monitoring the contents of the pantry. Additionally, the committee will meet to look at the master plan to determine exactly where the pantry should be placed, in addition to other updates to the field that will be taking place (e.g. the next topic(s) below).



NEW BUSINESS

- *Park Benches & Memorial Update:* Last month, David Martin asked Melanie Most to put on social media a request to support the donation of benches to be placed along the walking path. The request was for funds to support this project, and David will coordinate the purchase of the benches so they match the ones already at the field. If you are interested in supporting this endeavor, please reach out to David Martin. David indicated that there were a total of 15 people that reached out to express interest in this endeavor. Prices on the benches run around \$500-600, plus the cost of cementing them into the field, and then an additional cost for the brass plaque for the memorial. Once the costs have finished coming in, the committee will revisit this topic. Dennis Szymanski suggested that perhaps the HISCFA can help offset the cost by committing to paying for the cement and bench prep at the field, while the people/contributors pay just for the benches. Supervisor Bryson suggested applying for a grant to further offset the cost hit to the Association. The brick memorial project has not gotten kicked off by Susan Bryson yet, but it appears that it will commence in the spring.

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ Recently, a Great Lakes Island Alliance (GLIA) representative paid a visit to Harsen's Island to meet with Harold a few others. The representative will be doing a video presentation of all of the islands that he will visit at the next GLIA meeting. The GLIA holds monthly phone/zoom meetings, and an annual meeting which takes place at a different island location each year. Overall the visitor enjoyed his visit and recognizes the beauty of where many of us call home.
- ✓ Steve Lawrence requested that the list of dates for 2022 events are updated and posted somewhere, so that everyone can plan for next year's event. Melanie Most also mentioned that the similar list will also need to be provided to The Flyer for printing next summer.
- ✓ Fred Cardinali mentioned that the Lions Soup Cook-Off is tonight at the Lions Hall at 6pm, and he would appreciate anyone that can stay behind at today's meeting and help set up the room for this community
- ✓ At the Sans Souci Bar, the liquor license is now in the owner's name for ease of transition when a new lessee is found.
- ✓ Kathy Harrison indicated that the water station is looking the best it ever has, so she'd like to thank the HISCFA for the upkeep. Kathy also asked whether someone can clear the brush near the AT&T box nearby to keep it looking nice.
- ✓ Last Thursday for Veteran's Day hosted 75 parties for hunting on the Island. There was food, goody bags, etc. It was very well-attended and a great event for veterans.

Next meeting will be Saturday, January 8, 2022 at **9:30 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

Jerry Thiel made the motion to adjourn; David Martin seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 10:09 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

MelanieM@hiscfa.org



APPENDIX

Fire Department Incident Reports for Harsen's Island (October 2021)



Clay Township Fire & EMS

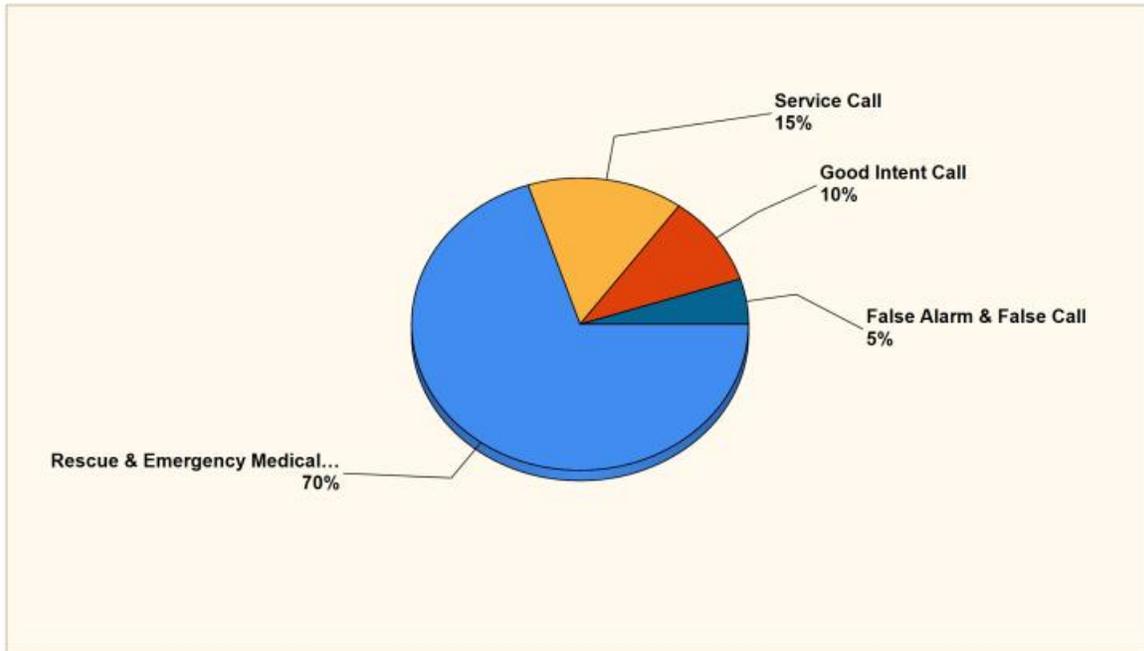
Clay Township, MI

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Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 10/01/2021 | End Date: 10/31/2021



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	14	70%
Service Call	3	15%
Good Intent Call	2	10%
False Alarm & False Call	1	5%
TOTAL	20	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	5	25%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	9	45%
500 - Service Call, other	3	15%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	1	5%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	1	5%
746 - Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	1	5%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	20	100%