



Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association

Minutes May 8, 2021

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

Excused: Deborah Addy, Susan Bryson, Jerry Freeman, Donna Halacoglu, Kathy O'Connor, Terry Wiggins;

Guests and Members Present: Michael Balan, Artie Bryson, David Bryson, Jacob Bryson, Peter Bryson, Chuck Button, Cheryl Cardinali, Fred Cardinali, John Dickson, Shelly Dickson, Kurt Marchwinski, George Rose, Linda Schoonover, Joanne Shirkey, Jim Stieber.

Craig Baloga brought the meeting to order at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall at 9:00 am with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Craig opened the meeting by wishing all of the mothers a Happy Mother's Day. He announced that the new Wild Apricot membership software will be launching the new website shortly. Membership renewal reminders will be sent out once the site goes live, as well as an email blast to all the members to notify everyone that the new site is live. Craig also mentioned that he attempts to meet with Supervisor Bryson on a regular basis (at least once per month) to get updates on things happening with the Township and to provide updates on HISCFA's vision of things happening on the Island. An update of the kayak launch / nature park was received at their last meeting, and the conceptual drawing is being shared in the Appendix of this document.

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

Executive Committee Reports

Treasurer Report: Harold Stieber presented the April 2021 Treasurer's Reports. Harold reported that the balance in the checkbook for April 30, 2021 was \$50,455.39, with total cash on hand being \$120,247.27. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Harold at HaroldS@hiscfa.org.

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

Secretary Report: Margaret Marchwinski reported that April was a busy month for receiving membership renewals. This month, many articles and notices/announcements for The Delta News were collected. At this point, approximately 75% of the membership has responded.

Communications: There were no communications received this month.



Browne's Field: Dennis Szymanski reported that Jim Laethem turned the water back on at Browne's Field, and also at the Bates Cut water station as well as the outside taps at the main water station. The trees were taken down along the fence line at Browne's Field, and there will be some grading done to the driveway/parking area after Island Cleanup Day is completed. David Martin asked whether the dock will be removed soon, and Dennis replied that the ground needs to firm up a bit before that occurs because a heavy machine will need to be present to assist with that endeavor. David also presented the new Browne's Field sign that will be displayed at the entry to the parking area. The frame will be re-stained and resealed and the sign will be put in place following that task. Rosemary Wieczorek reported that the field rentals are booking up fast for the summer. Craig Baloga asked whether the rental application for the field needs to be revised to better address the definition of a "gathering" for a rental, and therefore adjust rates depending on the size of the party. Supervisor Bryson pointed out that a rental will reserve it for that party. If you decide to reserve it for very small groups at a lesser rate, you might miss out on a larger group which would collect a higher rate. The field is a picnic area and is open to the public, so it is difficult to determine where to draw the line. The decision was made to leave the application as-is. A pavilion rental schedule will be printed and posted at the field, but a live update will be made available on the website. Rentals will be only be reported as being rented or not, and personal information (including rental event) will be kept private.

Government Affairs: Lois Whipple read a portion of an article about Asian Carp that can be found here: <https://boatingindustry.ca/current-news/8265-governor-signs-bill-to-restore-8-million-to-help-keep-asian-carp-out-of-great-lakes>. She also reported that a total of 89,260 doses of the vaccine have been sent to St. Clair County and 80,208 have been administered. There are several locations within the county and around the area that have vaccinations to administer. Please visit the county health department's website for the most up-to-date information. <https://www.stclaircounty.org/offices/health/covid19.aspx>

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson: Supervisor Bryson mentioned that he was at the St. John's Marsh cleanup this morning which is going on today. He mentioned that the Township has \$200,000 penciled in for development of the kayak launch / nature park on the Island. A wetland/topography study is being conducted to determine which part(s) of the property can be most effectively utilized. Once that is complete, the overall engineering plan may need to be revised, but it will move fast once those decisions can be made. The Clay Township Board just approved to do the engineering for the water line replacement on the mainland along M-29. A total of around \$500,000 of that project is allocated to a new water feed to Harsen's Island. There may be opportunities for grants for this infrastructure, so it has been intentionally delayed in anticipation of getting some of those grants. The Clay Township Fire Department is closing on one of the new fire trucks on Monday. In order to pay for the truck, \$450,000 was put forth as a down payment, and the rest was put on an installment purchase agreement (IPA) on a bid to various banks to get the best financing options available. Our township's bond rating is AA+ which essentially is the gold standard for municipalities. The township's financial expert figured we would probably settle the financing at around 2.25-2.3% interest rate, but the township was actually able to obtain a 1.81% interest rate which speaks highly for the township's financial stability.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose: During the month of March, Chief Rose attended the HISCFA meeting on Harsen's Island. Fire Boat #1 is in the water and ready for service. The Plymovent system had its yearly inspection at both stations: no issues were found; all in good working order. A security system in station 2 was installed: they had an issue with two cameras and sent them back for an exchange. Chief Rose had a Zoom Meeting with Paul Dowell from West Shore and E-One to do a virtual inspection of the new fire engines on April 30, 2021. He is not happy with this process since he will not be able to physically see or go through the trucks until they are in Michigan. If there is an issue with either vehicle West Shore advised they will fix it. Chief Rose spoke



with the airboat company: the Stinger Gear Box is in and they are mounting on the boat. He expects them to be done during the second week of May. Chief Rose would like to thank Brian Sears for washing the walls down at Station #2: the inside looks great. Evan Randall passed his EMT National Registry Test. FF Jeffries and FF Lawson are waiting for their test dates. Craig Baloga asked whether it was possible to get a CPR class scheduled, and Chief Rose responded that he will be coordinating that and a safety class soon.

Guest Speakers David Bryson and Jacob Bryson, Champion's Auto Ferry: Representatives from Champion Auto Ferry (CAF) were present for today's meeting and provided an update as to the status of the ferry and docks. David Bryson stated that for the last four months CAF has been working feverishly every day of the week in order to get a new engine installed in the Middle Channel ferry. It has taken a lot longer than they planned to get this accomplished due to new U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) requirements, and also because the USCG and the engine company are responding/moving slowly. It used to be that the USCG would be available to inspect in the next day or two from the time they were contacted, and always within a week's time. Now, the situation is that CAF needed to call and make an appointment and the lead time is approximately 3 weeks or more at this point. As work on the ferry takes place, the work gets to a certain point (in stages) and the USCG must be notified so they can come in and inspect it in order for the next stage of work to begin. It has been a long, slow process due to COVID-19 restrictions and scheduling constraints. The appointment for the engine factory representative to come out and start the engine is scheduled for Monday 5/10/2021, and the USCG will be coming out a week or two after that. Once that activity is "blessed," the Middle Channel ferry will be placed back into the water. The goal is to have the Middle Channel ferry up and running before Memorial Day weekend. The work being done to the Middle Channel has allowed CAF to permanently correct the problem of what caused the boat to collapse the dock in December 2019. Now, the potential concern for that occurrence to take place again is no longer a concern at all. This fall, the Middle Channel ferry will return to dry dock so the second engine can be put in. It is something that has to be done. As far as the new docks are concerned, CAF has been having no one to work on the dock because the welders had to be shifted over to deckhands since there is a serious lack of deckhands. CAF has been trying desperately to find deckhands but no one is coming forward to fill these open positions. Keeping the boats running at this point is more important than working on the docks. Furthermore, it may be perceived that no work is taking place but that's not true: it's not that CAF is *not* working on the dock, but they're pre-fabricating a lot of the dock parts in the shop. CAF expects by the end of the summer season to have at least the dock platform completed, and then through the winter they'll be installing the pilings and electrical and other items associated with those actions. Realistically, for as little time that CAF has to dedicate working on the dock with all of the other things going on, it will be next spring before the new dock will be completed on the mainland. At that point, work will shift over to the Island side to get the middle dock completed which has also collapsed and is in need of repair.

Jacob Bryson reported that CAF have even been contacting local parole/probation officers to see who may be getting released and in need of a job, but to no avail. CAF have put ads in papers, speaking with the off-boarding officer at the Selfridge Air National Guard base for people retiring out of the military, putting ads out on Indeed and other websites; there are 2 high schoolers and 2 college students being trained as part-time deck hands but have limited availability due to their school schedules. The COVID-19 situation and the unemployment problem is really causing difficulty finding candidates. Additionally, because CAF is regulated by the USCG, the USCG doesn't care what the State of Michigan says about legalized marijuana: deckhands must still submit to random drug testing and marijuana is not permitted by the USCG. Deckhands are being offered \$15/hour, and full-time placement is available. David stated that if CAF considered paying the deckhands more (i.e. to remain competitive with current unemployment), that would mean CAF would need to raise the cost of tickets by one or two dollars to help offset that cost. He doesn't want to go this route because he doesn't want to impart that financial burden onto the residents. A question came up about all the dirt piles and pilings on the mainland near the ferry landing: David Bryson



reported that the dirt and pilings are being placed there to be stockpiled for backfilling behind the seawall and placing a new road in that area.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Browne's Field Restrooms / Fundraiser:* Craig Baloga stated that the committee has been meeting with the architect to obtain a secondary proposal of the facilities, in order to emphasize the lowest maintenance costs, durability, ease of cleaning, etc. After that, it can be compared to the current proposal that's on the table to see what will make the most sense for the bottom line of the Association. A comparison will be summarized and presented to the Board. Additionally, a survey will go out to the HISCFA members in order to receive feedback about expectations for what the membership is looking for out of a permanent restrooms facility. This item and the walking path are the two main focus points to get rolling as soon as grants are available.
- *Status of Grants:* Jane Mount stated that the committees met to get a plan together to apply for the grants. Jane is doing some research to ask some questions in order to be able to correctly and efficiently apply for the grants. Jane has a phone appointment soon as a secondary option for a grant from another foundation. Once a solid plan is put in place for the scope of the project, Jane can effectively apply on behalf of the HISCFA.
- *Walking Path:* Craig Baloga reported that a re-quote was submitted in order to update the original bid from 2017. This quotation was for a hard asphalt surface, priced per lineal foot. Dennis and Craig were discussing perhaps putting down a softer path (aggregate) as a base and then possibly come back later to put down something more solid like asphalt. Depending on how much costs have gone up since 2017 may determine which route is taken with respect to the material of the path. Supervisor Bryson stated that that island kayak launch/nature park will include a walking path made from wood chips. Jane Mount requested that the path should be handicap accessible. Dennis Szymanski mentioned that the layout includes handicap accessibility since it will come right up to that designated location at the parking area. Jim Stieber pointed out that a wood chip path or a loose stone path might cause difficulties with commercial mowers at the field.
- *Car Show Update:* Jerry Thiel is attending a car show every Monday, during which he will be networking to increase visibility of the Island car show to drum up interest and excitement. The committee is working on publicizing this event at other local car shows and collecting prizes as time permits. Craig Baloga indicated that the committee will be meeting in the coming weeks to keep this project moving.

NEW BUSINESS

- *The Delta News:* Craig Baloga mentioned that Margaret Marchwinski will be meeting with Christine Baloga after this meeting to work on the membership roster for printing in The Delta News. Barbara Crown is working with the printer on the layout of this year's publication and submitting proofread articles as they come in.
- *New Entrance Sign Design:* Last month, Craig Baloga presented a proposed sign to be replaced at the entrance of the field, and also a poster that can be placed in the locked announcement center on the pavilion. David Martin got the new sign completed and brought it in to the meeting for all attendees to view prior to installation at Browne's Field. A preview of this sign can be found in the Appendix of this document.



- *Pantry in the Park:* A group of volunteers installed a Pantry in the Park at the Clay Township Park on the mainland. Craig Baloga felt that it would be a good idea to implement something similar: the idea was to bring this same concept to Browne's Field and to determine a convenient yet inconspicuous location so as not to make it obvious when someone in need is reaching out for food staples. Supervisor Bryson stated that there are already volunteers in place to manage the installation of a Pantry in the Park, and that all he needs from the HISCFA is consent to install it, and a location to place it. **Craig Baloga made a motion to accept the offer to put a Pantry in the Park at Browne's Field at a team-decided location based on the master plan for the field; Jerry Thiel seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ Rosemary Wieczorek was wondering whether we can look into a replacement for the large green/blue tarps that are wrapped around the outside of the pavilion to block the wind. They are effective, but unsightly. She wondered if the HISCFA could look into some kind of roller shades to implement at the pavilion. Dennis Szymanski mentioned that a roller shade wouldn't be cost effective, but rather suggested the large sides of tents that come with tent rentals might be a nice solution. They often come with windows, and they could be fitted with grommets and carabiners for future easy installation. David Bryson mentioned it might be worthwhile to use canvas from local companies to give them the business. Another member mentioned that at North Channel Yacht Club, there are black plastic shades with screens that are on pulleys for raising and lowering. He will investigate what was used and provide that feedback as an option to the HISCFA.
- ✓ Island Cleanup Days are the first weekend in June (5-6) at Browne's Field from 8:00 am - 4:00 pm. Hazardous material will be accepted; tires must be off the rim. Items containing Freon will not be accepted, nor will latex paints. There will also be a second date for Island Cleanup in October.
- ✓ Trunk-to-Trunk Sale will be held on June 12, 2021 from 9:00a-12:00pm. Melanie Most has updated social media to announce this event and reflect the change. This is moved up one week (formerly was on June 19th) due to a conflict with the field rental. This will be held on the same day as our next HISCFA meeting. Shred Day will also be occurring on June 12th this year, same day and location as the Trunk-to-Trunk.
- ✓ A member reached out to ask whether a portable toilet can be placed somewhere in Sans Souci. Portable toilets are already located behind the Sans Souci Market / Historical Society.
- ✓ The Harsen's Island Lions will be hosting the Turkey Shoot again this year Labor Day weekend. They are in the process of making the plans for this year's event, which will be another scaled-back event, similar to last year. The bands are reserved, and the Lioness' are on board for assisting. The fire department will also be the pancake breakfast again as well.
- ✓ The Harsen's Island Militia will be playing on June 6th at Browne's Field against the Algonac Little League Coaches. Proceeds for this event will directly benefit the Algonac Little League program. As a side note, there are actually a few children on the Island who play in the Algonac Little League.
- ✓ Cheryl Cardinali requested that the C.A.T.T.A.I.L.S. be able to sell hot dogs, chips, etc. during the Music in the Park events being held at Browne's Field this year. As a reminder, the C.A.T.T.A.I.L.S. is a charitable organization on the Island. **Jerry Thiel made the motion to permit the C.A.T.T.A.I.L.S. to sell food during the first three Music in the Park events at Browne's Field in 2021** (the fourth event coincides with the HISCFA Pig Roast); **Dennis Szymanski supported. All in favor, motion carries.**
- ✓ Linda Schoonover mentioned that there is a local company called Ice Box Novelties ice cream bicycle are interested in selling their ice cream at our events. The HISCFA is politely declining at this time due to initiatives to sell on their own for their own direct profits, or with other Island charitable opportunities like with the motion above for the C.A.T.T.A.I.L.S.



Next meeting will be Saturday, June 12, 2021 at **9:00 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

Jerry Thiel made the motion to adjourn; Steve Lawrence seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 10:24 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

MelanieM@hiscfa.org



APPENDIX

New Browne's Field entrance sign

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

Harsen's Island/Clay Township kayak launch / nature park drawing



Welcome to

BROWNE'S FIELD & PARK

Thank you to Cecil R. Browne for
Donating this Island Jewel

Park Closes at Dusk

Please Enjoy the Park at
your Own Risk

OWNED & MAINTAINED BY THE
HARSEN'S ISLAND ST. CLAIR
FLATS ASSOCIATION

Become a Member | Rent the Pavilion | View the Calendar

WWW.HISCFA.ORG



Clay Township Fire & EMS

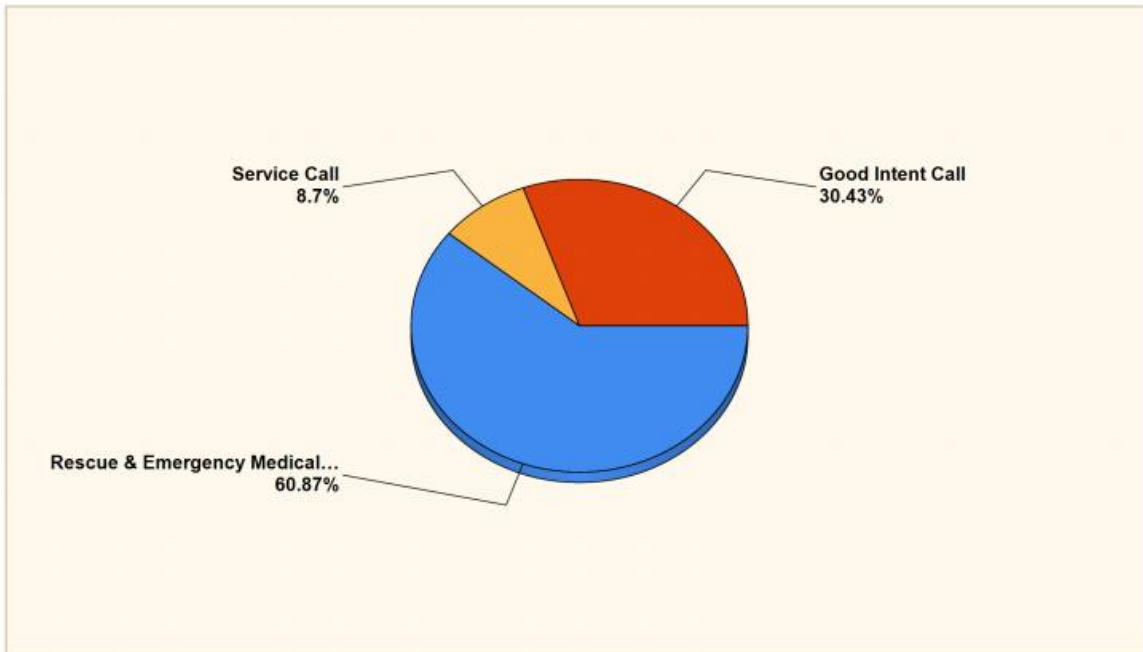
Clay Township, MI

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Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 04/01/2021 | End Date: 04/30/2021



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	14	60.87%
Service Call	2	8.7%
Good Intent Call	7	30.43%
TOTAL	23	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	5	21.74%
320 - Emergency medical service, other	1	4.35%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	8	34.78%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	2	8.7%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	6	26.09%
651 - Smoke scare, odor of smoke	1	4.35%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	23	100%

