



Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association

Minutes September 10, 2022

Directors Present: Craig Baloga, Steve Gartland, Steve Lawrence, Margaret Marchwinski, Melanie Most, Linda Schoonover, Harold Stieber, Dennis Szymanski, Leonard Verlinden, Lois Whipple;

Excused: Lucy Burby, Rosemary Wiczorek;

Unexcused: Susan Bryson, Jerry Freeman, David Martin, Kathy O'Connor, Terry Wiggins;

Guests and Members Present: Doug Andrews, Kathleen Andrews, Maureen Boury, Art Bryson, Jeanne Burczycki, Cheryl Cardinali, Fred Cardinali, John Dickson, Paul Engel, Roger Favrow, Sandy Favrow, Barb Feldman, Jim Hartsic, Nancy LeClair, Kurt Marchwinski, Jane Mount, Chris Pietras, Deborah Pietras, Chuck Quint, Sue Besemer Roberts, George Rose, Stephanie Spencer, Cathy Stapels, Jim Stieber, Paul Stieler, Nancy Streit, Gail Tomayko, Larry Tomayko, Kathy Toth, Rick Toth.

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

The August 2022 meeting minutes were presented. **Steve Lawrence made the motion to approve the August 2022 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 August 2022 Treasurer's Report. Harold reported that the balance in the checkbook for August 31, 2022 was \$64,202.80, with total cash on hand being \$97,535.52. Harold covered the financial report of Field Day, with the overall profit from this event totaling \$5,338.47. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Harold Stieber at HaroldS@hiscfa.org.

Steve Lawrence made the motion to approve the August 2022 treasurer's reports, Linda Schoonover seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, reports to be placed on file.

Secretary Report: Margaret Marchwinski reported that she put together an overview of the membership and The Delta News to review with the meeting attendees. Current membership is 555 active HISCFA members, in addition to 167 members from The Old Club (722 total). There are 62 advertisers on The Delta News mailing list, and with everyone included (mentioned previously) that means that 784 copies of The Delta News are being provided/handed out. This year (as in previous years) we ordered 900. A total of 289 copies of The Delta News were handed out in-person when members came to pick them up either at Field Day, the Trunk-to-Trunk Sale, and one of several other designated pick-up dates. There were 3 copies that were sold, and a total of 483 are going to be mailed. After Field Day (which is the main designated pick-up date), the HISCFA added a few additional pickup dates which will ultimately delay the mailing of the rest of the copies to those who could not pick up themselves. With respect to membership numbers, the Association lost 44 members from 2021-2022, but gained 21 new members... and 30 members who lapsed in 2020 have re-joined, so overall we have a net gain of 7 members this year.



Communications: No official communications have been received this month.

Browne's Field: Dennis Szymanski reported that he magnet-rolled out the entire Browne's Field parking area last month to collect any metallic debris leftover from the spring Island Cleanup day. Dennis mentioned that he would be repeating the same thing after the Fall Island Cleanup date. Supervisor Bryson mentioned that the Water Department comes by on the Monday after Island Cleanup days to tidy up afterwards. This was the first year that the HISCFA has learned about flat tires after any Island Cleanup days, so the HISCFA is committed to doing a better job rolling the magnet over the field, and Supervisor Bryson stated the Township would try to do a better job as well. Additionally, the DPW removed the excess dirt so now the water will drain off properly and should not affect the pond level so significantly any further.

Government Affairs: Lois Whipple reported that there is a new COVID booster available. The older formulations of the booster will no longer be available for persons 12 and older as the FDA has removed authorization for those boosters. Water levels are up and down lately, and the International Joint Commission website (ijc.org) has some really good information, and Michigan.gov also has good information about the water levels if you're interested in reading about them. Lois indicated that she would be willing to assist with locating this information on the web if someone wishes to reach out to her at LoisW@hiscfa.org.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Grant Update:* The HISCFA is still awaiting feedback about a determination on the Ralph C. Wilson grant that was recently applied for. The total for the grant request was for \$430,000. A request for update is still being shown as submitted but there has been no feedback yet as to a determination. This grant was submitted on May 9, 2022. Harold has reached out several times to inquire about the status of the grant, but there have been no responses. This grant would cover a new walking path, new restrooms facility, including acquisition of the former bank property which abuts the property. In the meantime, another grant was discovered that can be applied for if the RCW grant doesn't go through for some reason, and with a November 15th deadline, we won't be able to hear back until March for that one.
- *Fall Bonfire & BBQ:* Volunteers are needed for this event, taking place on Saturday, September 17th. Again this year, "Better Brad's BBQ" will be providing the food, and limited tickets will be sold for this event. Tickets are \$25 per person, and Dude and the Abiders will be playing this year. A sign-up sheet was passed around during the meeting for volunteers to assist with this event.
- *Election Results of Directors with Term Ending 2022:* Directors Lucy Burby, Susan Bryson, and Kathy O'Connor, whose terms expire December 31, 2022, have been re-nominated for their director terms for the 2023-2025 term as the result of a vote. In the October 2022 meeting, a motion will be entertained to appoint the above-named persons to new three-year terms, expiring December 31, 2025.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Pickleball Courts, Expansion & Restoration:* There have been 20-25 consistent pickleball players lately, all from the Island. There is a strong desire to restore the existing courts to support additional pickleball courts, and a large group of the players were in attendance at the meeting. Over the last two months, the HISCFA has been reaching out to companies to get quotations for resurfacing the existing, rarely-used tennis court. Craig Baloga displayed a rendering of what is desired for the four "new" courts, two on each side of the



existing tennis net, and also passed around a color chart illustrating potential court colors available. Flats Epoxy (owner Ryan is an Island resident) has quoted this job and the quotation came in around \$12,900. Supervisor Bryson mentioned that Clay Township has utilized Flats Epoxy in the past several times, and he speaks very highly of their work. Ideally, Flats Epoxy would like to take advantage of the current weather in order to complete the job properly. Alternatively, if the fall doesn't work out for timing, the job would need to be completed in the late spring/early summer. Jim Stieber agreed to be a liaison between the pickleball players and the HISCFA when/if this job takes place, to ensure the finish is suitable and the dimensions of the courts are correct. It was also noted that a new tennis net would need to be obtained because the old one is in rough shape. **Harold Stieber made a motion to award the contract to Flats Epoxy to complete the work to the specifications HISCFA outlines, including adding 2 new pickleball courts on both sides of the current tennis court net location, with cost not to exceed \$13,500; Linda Schoonover seconded. All in favor; motion carried.** Stephanie Spencer, on behalf of the pickleball players, committed to assisting with funding to acquire temporary pickleball nets until the new ones can be received.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson: Supervisor Bryson stated that roads on the Island have been in the process of being regraded/repaved recently. Golf Course Rd. is all torn up right now but there's a good base on it which is well-needed. They've got about 5-6 inches of stone on it right now, and they'll be compacting that soon. Then Middle Channel, part of North Channel and Bates Highway will be repaved.

The 9-acre nature park along the Krispin Drain (next to the Schoolhouse Grille) is going through the permit process with EGLE currently. Supervisor Bryson just received an email a few days ago that indicated that the permit will be issued soon, after several revisions to the application took place. Some of the things that were being requested got denied, including a walking path through prairie wetlands. Although a permit is not required for this walking path, because it was included in the description of the permit application, the path is not being allowed as part of the scope of the permit. A culvert is also being requested via a permit as well as a request to extend the driveway and a water line. A grant was also obtained for a birdwatching platform through the Audubon Society.

Numerous people (including a congresswoman and a state representative) have contacted Supervisor Bryson regarding the difficulty getting permits through EGLE which formerly *would have* been approved but are now *not* being approved. There are complaints from residents not only on Harsen's Island but the mainland as well. Supervisor Bryson met with a higher-up (second in charge with EGLE in Lansing, appointed by our governor), who was extremely disinterested in even having the conversation with Supervisor Bryson at all. For some background, there was a Supreme Court order a few months ago from a case in New Jersey that went to the US Supreme Court against the EPA. The Supreme Court said the administration of the EPA or any government agency cannot dictate new policy. They can suggest and/or that they educate, but they cannot enforce new policy. That function is for the legislative body above them. Supervisor Bryson's position is that they (EGLE) created new policy, so that's what he was trying to explain to this higher-up. If you go to EGLE's website, they have it right on their best business practices page that they don't want steel seawall anymore, that they'd prefer rock (e.g. riprap). As of right now, EGLE is not issuing any permits for steel seawall on a canal. You'd have to put rock - but, who wants to tie their boat to rock? They can say that rock is being suggested, but they can't mandate it - that's a policy change. Supervisor Bryson educated this person in the meeting about the Supreme Court ruling, and about a week later Governor Whitmer called Congresswoman Lisa McClain to have a meeting to discuss the situation with EGLE. Supervisor Bryson is awaiting feedback on the outcome of that meeting, but he feels it made a few waves so we'll have to see what comes from that. He has also heard from several Island residents that the EGLE inspector told them essentially that the people of Harsen's Island should get used to it - there will be very little or no building here, and



that if it were up to her, people wouldn't even be allowed to live on the Island. Supervisor Bryson was thanked for advocating for the residents. He mentioned that although he went way out of his lane, he's already been through this with the owners of Cabana Blue and seen the rejection firsthand with them. Cabana Blue wanted to repeat (now) what they did when the water level was high a couple years ago, and the EGLE inspector denied it without even seeing a permit... and she stated that even if they submitted a permit application, she would deny it. Another example is that someone bought a house on Phelps Rd. for \$50k with similar topography throughout the lot. On one side of the property, a house was just finished being built last year, and on the other side, a house is in the process of being built. His lot was inspected and he was told there were wetlands and that he's not permitted to build, even though nothing has changed in the area since the time the houses on either side were approved for permits.

The final Music in the Park in conjunction with the BBQ and Bonfire will be taking place next Saturday, September 17th at Browne's Field on Harsen's Island. There will be a Block Party in Sans Souci on October 8th, with the first band starting around 5pm and the second band starting about 2 hours later. The businesses in town will stay open late and provide food during this event. The street will be closed and people are encouraged to bring chairs and coolers, and dance in the street! Also on October 8th during the day, there is a Fall Island Cleanup day (Saturday only) at Browne's Field like usual.

There has been a lot of commotion regarding the launching of the big white tanks near Schneider Marina, on the Bay side. With respect to this eyesore, unfortunately no township ordinances were broken in this process. The township doesn't regulate what people put in the water. There may have been a motor carrier law broken, but that'd be a stretch and they'd have to see it to enforce it. Supervisor Bryson saw it after the fact, took photos of it, and sent it to everyone he could think of that could possibly do *something* about it. Supervisor Bryson had a video conference on Friday before Labor Day weekend with five people from the DNR, two Conservation Officers - a Lieutenant and a Captain, a couple EGLE enforcement people, a US Coast Guard Captain, and a Fire Marshall from the State. All that exists right now is rumors at the moment. The owner allegedly wants to use them like pontoons and make a barge out of it and anchor it out on Muscamoot Bay off the grid. Every person on the video call had a problem with that, and the Coast Guard said that there's no way that the tanks would be certified to do that, structurally even, because pontoons are designed differently than propane tanks due to their structure top to bottom. Then there's the issue of whether the tanks are fully empty or could there be any environmental impact if damage were to occur to the tanks. EGLE stated that they won't allow him to permanently anchor in Muscamoot or dock anywhere else. The Coast Guard stated they wouldn't allow it because it would be a hazard to navigation. The DNR stated it was an issue because they wanted to know how they were going to get the sewage and waste off of it (if the proposed 'project' were to come to fruition). In the meeting, the DNR took the lead because it's stuck on their property. The DNR gave the owner 48 hours to remove them from the DNR launch area but the owner ignored them. Currently the tanks are grounded in the marsh due to how much the tanks draft and the current water levels in the area. Supervisor Bryson was hoping that the DNR would take possession of them right there, cut them up and haul them away, but that would have been an astronomical bill so they decided not to pursue that option at this time. Supervisor Bryson tried to explain to the group that there's no good scenario with this situation, and the further along they let it go, the more it's going to cost to solve the problem. It is thought that there's really nowhere else for him to actually drag these things because of the water levels in the marsh where they are currently sitting. Another rumor was stated that someone heard he was going to dock them along the Middle Channel. Supervisor Bryson stated that that won't be happening, and township zoning wouldn't allow them to be stored in a marina or on any property, let alone build something like a houseboat within the township. Right now it resides in the hands of the DNR, and both DNR and EGLE are keeping an eye on the situation as it develops. Fire Chief Rose had to go out and assess the situation a few times because there was a possible hazmat situation, but that was determined not to be the case. A meeting attendee asked whether citizens could call someone or write letters to assist with placing some urgency on this matter, but Supervisor Bryson said there was nothing that could be done in that respect at this time. A citizen spoke to the



Conservation Officer at the scene when the situation was unfolding, and the CO stated that the owner was told that the second set of tanks was not allowed to be put in the water because it would further damage the launch. Once the CO left the Island/area, a few hours later the owner came back and put the second set of tanks in. The citizen asked Supervisor Bryson whether it was possible to issue the owner a fine for failure to comply with that order, and Supervisor Bryson agreed that the DNR/EGLE was looking at that, but they think it will ultimately be uncollectible in this situation. The citizen asked that now they're run aground and the water is too low to move them, where can they go - are they just going to sit, or can something be done about them? Supervisor Bryson stated that the DNR is going to give him another time frame to take action. At some point, the State is going to have to take possession of the tanks and get rid of them, which is why Supervisor Bryson was pushing them to take action when only one set was in the water and the other set was on land.

The township is applying for a specific grant intended for municipalities for the purpose of revitalizing parks. Supervisor Bryson is putting together a \$250-300k grant application to revitalize the Clay Township park to entail outside adult exercise equipment, replacing the playscape with a pirate ship (or other) play structure, and possibly replacing the sand volleyball court in lieu of a pickleball court. Melanie Most suggested that if the playscape at the township park is going to be replaced, perhaps the HISCEFA could work with the Township to acquire the former playscape for installation at Browne's Field. Supervisor Bryson also stated that it would be approximately \$5,000 to revitalize the current play structure for the purpose of re-utilizing it elsewhere.

The County Park meeting will take place regarding the proposed county beach park on September 27th at the Clay Township meeting hall at 6pm. The park will be located between the DNR public launch and the Harbor Club, across from Catch 22 restaurant. The St. Clair County Parks director resigned recently, and the new director has been working closely with Supervisor Bryson to keep this beach park project moving forward.

Every year, the Township pulls a township-wide permit to treat the phragmites, and also makes the chemical available to residents at the township's cost. The township provides education to use it properly if residents wish to use it on their own. There used to be State funding for this endeavor, but the State didn't stick with it long enough; that is, if the spraying is done over 5 years, it will get killed eventually (the State only did it for one year). The Township can't go on State property, and the Road Commission sprays the ditches. The Clay Township Building Department can provide information regarding this topic if you give them a call. Phragmites won't grow in 6 inches of water or more. As the water was high, the seeds were spread all over, and now that the water is low, we're seeing new growth. The active ingredients in the chemicals become inert when it becomes wet, so it needs to be sprayed on the leaves during a dry period (at least 24 hours), then it draws down to the leaves and to the root and kills it. Then, when they're dead, you can cut it and burn it.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose: During the month of August, Chief Rose attended three meetings: the St. Clair Flats Association, St. Clair County Fire Chief's Association, and one teleconference meeting with the Coast Guard and other agencies involved with the Raft Off event in 2022.

The Clay Township Fire Department responded to 8 medical responses at Raft Off this year, which turned out to be fewer than last year's event. There were reports of low attendance this year compared to last year; about 1/3 fewer boats attended the Raft Off event. Chief Rose would like to thank the men and women of the CTFD for their service on that day, and Clay Township Dispatch for their hard work.

Chief Rose would also like to thank Mr. & Mrs. Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Engel, and Mr. & Mrs. Bryson for their assistance with their property and equipment. It made the Clay Township Fire Department's job much easier.



Fire Boat #1 is out of service due to issues with the starboard motor. Mercury Marine is warranting all repairs; the department is just waiting for parts.

The Clay Township Fire Department was working on their next events for September: Peter Henkel Memorial Boat Parade, Harsen's Island Lions Club Land Parade, and the annual Pancake Breakfast. Over 400 residents showed up to support the breakfast, and Chief Rose would like to thank residents for coming out for this event.

We hope to have our new AEDs delivered this month, and one is scheduled to be installed at Browne's Field. There is a special cabinet with an alarm that would chime to the Fire Department in the event the cabinet was opened or being tampered with. This would be accessible during the warmer months, and removed in the winter. The EWS (early warning system, i.e. tornado sirens, severe weather) sites have been selected, so in the next month or so these should be installed. These would be installed near the South Channel Yacht Club, the Voakes Rd. DNR site, Golf Course Rd., and Little Road. They will rotate and they will also be able to be heard in Muscamoot Bay.

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ On behalf of the Lions, Dennis Szymanski would like to thank everyone who volunteered and/or came out to the Turkey Shoot this year. Additionally, there will be trap shooting on Sundays at 2pm at the Lions location until hunting season begins. It will be \$6 and you can shoot the whole box.
- ✓ Barrier Breakers: No Limits Fishing provides free fishing charters 2-3 times per week to people who are handicapped. The boat is wheelchair accessible, and they dock at the Pearl Beach fishing pier. Additionally, Fins & Feathers (a local Island resident) is taking hunting and fishing groups out for Veterans that are suffering from PTSD. This is also a free service.
- ✓ Francis Sampier is doing the Morrow Road Film, and one scene will be shot on the Island at the oldest, largest tree. The website is MorrowRoad.com, and he is looking to get people involved. If you go to the website, click on the section called "get involved" to review the prop list (things they're looking for) to see if you can assist. About 20% of the film is set in 1889-1890, and uses scenes of horror, suspense and mystery. They are looking for items to borrow, as well as extras (as volunteers). As an extra, the movie crew will assist if you'd like to participate. Over half of the \$600,000 production cost has been raised, but they're looking for more investors. It is a 24-day shoot, with 12-16 hour days. Production Assistants are also being requested. Please visit the website to learn more.

Next meeting will be Saturday, October 8, 2022 at **9:00 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

Steve Lawrence made the motion to adjourn; Lois Whipple seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 10:41 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

MelanieM@hiscfa.org



APPENDIX

Fire Department Incident Reports for Harsen's Island (August 2022)



Clay Township Fire & EMS

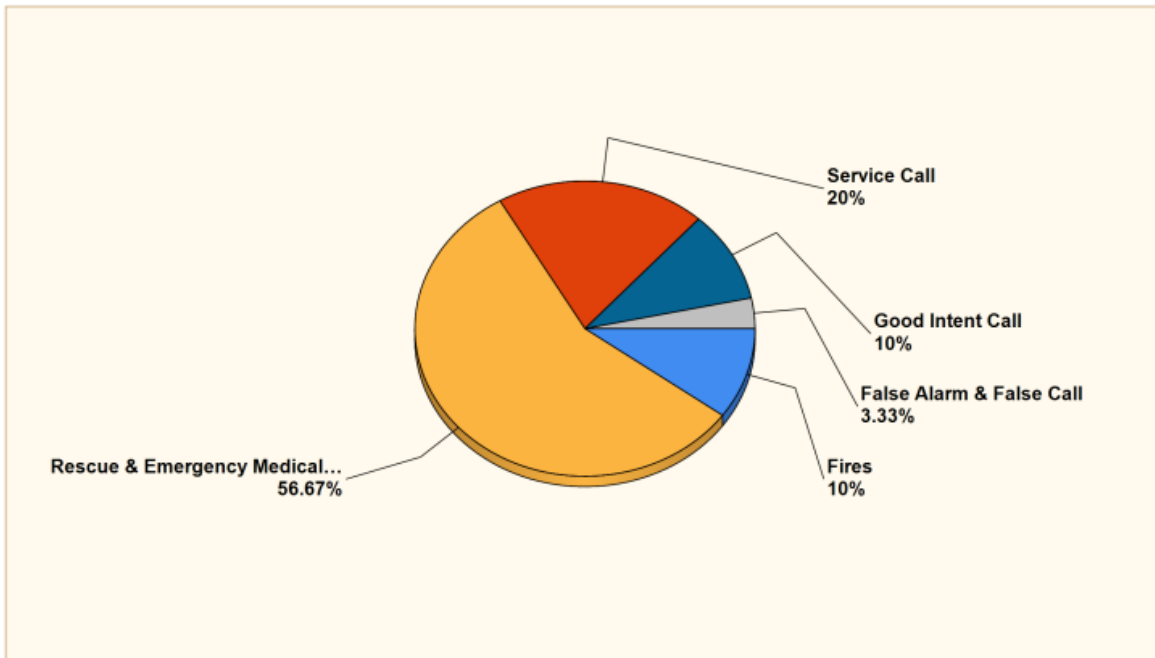
Clay Township, MI

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Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 08/01/2022 | End Date: 08/31/2022



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	3	10%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	17	56.67%
Service Call	6	20%
Good Intent Call	3	10%
False Alarm & False Call	1	3.33%
TOTAL	30	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
111 - Building fire	1	3.33%
154 - Dumpster or other outside trash receptacle fire	2	6.67%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1	3.33%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	14	46.67%
324 - Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	1	3.33%
360 - Water & ice-related rescue, other	1	3.33%
500 - Service Call, other	4	13.33%
550 - Public service assistance, other	1	3.33%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	1	3.33%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	3	10%
746 - Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	1	3.33%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	30	100%