



Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association

Minutes October 8, 2022

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

Excused: none.

Unexcused: Susan Bryson, Jerry Freeman, Kathy O'Connor, Rosemary Wieczorek, Terry Wiggins;

Guests and Members Present: Mike Balan, Artie Bryson, Cheryl Cardinali, Fred Cardinali, Gordon Couture, George Covalle, John Dickson, Paul Engel, Carol Everett, Mark Everett, Roger Favrow, Sandy Favrow, Mike Galati, Javier Geronimo Jr., Dan MacDonald, Kurt Marchwinski, Doreen Miller, Jane Mount, Cher Neumann, Dan Neumann, Spencer Phinney, Aaron Quain, George Rose, Andrea Seifferlein, Denise Stieber, Jim Stieber, Paul Stieler, Mark Verschaeve, Robert Wasil, Randy Wildner.

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

The September 2022 meeting minutes were presented. **David Martin made the motion to approve the September 2022 meeting minutes, Linda Schoonover seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, minutes to be placed on file.**

Executive Committee Reports

Treasurer Report: Harold Stieber presented the September 2022 Treasurer's Report. Harold reported that the balance in the checkbook for September 30, 2022 was \$71,652.52, with total cash on hand being \$137,949.01. A full report for the recent BBQ & Bonfire will be coming next month. Full copies of the monthly Treasurer's Report are available by contacting Harold Stieber at HaroldS@hiscfa.org.

David Martin made the motion to approve the September 2022 treasurer's reports, Leonard Verlinden seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, reports to be placed on file.

Secretary Report: Margaret Marchwinski is continuing to work with advertisers for the current year and upcoming year as well. Membership is winding down, but there is still some interest and random emails/phone calls coming in. Harold indicated that a local foundation reached out to the HISCFA to review the Treasurer's Reports. After they reviewed the information, they've decided to provide a donation of \$2,500 to go towards the permanent restrooms fund.

Communications: No official communications have been received this month.

Browne's Field: Dennis Szymanski mentioned that the field is in pretty good shape. Over \$1,900 was raised during the Harsen's Island Militia charity softball game (for benefit of the Blue Water Humane Society) that was held a couple weeks ago, which was played at Browne's Field. The fall Island Cleanup day is taking place today at



Browne's Field. Large items are not being accepted today and must be taken to the mainland. A pit was dug and will be filled in level once the event is over. The Township will be using a magnet upon completion of the event (to prevent possible flat tires), and Dennis indicated he would also run the magnet once more after the Township has finished cleaning up on their end.

Government Affairs: Interstate 69 has recently reopened from recent construction. Additionally, 21 Mile Rd. near Gratiot will be closed to work on the railroad tracks, in addition to all of the other work going on at M-59. The water level report that Paul Wargo posted on Nextdoor was read to the group.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Grant Update:* The HISCFA grant that was submitted for the Ralph C. Wilson grant was recently denied. The HISCFA was advised to continue to submit because persistence pays off. The total for the grant request was for \$430,000, but it was communicated by the foundation that the HISCFA request did not meet their criteria, although the criteria was not well-defined. This grant would have covered a new walking path, new restrooms facility, including acquisition of the former bank property which abuts the property. In the meantime, another grant through the Community Foundation of St. Clair County was discovered that will be pursued, in addition to an amended grant request through the Ralph. C. Wilson foundation. The building will not be able to be submitted in the scope of the Community Foundation grant, which is due by November 15th with a response expected in March 2023.
- *Director Terms, 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. All three directors have accepted their nominations. **David Martin made a motion to appoint the above persons Lucy Burby, Susan Bryson, and Kathy O'Connor as directors to new, three-year terms, expiring December 31, 2025. Steve Lawrence seconded; all in favor, motion carried.**
- *Pickleball Courts, Expansion & Restoration:* It's getting a little too cold now to complete this project, and since Flats Epoxy is booking up quickly, another quotation is being pursued in the event it cannot be completed in a desirable time frame.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Pavilion Vandalism:* Recently there was some vandalism at Browne's Field. The rope lighting from the rafters was ripped out, and a vent was kicked in on the kitchen wall. David Martin indicated that the vent has been kicked in before; he has replaced/repared it at least twice in the past. The HISCFA knew who committed these recent acts of vandalism based on camera footage, so the information was taken to the police and a report was filed. The officer reached out to the alleged teens, and they admitted guilt. The officer is submitting the report to the prosecutor's office to press charges for vandalism. The HISCFA is not aware of the terms of the juveniles' impending punishment at this time. These specific juveniles are known by the police to have a record of other malicious behavior.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson: Supervisor Bryson recommended that the HISCFA take a look at the winning grants from the Ralph C. Wilson foundation, and see what their scopes were so the HISCFA has a better idea of what to submit next time. The winning bids have to be published so it will be public information.

Supervisor Bryson was sad to report the status of the nature park as of late. The nature park originally had a walking path, archery range, kayak launch, a birding platform, handicap accessibility to the Krispin Drain, as well as ample



parking in the scope of the project. Three buildable lots were purchased and appraised for this project. The concept plan was provided to the DNR and their inspection/approval was given. Grants were awarded to purchase the property, which included a DNR appraisal. An environmental review was obtained, including a wetland delineation and was once again submitted. EGLE basically destroyed the whole plan and won't allow the archery range and walking path. Technically the land is prairie and not wetland. A permit is not needed to walk on prairie land, but since it was in the scope of the plan it was not approved. EGLE said the wetland started right where the parking lot was scoped, so to get around that, the township would have to do an elevated dock starting at the parking lot to go all the way out to the Krispin Drain, which is 600 feet long. The cost of the pipe to drive it is \$200,000 just to get to the length of 600 feet, and the estimated cost of the elevated dock would be around \$500k-\$600k. It is very unlikely that someone with a kayak would routinely walk 600 feet just to splash it. In the meantime, Supervisor Bryson put a stop to the whole project to rethink it and to see whether he could negotiate something better with EGLE, but it is certainly an uphill battle. The difficulty with EGLE recently is stemming from a newer person in the position of Environmental Quality Analyst. There have been many projects denied recently, including a permit request for a community septic system for the entire downtown Sans Souci businesses.

There has been a lot of activity with road work on the Island, and it's almost completed. There are two additional coatings that will be applied, one called fogging and another one called blacking. There is a method to the madness: they do some of it and let it sit so the base will compact as vehicles drive over it, which ensures a better base. After that, they come back and do the subsequent applications. This is the same surface application that's always been on these roads all along. This chip seal works best on roads like ours because we don't have stable bases on the Island. When you don't have a stable base, asphalt cracks; this chip seal does not crack.

During Island Cleanup today, the dumpsters came from MGM this time because Emterra wasn't available. Unfortunately the Township is paying a little more for the MGM dumpsters, but Emterra couldn't support this timing and that's why large items are not being accepted (risk of damaging MGM dumpsters).

The road will be closed at 4pm today in Sans Souci to accommodate the 1st Annual Block Party. All of the downtown businesses will be open and participating in tonight's event. The first band starts around 5pm and the second band will start sometime after 8pm. There will be propane heaters available to keep people warm. Portable toilets and handwashing stations will be available.

Supervisor Bryson would like to thank the USCBP for their service and for the great job they've been doing.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose: During the month of September, Chief Rose attended one meeting: the Harsen's Island St Clair Flats Association.

The Clay Township Fire Department participated in two parades: the Pete Henkel Boat Parade and the Harsen's Island Lions Club Parade. The Fire Fighters Association had their pancake breakfast, and it turned out very well. Chief Rose thanks all of the residents for coming out and showing their support for this event.

The CTFD had a visit from ISO (for fire rating): they conducted their 4-year inspection. It covered vehicles, equipment, personnel, training, fire responses, building inspections, fire prevention, dispatch, and water supply. Some positive things: by putting a second water feed to the Island and upgrading our water line may help our rating in the future. At this time, the township is rated at a 5/5X at this time, we should have a report back in 4 to 6 months.



Fire Boat#1 is still out of service, because the CTFD is currently waiting for parts from Mercury. This boat is 17 years old at this time. Chief Rose is looking for grants that are available to assist with ultimately replacing the vessel.

It is hoped that the sirens will be placed on the Island this month, if possible. All of the permits have been completed for this task. Two of the sirens are on county property, and the other ones are on private property.

The AEDs should be received this month and installed towards the end of November.

Guest Speaker, US Customs & Border Protection Dan MacDonald: Dan indicated that he has been with the USCBP for 20 years now, and he introduced Aaron Quain, and Patrol Agent in Charge Javier Geronimo Jr.. The team indicated that they are attending events like our HISCFA meeting as part of their community outreach program, to get their faces out there and give community residents a point(s) of contact for the local USCBP offices. They stated that Harsen's Island is an important part of customs and border protection due to its proximity to an international border. Protecting the borders in St. Clair County is a huge challenge. We have great neighbors in Canada across the river, but there are criminal organizations that try to exploit every opportunity they can to further their illicit activities. When you look at the river and the time it takes to cross the river and to get over here, it doesn't take a lot of time. CBP relies on their technology and manpower that's deployed out in the field, but they also rely on the community to be their eyes and ears. If you see something out of the norm, please reach out and it will be investigated. They would rather receive the call and have it be nothing than not receive the call at all.

This is the busiest year in the past 13 years for cross-border activity, especially in the summer... not only that they're seeing or missing, but that they're catching. There were 3 apprehensions on M-29 on the mainland just yesterday, reported by the local police department. Most of the activity comes from the Chanel and Chematogen waterways. On October 3rd, there were 4 Vietnamese nationals that came inbound through the Chanel; they came straight across to the Big River Grille. It took them approximately 30 seconds to get across. There was one guy there waiting to pick them up, and within a minute they were dropped off and picked up and on the road. Luckily the USCBP caught that one on camera and they were able to get down there quickly and apprehend them. Two of them were juveniles and placed into the custody of Health & Human Services (HHS) per policy, and the other two were processed for expedited removals with US Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE). On September 23rd, there was a duffel bag that came out of the Chanel and was dropped off and picked up by another individual on the mainland. They caught this on camera afterwards; they didn't have time to get there. There was a break-in on Russell Island two weeks ago: a two-person rowboat landed on Russell Island from Walpole Island and attempted to break into a house. Luckily the homeowners were there at the time with someone else, and one of them came out with a shotgun and fired a round in the air to scare the perpetrators away. The USCBP responded to that incident, along with the Clay Township Police Department. This particular type of break-in (on Russell Island) typically takes place this time of year, when cottage owners are closing up for the season and there's significantly less activity than in the summer. Additionally, there were a couple of other packages in late September that were dropped off. On September 5th there was another inbound incident where 3 adults were apprehended, each from Spain, Chile, and Brazil. They were from Walpole Island and dropped off at the Riviera Restaurant in Marine City. On September 11th, they had an apprehension here on the Island. They originated on Walpole Island and a jet ski came across to drop off a Canadian at a house for Sale on S. Channel Drive. There was someone there waiting to pick them up. Luckily, an Island resident noticed this activity and called it in, and Clay PD responded because of their proximity. Technology is getting better, but the best help they can receive from the Island is tips from residents. There is always an agent assigned to the Island, and anything you see that seems out of the ordinary, please give the USCBP a call.



Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ Harold Stieber provided a preliminary update from his recent Great Lakes Islands Alliance meeting, which was jointly hosted by the Lake Erie Islands of Kelleys, Middle Bass, Pelee, and South Bass (Put-in-Bay). He will provide a full report next month. Harold indicated that there are many opportunities to network with those folks. They do a lot of things that we (Harsen's Island) could be doing. For example, they have a school on Kelleys Island (adjacent to Put-in-Bay) with five students. They make it work, funded by the State of Ohio. They have a flat 0.26 mills from their taxes to run the school. They have more teachers than students, but they're economically feasible and use the school not only for that, but as a community center, gymnasium, and other events to keep it multi-purpose. The students are not short-changed with their education since they have access to many forms of technology these days. They remotely share with other schools on other islands and the mainland as well. They even have a track and field team.
- ✓ Jane Mount wanted to promote the 7th Annual Soup Cook-Off on November 12th, for the benefit of the Harsen's Island Lions. Applications are available if you would like to make soup and participate. It is a \$10 entry fee, and you will get to taste 20 soups with three votes to cast. Applications are available with Jane directly, and will also be available at the Craft Show tomorrow at the Lions Hall. She will be placing them on Nextdoor as well, and Jane can email them to you if you want to reach out to her.
- ✓ Kathy Harrison voiced her opinion about the recent vandalism. She believes that the parents should be held responsible and will have to pay for any costs incurred to replace the damaged items. It was her opinion that neither the HISCFA nor any members should pay to replace them.

Next meeting will be Saturday, November 12, 2022 at **9:00 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

Dennis Szymanski made the motion to adjourn; Steve Lawrence seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 10:07 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

MelanieM@hiscfa.org



APPENDIX

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



Clay Township Fire & EMS

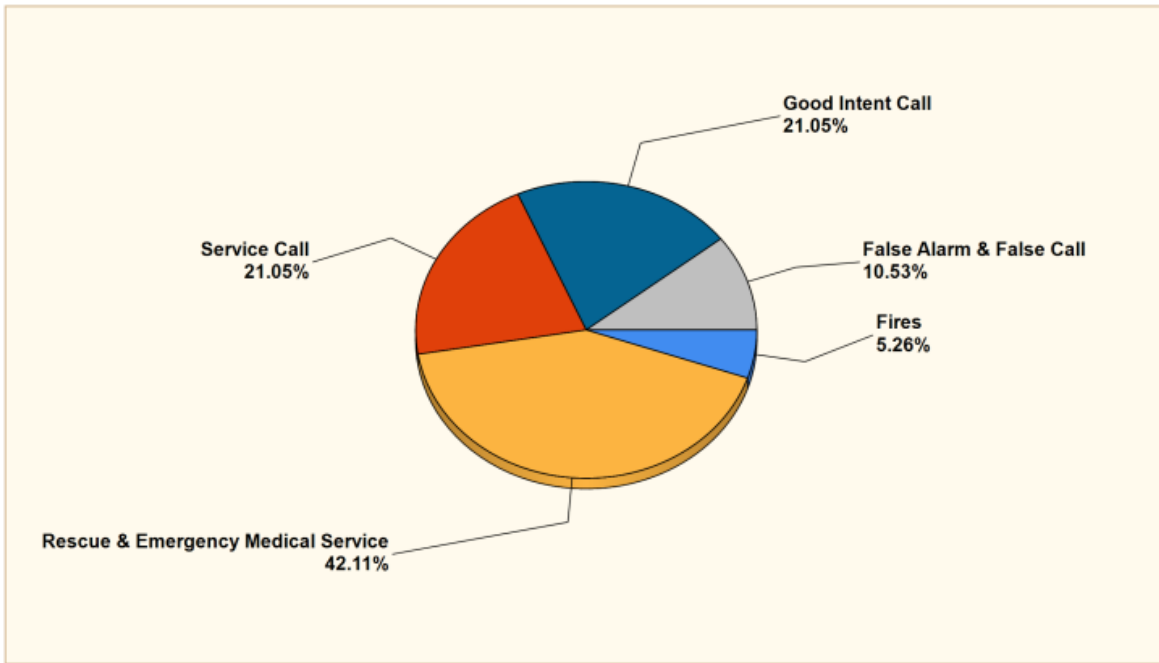
Clay Township, MI

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Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 09/01/2022 | End Date: 09/30/2022



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	1	5.26%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	8	42.11%
Service Call	4	21.05%
Good Intent Call	4	21.05%
False Alarm & False Call	2	10.53%
TOTAL	19	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
142 - Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	1	5.26%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1	5.26%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	7	36.84%
500 - Service Call, other	1	5.26%
554 - Assist invalid	2	10.53%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	1	5.26%
600 - Good intent call, other	1	5.26%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	2	10.53%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	1	5.26%
743 - Smoke detector activation, no fire - unintentional	1	5.26%
745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	1	5.26%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	19	100%