



Harsen's Island St. Clair Flats Association

Minutes June 10, 2023

Directors Present: Craig Baloga, Melanie Most, Kathy O'Connor, Linda Schoonover, Harold Stieber, Dennis Szymanski, Lois Whipple;

Excused: Steve Gartland, Steve Lawrence, Margaret Marchwinski;

Unexcused: Susan Bryson, Lucy Burby, Jerry Freeman, David Martin, Leonard Verlinden, Terry Wiggins;

Guests and Members Present: Mike Balan, Joe Bosy, Artie Bryson, David Bryson, Jeanne Burczycki, Cheryl Cardinali, John Darling, Fred Cardinali, Roger Favrow, Barb Feldman, Mike Galati, Greg Gagnon, Kathleen Harrison, Brian Hellebuyck, Christine Holcomb, Rich Holcomb, Doug Kaltz, Doreen Miller, Larry Morelli, Karen Nihranz, Ashleigh Palescuk, George Rose, Pat Schulte, Andrea Seifferlein, Stephanie Spencer, Jim Stieber, Skip Tornow, Mark Verschaeve.

Craig Baloga brought the meeting to order at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall at 9:03 am with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The May 2023 meeting minutes were presented. **Dennis Szymanski made the motion to approve the May 2023 meeting minutes, Kathy O'Connor seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, minutes to be placed on file.**

Executive Committee Reports

Treasurer Report: Harold Stieber presented the May 2023 Treasurer's Reports. Harold reported that the balance in the checkbook for May 31, 2023 was \$76,147.73 with total cash on hand being \$142,887.68. 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 May 2023 treasurer's reports, Kathy O'Connor seconded to approve; all in favor, motion carried, reports to be placed on file.

Secretary Report: Margaret Marchwinski was not present at the meeting, but submitted her comments via email. The second proof of The Delta News was received from Graphics East, with fine tuning continuing to occur. Reminder about the Barks, BBQ and Rock-n-Roll Fundraising Event on June 17th at Browne's Field: if anyone would like to volunteer they can leave their name and phone number and Margaret will forward that information to the Committee in charge. David Martin was not present at this meeting, but he provided details via email about getting a handwashing station at events where food is served. That fee will be \$105/event. Harold Stieber entertained a motion to approve obtaining a handwashing station for each HISCFA event where food is served, as well as 2 additional portable toilets. **Dennis Szymanski made the motion to rent the handwashing station and obtain 2 additional portable toilets for events this season; Kathy O'Connor seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

Communications: There are no official communications to report this month.



Browne's Field: Dennis Szymanski followed up after Margaret Marchwinski and Cher Neumann thoroughly cleaned and sanitized the kitchen and it looks great. The driveway is in much better shape after the millings have been placed down. Dennis reported that he replaced the pedestrian door to the barn and also replaced the lock on the door. There was an issue at the Bates Cut water station, and it appears that it is being tampered with. The water department checked it out and discovered the issue. Dennis mentioned that Browne's Field will be hosting the Harsen's Island Militia vs. the Algonac Little League Parents/Coaches on Sunday June 11th at noon. Dennis and Chief Rose will be determining a location at Browne's Field under the pavilion to mount the AED where it will be publicly accessible. Additional cameras may be needed in order to ensure the security of this device. Dennis recommended getting an additional supply of spray to treat the influx of ants, and replace some of the trim where damage has occurred as a result of the ants.

Government Affairs: Lois Whipple had nothing to report at this time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- *Grant Update*: No official responses have been received. Many grant sources have indicated that they do not donate to capital projects. Since funding for capital projects is exactly what the Association needs, Harold Stieber and Jane Mount are discussing options about shifting gears with respect to grant applications in order to fall under the scope of available funds.

NEW BUSINESS

- *Trees for Browne's Field*: Some trees have been obtained and will be placed on Browne's Field, in coordination with the proposed walking path. Last month, obtaining benches to place around the field was discussed with no official resolution. Dennis Szymanski recommended turning over the bench project to another volunteer who is willing to execute this task going forward. Craig Baloga agreed to contact Dave Martin before the next meeting to see if he is still interested in following through with this project.
- *Car Show Update*: Kathy O'Connor indicated that she has another set of cornhole boards to donate. A lot of the gifts have been received for this event, and t-shirts are already available for purchase. The feature vehicle this year is a 1969 Ford Mustang Boss 429 in lime green; it looks very sharp. Volunteers are still needed for this event! If you are interested in volunteering, you can contact CraigB@hiscfa.org or by calling him at 248-880-2861. In addition to volunteers for setup & teardown of this event, Car show judges are needed, and it will be very easy to judge (no prior experience is necessary). It will be one sheet of paper for each car with four areas to review with 100 points (25 points per category): exterior, engine, interior, and overall.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Supervisor Artie Bryson: Supervisor Bryson commented that the Block Party and the Music in the Park kicked off the summer season quite nicely. Today at 10:00 am, the Algonac Muskrats baseball and softball teams are both playing their regional finals, which is being held in Algonac. If they make it through, they will go to semi-finals, and then hopefully the state championship.

Last month there was a tour of the Algaewheel Batch Plant in Indiana, and some preliminary engineering will be conducted to see where, of the three identified possible locations, would be the best to host this structure. The best location has been identified at Krispin Rd. & Ames, which is currently owned by Clay Township. A lot of that area



is upland, and it would be a more central location to accommodate more users as opposed to just Sans Souci. Since that property is considered a brownfield, Supervisor Bryson indicated there is grant money to be obtained for brownfields specifically, so he is hopeful that grants are a possibility. There are 5-6 acres to work with and it is not near any houses. The other locations that have been identified are at Poplar and Elm streets (back side, 4 lots not near the road), and one spot behind Tashmoo Marina, but both of those locations are 'wet' and may not be suitable for this type of project. Supervisor Bryson stated that he probably had at least 10-15 people reach out to him with interest about this project. There was a study done recently that estimated there could be \$20-30k/year in carbon credits produced. In comparison, the plant would only cost about \$40k/year to operate. The capacity would be 25,000 gallons/day. Recently, the state of West Virginia took the EPA to court, and it went up to the Supreme Court. That court ruling said that the EPA could not regulate from their policies (best practices), but they must only enforce the statute. Essentially, that's what EGLE has been doing with us, which has been causing so many issues on Harsen's Island. With the current legislature, it is possible to turn Best Management Practices into law, which could really cause some extreme difficulty down the road. ASTI Environmental is the company that the township uses, and they have seen other instances where there were projects similar to the proposed nature park on the Island (near the Schoolhouse) have been approved. The Supreme Court said that the state cannot dictate/enforce policy, they have to go by the statute. For the proposed nature park, the permit was denied (in part) because the state said it is not permitted to walk on prairie land. The argument was: how is it NOT possible to walk on that land, but it IS possible to snowmobile on it in the winter? The environmentalist at ASTI has seen other similar sites that *have* been granted permits for walking paths, so the state is being inconsistent. Our Township, along with ASTI, will very likely resurrect this project within the next 6 months to pursue it once again.

The sewer interceptor project on the mainland is underway beginning next year. Supervisor Bryson is working on securing the money from the Spark Grant that was received, and that will probably occur in spring next year. At that time, the existing Township playscapes will be repurposed to Browne's Field when the mainland park receives new playscapes. The wood chips will also be hauled over to support the playscapes once they are installed at Browne's Field. Stephanie Spencer asked whether city water will ever be brought to The Flats, and Supervisor Bryson indicated that the project for the second line would need to be completed first, and then it would be up to the residents in that area if they were willing to pay for it. There was a special assessment requested for the area near the South Channel Yacht Club, but if it is taken all the way down to the end, how many residents will realistically hook up to this line? At the moment, there doesn't appear to be too much interest based on previous cost estimates.

At the mainland park, pickleball courts are currently being installed and should be ready to play on in early July, and at the Pearl Beach Pier location, a small parking area and restrooms are being constructed to support the pier. There is a handicap-accessible dock and pontoon boat that does charters specifically for handicapped individuals.

Guest Speaker, Clay Township Fire Chief George Rose: During the month of May, Chief Rose attended three meetings: the St Clair Flats Association, and the St. Clair County Chief's Meeting. The United States Coast Guard had a meeting at the Clay Township Police Department to plan out Jobbie Nooner this year. The Clay Township Fire Department (CTFD) command post will be on land at Tashmoo South Marina (it will not be on the Bristol Bay this year).

The CTFD is being asked to deploy the marker balloons and reserve the portable toilets for this event. The CTFD will do some light patrolling at Jobbie Nooner, but not like in years past.



From the township clean-up events for the Mainland and Harsen's Island, the CTFD took in a lot of used motor oil this year, some paint, antifreeze, insecticides, and household cleaning supplies. It appears we are collecting less each year. It helps that it is possible for our mainland station to take it year-round. Additionally, Supervisor Bryson added that 530 tires were collected township-wide. Chief Rose indicated that they have sharps containers and they collect year-round if anyone has a need for disposal of this bio-waste. They also collect medications, and they need to be removed from the prescription bottles and placed into a plastic baggie and turned into the fire station.

Fire Boat #1 was repaired and put into the water; starboard is in a break-in period, so once that is complete the boat will be in full service. Fire Boat #1 will be used for fires and inclement weather only.

Chief Rose would like to thank Linda Schoonover for providing dinner for the firefighters at the Dancing in the Street Block Party on Harsen's Island. He would also like to thank the Harsen's Island Garden Club for planting new flowers at the Island station.

Chief Rose apologized to the residents of Harsen's Island for the lack of communication regarding the testing of the new sirens. There was supposed to be a WINS notification sent out but that did not occur as intended.

Finally, Chief Rose indicated that the CTFD is deploying the new AEDs on the Island, located at St. Mark Church, St. Paul Church, Browne's Field, and the Harsen's Island Lions Hall. There may be one additional location that is being looked at for another AED, possibly located in downtown Sans Souci.

Guest Speaker, DNR - John Darling: John commented that he gets a lot of complaints or inquiries about the Snooks Launch (boat launch) near Brown's Bar: this is the responsibility of the Algonac State Park and does not fall under the Island Field Office's scope of responsibility. A new manager is in the process of being hired at the Algonac State Park, and the current interim manager assured John that it will be handled this year (but he has heard the same story from them for the past three years). If you continue to have problems with the Snooks Launch, please call the Algonac State Park and hopefully the "squeaky wheel gets the grease." The Ames Launch is also owned by the State Park as well, but due to its proximity, the Island DNR takes care of that launch since it is used by duck hunters on Harsen's Island and is adjacent to the DNR Field Office's property and our duck hunters end up using it more than anyone anyways.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza is still an issue here on the Island. Last year, the Island was Ground Zero for wild bird fatality in Michigan. John stated that 120 dead geese were recovered last year including dozens of ducks and a few swans. Nationwide, HPAI is still present so the DNR is still being prevented from duck & goose banding (as if it is still on the landscape), but there haven't been any fatalities this year that John is aware of. Perhaps it is because it hasn't come through yet, or it has and our birds are somewhat resistant at this point. We haven't had mass die-offs this year like we had last year, but if you do encounter multiple dead birds in one area, please call the office at 810-748-9504. The clinical sign for AI is spinning in one spot, so if you see that, please call. Some of the ones that were recovered last year got so tangled in tall grass that it almost formed a cord around their legs. The only dead birds that have been found this year have been found from lead poisoning from feeding on sinkers or lead shot.

John wanted to raise awareness of the Open House event taking place next weekend on Saturday, June 17th at 9am. There will be a driving tour and will give you a chance to see parts of the area you may not have seen before. This date was moved to the summer to help the summer residents have access to this event. It has been absurdly dry, farming has been good, and the dykes are in good shape.



A question was asked about how the draw will occur. There is now a hybrid model for doing 2 draws a day, 7 days a week. The social distancing rules have been kept in place. The draw will still occur over the radio and one person can sign up the whole group, and everyone doesn't need to stay inside. This makes it a lot faster and a lot easier than it used to be. Another question asked was whether the area was available for walking. John stated that the dykes are open from January 2nd through Aug 31st. The gate is open Monday-Thursday but it is kept locked outside of those times. Parking is permitted in the parking lots nearby, or on the side of the road near the cottonwoods. The area is always closed to motor vehicles: no side-by-sides, ATVs, etc. There is officially a state rule in place to prevent bicycles in that area as well. September 1st through January 1st the refuge is closed entirely and no persons are permitted to enter the area. A permit must be obtained for hunting during that time. Two weekends ago, you may have seen some people on the area with four-wheelers and such. There were two groups: St. Clair Flats Waterfowlers and the Harsens Island Waterfowlers. Each of those groups placed multi-colored flags around the area to help identify some of the worst-damaged corn fields (from geese) to try to keep the geese out of some of the fields. This is the second year they've done that. If you are experiencing geese on your property, the best way to get them off your property is harass them as much as possible, or place some sort of blockage or repellent flags up. We have had really good success with the flags last year. Pie plates were placed on the DNR area last year, but they did not hold up to the wind.

A question was asked about what to say to a neighbor who insists on feeding geese and encouraging them on their property. John stated that although there are no legal ramifications for feeding geese, he would strongly urge them not to do that. The byproduct of feeding geese can lead to things like swimmers itch from swimming in the water where the byproduct is present, besides making a terrible mess to look at and walk through.

Additional comments from directors or guests:

- ✓ Harold reported that the raffle license has been received, and Margaret will be able to get the raffle tickets printed now. Harold also needs the liquor license application signed.
- ✓ Craig Baloga indicated that he would like to get Jr. Class Hydroplane Racing out to Harsens's Island. They are demonstrating at Belleville Lake soon, so Craig is in talks with them to see if they can come out. Scouting our area to provide a good location and good access are key in order to make this potential future event successful.
- ✓ Linda Schoonover indicated that there are good responses from vendors for Field Day this year, but additional vendors are needed. Please continue to spread the word, and direct possible vendors to the website (hiscfa.org) under the Calendar section.
- ✓ Dennis Szymanski asked Supervisor Bryson whether the boards from Clay Days will be displayed during Field Day, and Supervisor Bryson indicated that the HISCFA will need to direct the township where to place them appropriately.
- ✓ The St. Clair County Health Department recently held a Mental Health Awareness seminar sponsored by the Algonac Rotary. Between 15-30 people would be needed in order to hold an event of this type on Harsens's Island if there is any interest.



Next meeting will be Saturday, July 8, 2023 at **9:00 am** at the Harsen's Island Lions Hall.

Dennis Szymanski made the motion to adjourn; Kathy O'Connor seconded. All in favor; meeting adjourned at 10:17 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Melanie Most, Recording Secretary

MelanieM@hiscfa.org



APPENDIX

Fire Department Incident Reports for Harsen's Island (May 2023)



Clay Township Fire & EMS

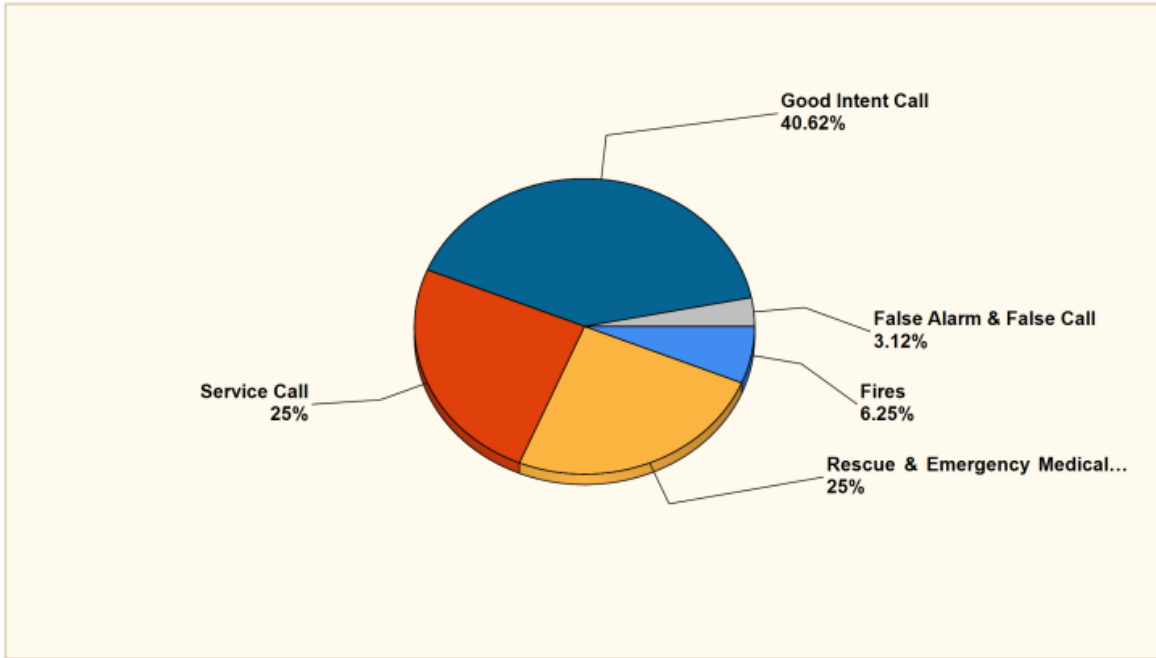
Clay Township, MI

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Breakdown by Major Incident Types for Date Range

Zone(s): 3 - HARSENS ISLAND | Start Date: 05/01/2023 | End Date: 05/31/2023



MAJOR INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
Fires	2	6.25%
Rescue & Emergency Medical Service	8	25%
Service Call	8	25%
Good Intent Call	13	40.62%
False Alarm & False Call	1	3.12%
TOTAL	32	100%

Detailed Breakdown by Incident Type		
INCIDENT TYPE	# INCIDENTS	% of TOTAL
111 - Building fire	1	3.12%
142 - Brush or brush-and-grass mixture fire	1	3.12%
311 - Medical assist, assist EMS crew	1	3.12%
321 - EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	7	21.88%
500 - Service Call, other	3	9.38%
552 - Police matter	1	3.12%
554 - Assist invalid	1	3.12%
571 - Cover assignment, standby, moveup	3	9.38%
611 - Dispatched & cancelled en route	3	9.38%
631 - Authorized controlled burning	9	28.12%
651 - Smoke scare, odor of smoke	1	3.12%
745 - Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	1	3.12%
TOTAL INCIDENTS:	32	100%