

**ALMENA TOWNSHIP BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**MAY 16, 2013**

The Almena Township Board met at the Township Hall. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Supervisor Stiles.

Roll call: Mark Roman, Bill Van Tassel, Jim Manning, Doug Stiles, Jerry Lentz, Sheri Manning, and Sandra Rickli.

**AGENDA APPROVAL:**

**MOTION**: **Motion** by Doug Stiles to approve the agenda as presented, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion approved.**

**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES APPROVAL:**

**MOTION**: **Motion** by Doug Stiles to approve the meeting minutes of April 10, 2013 as presented, **second** by Mark Roman. **Motion approved.**

**PRESENTATION/APPROVAL OF BILLS:**

**MOTION**: **Motion** by Sandra Rickli to approve bills in the amount of \$37,055.30, **second** by Sheri Manning. **Motion approved.**

**CORRESPONDENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Clerk Rickli shared of an upcoming MTA workshop entitled, Hot Topics in Planning and Zoning, which will be held June 28 from 1-4 pm at the Fetzer Center in Kalamazoo, and includes lunch (served at noon). If any PC or ZBA member is interested please contact the Clerk.

**REPORTS:**

Road Commission: Al Svilpe in attendance, there was discussion about 30<sup>th</sup> St., it was stated that this project does not appear to be viable at this time. The financing is a large issue, as well as major tree removal. Larry Hummel is looking seriously into it at this time. Potentially a five year plan? Research and negotiations are in the works. It was also suggested to potentially use subcontractors, which would make the job easier. Seal coating the Almena roads is the next order of business.

It was questioned whether or not the offer of conducting a road count for Almena by SW MI PC, specifically for 30<sup>th</sup> St. has been looked into yet? Doug will follow up on this offer, of which, it was requested that he check into this at the April meeting.

Commissioner: Dick Godfrey was not able to attend but had distributed his monthly report for the board/public.

Sheriff's Department: Not in attendance.

**LIMITED PUBLIC COMMENT**: Mike Kubiczak, 37760 CR 653, came to formally complain about his neighbor, again. He is wondering about motocross for entire weekends, hours and hours long with lots of dust. Also an extremely large bon fire the neighbor had that they were worried about, especially because it has been so dry; and he is also concerned about the shooting

safety, with his neighbors with the lot being so long and narrow, and his house being located in close proximity to his house, along with that of his children. Possibly this would be covered under a nuisance ordinance? Mike or his wife will come in to fill out a complaint form.

Scott and Michelle Metalka, 37683 CR 653, also concerned with the same neighbor previously mentioned. They are very concerned about the shooting and noise, the Sheriff's Department has been called but has not come out.

Tom O'Neil, 37683 CR 653, is very concerned about the shooting being conducted by his neighbor, which goes on for 17 minutes straight, as he has timed it. He is also concerned about the close proximity to the other houses.

Sergeant Miller, 38476 23<sup>rd</sup> St., has questions regarding the proper protocol for licensed businesses. He is talking about a pole barn in the 38000 block of 23<sup>rd</sup> St., he is renting a house behind this pole barn and works until early morning hours sometime, and has to be back to work again very early; the sleeping is impossible due to the extremely bright lights outside this pole barn, they shine right through his window blinds that are black out blinds. The noise is also bad. Additionally, he is also concerned about waste materials, are they being properly disposed of? He will be in to pick up a complaint form.

Bruce Buxton, 38981 23<sup>rd</sup> St., lives across from the warehouse on 23<sup>rd</sup> St. He assumed it was a storage warehouse for appliances. He said it is a mechanical garage; there is an auto lift in the ceiling. This is not a commercially zoned piece of property; he feels a person should not be able to conduct business here under the circumstances. His immediate concern is how waste is being disposed of.

Bob Parshall, has researched this business and discovered the person running it does not have a mechanics license. He also shared the bright lighting at night is out of control. It was suggested to check the zoning classification.

Tim Heffner, 44865 Hayden St. (Trestle Creek); the roads in Trestle Creek need repair work to be done; there is lots of patchwork needed on pot holes. It was explained to him that this subdivision is sleighted for work.

## **REPORTS:**

Treasurer: Sheri Manning reported that we have received a state revenue check for \$55,979. There were five (5) delinquent personal properties listed last month, most have been taken care of. Championship Construction has been turned over to the Attorneys to begin legal action, once again.

Senior Services currently has a 27 member board. They currently do not have anyone, but would like an Almena representative on their board. How often the meetings are held will be looked into.

Website update: many of the building department forms on the website are incorrect and out of date, Sheri is working on getting electronic forms or pdf format so that the website is current and up-to-date.

Trustee: Bill Van Tassel reported on the fire board meeting held in May. There will be a Squad 6 vehicle in 2014, on May 18 there will be a Tornado test run. Also on May 18, there will be a community garage sale at the Paw Paw Fire Department, donations can be dropped off on May 17<sup>th</sup>.

Farmers Market: The Almena Farmers Market will begin on Saturday, June 1<sup>st</sup>, from 9-1, and every Saturday throughout the summer until the end of September.

Parks-n-Recreation: Jim Manning and Bill Van Tassel recently walked the Almena woods and shared that the survey seems to be complete. (We are waiting for the official word/ report from the survey company. Possibly we can put permanent steel makers on the borders for neighbor disputes and for the public to be aware of the boundaries.

Jim Manning and Bill Van Tassel will work on contacting a Forester or Biologist to work on the Almena Woods in the near future; also possibly contacting Ducks Unlimited or DEQ; we need to protect the waterways in the Almena woods, as they are a great asset. Also to check into signage for the woods.

Jim Manning reported that Andy Mastenbrook wants to pay \$10,000 for the 180 ash trees in the woods, in order to protect against the ash bore.

They will look into this matter further, for more estimates, to mark the trees and determine the potential.

Planning Commission: Mark Roman reported the following: At the May PC meeting, the commission passed the recommendation for approval for amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, Section 22.02 Site Plan Review Process; it will be on the agenda for the June board meeting for a decision.

Ron Marvin, PC Chair, recently attended the workshop given by Greg Milliken at Oshtemo Township, there was much discussion as to potential to get the public more involved with the township, to have them aware of what the different boards do and the decisions they make. Possibly creating an email list for updates on the site. Sheri will look into this.

MTA recently shared a legislative issue regarding voting, with a potential change that will not allow voting for township board members that are not physically present at the meeting.

Clerk: Sandra Rickli reported on the following: The School Election for Mattawan and Gobles Schools millage renewal was held on May 7, 2013, which was successful, but with only 64 total voters voting, which included 34 Absent Voter ballots.

Cemetery update: The Cemetery Committee held a meeting on May 1<sup>st</sup> at the Cemetery, the fence was discussed and it was the consensus of the cemetery committee to put up a new aluminum black decorative fence along the front of the entrance, possibly running south a foot or so, Sandra will be getting at least two price quotes. It was also the consensus of the committee to have a cement pad placed under the new information center that was completed this winter by the Eagle Scouts, Sandra will obtain at least two bids as well.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Road Report: Doug started to give his report, as the road committee has already met, and conducted the road tour along with a representative from the Road Commission. The Road Committee will meet again to compile a report to distribute to the board for approval of expenditure of funds at the June board meeting. Adequate information was not available to the board in a timely fashion to prepare for the meeting.
2. Discussion of shared services with Texas Township: There was much discussion regarding the shared building department services that Almena shares with Texas Township. There has been much discussion regarding the potential purchase of the BS&A program for the Building Department. It is a very expensive program, so the board would like to know what the benefits would be, and also to be thinking about the end of the one year agreement with Texas Township. Some of the administrative things, including billing, were never discussed. Some have questions regarding what we are getting for the 90% we are paying to Texas Township. Sheri and Sandi would like to meet with Texas Township for a better understanding and for more information. Also, to possibly contact Antwerp to get their opinion as to how well the shared services work for them. This meeting will be set up.

3. Manning Site Plan Review Approval:

**MOTION: Motion** by Jerry Lentz to accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission to approve the Manning Site Plan as presented, **second** by Bill Van Tassel,

**Roll call:** Jerry Lentz-yes, Mark Roman-yes, Sandra Rickli-yes, Bill Van Tassel-yes, Doug Stiles-yes

**Abstaining** (conflict of interest): Sheri Manning and Jim Manning.

**Motion passed.**

**OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Rod Ebright, CR 375, is here for approval on his application for a permit to do a fireworks display on June 29<sup>th</sup> for Leduc's Equestrian Center.

**MOTION: Motion** by Jim Manning to approve the permit for the fireworks display on June 29<sup>th</sup> at Leduc's on 29<sup>th</sup> St., **second** by Bill Van Tassel, **motion approved.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION: Motion** by Jerry Lentz to adjourn the meeting, **second** by Jim Manning. **Motion passed.** The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

ALMENA TOWNSHP

Sandra B. Rickli  
Almena Township Clerk

cc: Township board (7)  
Planning Commission (8)  
ZBA (5)  
Attorney Kelly Page  
Attorney Gary Stewart