

Milton Township
Draft Minutes Public Hearing
March 23, 2023

Members present: C. Weinzapfel, L. Atkinson, and B. Pharo

Also present: Attorneys B. Derman, and many audience members

Members absent: J. Renis and S. Ball, excused.

C. Weinzapfel called the meeting to order at 6 pm and the Pledge was recited

Introduction: Weinzapfel introduced Charlie MacDonald and Dennis Irelan, representing the property owner. We will take public comment. If you have questions during the introduction, you may raise your hand

Proposed Project: Overview by Charlie MacDonald of Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. MacDonald gave an overview of the grant for the purchase of the property. MacDonald discussed the process of the application and the grant money. This is a preliminary stage and there will be other opportunities to have public comment on the project details. This public hearing is only to review the approval for submitting for the grant application.

Public Comment:

Sandra Linnenger of NW Torch Lake Dr., asked what meetings have happened since the November meeting. Two meetings were had at Parks and Rec in reference to this. There are minutes available for review. Atkinson will print them off. The land acquisition will not go to the planning commission. What is the purchase price on the lots? Derman said the township board viewed the property. MacDonald said the resolution needed will need to include an overall project budget and sources of grant match. The grant will pay 75% and 25% has to come from local match. They don't have to actually be committed to until the project is finalized in October. We wouldn't have a breakdown of the budget and the details of the acquisition right now. Linnenger asked about the details of the project. MacDonald said many of those specifics are under discussion. Site development is up to the township.

Dave Atkinson of NW Torch Lake Drive. Given that this is prime real estate, the value should be known to those around it as our property values will be affected. Isn't this residential zoned? Parks are legitimate use in a R1 zone. Looking at the property currently, the only reasonable way to get in there is from the north. You can't see the property below as is steep. I'm curious if this is part of Maplehurst, where are people going to park to use this area. What will prevent this from turning into a sandbar? Nothing. It's a right of use. What will be the sanitary situation? Weinzapfel said the conservancy said will be contacting the DNR about vault toilets. MacDonald said the application requires a concept site plan. The DNR as they administer the grant, they make it clear for the application, they understand the application and site plan may be at a

preliminary stage, anything that is on the site plan you are not tied to it. It can change. From April 1 to October 1, there will be more meetings and more considerations for planning the site. When a potential bathroom was discussed, some things were brought up. Is a bathroom with running water possible? Would permitting for a vault style toilet be possible? For many of our projects, we keep parking areas small and may not provide bathrooms in order to avoid some of the issues that providing some of those issues can create

Larry Hints of NW Torch Lake Drive said Maplehurst is a wonderful place that the township has created. The idea that if you keep it natural, you will make it such that you don't bring a lot of people in. The driveway is a concern. It would be a nice compliment to Maplehurst and it would give people some place to get to the water.

Dave Atkinson said this is on the lake and it's different from Maplehurst. If they are motoring they will use that as a camping spot. If you turn it into a park, how many people can you have there? TLPA is working to try to figure out the brown algae and it's a concern. Will the park have hours? It will be dawn to dusk.

Ted Shaw of Cairn Hwy asked if we have any of these issues at the other areas? Weinzapfel brought the meeting back to order and reminded audience members to direct questions to the board and not to each other.

Jerry Sorgi of NW Torch said he likes the idea of a kayak access because that's a quiet sport, but there will be 500 feet of open property and it will be a mini sandbar. If you put a bathroom there, it will get out of control.

Kathleen Hints of NW Torch Lake Drive said there is a sandbar and there have been a lot of boats there. They are mooring their boats out in front of this parcel and I think it could get messy like the south end Torch sandbar.

Robin Henry of NW Torch Lake Drive said it's across from Dockside and it makes it a potential high traffic area at the south end. It's a half mile from the public access we have now. It's not like we need a spot, there is one there now.

Ron Boals of US 31 asked where is the demand for this? You're talking about a public access down the road from this one that isn't used a lot. Where is this idea coming from? Whose idea was it? Is it a great idea to put another public access on Torch Lake? Is there a kayak group that said we could use one across from Maplehurst? This map doesn't show our recreational properties that we have. 25% will be the township's money. Weinzapfel said they do not plan on contributing money to this. Will this create more problems than it solves. When you have a public park, you don't get to decide how to use it. The majority of people using this park will be non-township residents. This is prime real estate. It comes off the tax rolls. How much does it cost to maintain what we have now? I'd prefer to see the properties we have upgraded and cared for rather than this. I do not see the need. Just because it's not our money, it's money from the left pocket going to the right.

Bob Miller of Bussa Lane asked MacDonald about the process after October 1st. MacDonald said the natural resources trust fund board will meet in December to go over the applications and they will make their decisions as to who gets awarded. When the legislature meets at the start of 2024, awards will be determined after the budget is approved for the year. Then the township will have another public hearing and pass another resolution to accept those funds and close on it in mid to late 2024. It would be a two year process. Would there be any public hearings in between? The trust fund encourages public meetings and that would be up to the township to schedule.

Dave Atkinson said given the use of this land would increase in a residential area. Have the neighbors on either side been notified? How do they view this as they are directly impacted? Atkinson would suggest a public meeting in June or July. Derman said there is 100 feet owned by the county that has been noted for public use. Everything I've heard is that this will be a natural site. We may not get the grant and we may not get the matches but we are exploring it. Our master plan directs us to purchase lake front property if it should come up.

Linnenger asked how it came to the township's attention. This was a combination of the conservancy and the county, Paddle Antrim and Dennis Irelan.

Bob Kingon of E. Elk Lake Drive said thinking of the future and in our master plan it does say to work with conservancies to develop park properties. The DNR has a launch on E. Elk Lake Drive. It's been improved and we do see a bit more use. There is another park but it is never used. No boats ever park in front. Those two parks exist on our road and everything is very amenable. The township has had great success with our parks. Our collaborations have been fantastic and it's a good opportunity to help the citizens of our township.

Lorring asked about encouraging people using Maplehurst to go down there. There are trails that go toward there according to Derman.

Public Comment Closed at 6:45 pm.

Weinzapfel asked if we proceed is a special meeting that has to be called to vote. Atkinson said yes. There will have to be a resolution passed by the board. Atkinson said we are sensitive to the neighborhood. We can put in buffers and give all of this serious thought. We are sensitive to parking on the road. We need to address that too. We are in the early stages and we want to hear the comments and concerns.

Weinzapfel said a letter was received from Jan and Al Bernat. This letter was read aloud during the meeting and will be included with the meeting minutes as a matter of record.

Motion by Atkinson to set a special meeting at 8 am March 29th at the Township Hall. Seconded by Pharo. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned by order of the chair at 6:53 pm.

These minutes are subject to approval at the April 10, 2024 meeting. A copy of these minutes are available at miltontownship.org

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Ball, Clerk

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the minutes by Leah Nicholson recording secretary on behalf of Milton Township, Antrim County, State of Michigan, at the Public Hearing, held on March 23, 2023, that said meeting was conducted and public notice of said meeting was given pursuant to and in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act, being Act 267, Public Acts of Michigan, 1976, and that minutes of said meeting were kept and will be or have been made available as required by said Act.

Sandra Ball, Milton Township Clerk

March 28, 2023
Date