

Township of Breitung Regular Board Meeting 05-16-24 at 6:00 PM. In Person Meeting at the Breitung Community Center

Present In Person:

Board Members: Chairman Tim Tomsich, Supervisor Matt Tuchel, Supervisor Erin Peitso, Clerk Amber Zak, Treasurer Jorgine Gornick

Public: Terry Carlson (Tower News), Daniel Reing-Police Chief (arrived late at 6:05 PM), James Batting, Tom Gorsma-Maintenance Supervisor, Trudy Hendricks, Jodi Summit (Timberjay), Doug Erickson, Paul Coughlin, Doug Anderson, Terry Mullery (arrived late at 6:11 PM)

Call to Order @ 6:00 PM by Chairman Tim Tomsich

Acceptance of Agenda

A late incoming request for a Letter of Support for the Highway 169 taskforce was presented to be added to the New Business of the agenda.

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to accept the agenda as amended

2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Supervisor Peitso to approve the minutes of the 04/18/24 Regular Board Meeting and 04/30/24 Local Board of Appeals & Equalization Meeting as presented

2nd by Supervisor Tuchel

Motion passed 3-0

Approval of Treasurers Report

Motion by Supervisor Peitso to approve the March 2024 Treasurers Report as presented

2nd by Supervisor Tuchel

Motion passed 3-0

Correspondence

- Minnesota Power – Rate Increase to Municipalities
- Thank You to Breitung Police
- MAT training

Correspondence so noted

Public Input

James Battin questioned the status of the requested MNDoT signage for the 50-mph zone as well as for the vehicle noise law signage; Chairman Tomsich indicated that the Township was

waiting for MNDoT and that it warranted a follow-up. The vehicle noise law signage had been ordered, but had not yet been installed.

Reports

- Police – Attached
- Fire – Attached
- Road and Bridge – Attached, Tom Gorsma further mentioned that Thank You's were due for several individuals and businesses including Jerry Chiabotti, Scott Chiabotti, Larry Tveit, Dave Zasadni, L&L Rentals, and the City of Aurora. The individuals and businesses had donated time, work, and/or materials; Clerk Zak agreed to send out Thank You notes the following week.
- Recreation – None
- Wastewater Board –
 - Supervisor Tuchel noted that the wastewater board was a recipient of \$1 Million Congressionally Directed Spending
 - Supervisor Tuchel discussed an option of creating a new piece of wastewater treatment infrastructure: the wastewater board was considering installing Rapid Infiltration Beds, which require a specific type of soil. The board believes that an area of land adjacent to the McKinley Park Sand Pit would likely have the correct soil structure; the next step is for the soil to be tested with borings, a water table test, and a water percolation test. Supervisor Tuchel noted that this type of wastewater treatment system is considerably cheaper than adding a 4th pond to the existing pond infrastructure.
- Ambulance Commission - None
- Housing – Attached

Reports so noted.

Old Business:

Kultala/Breitung Property Exchange – Transfer Complete/Recorded with county

Recorded documents attached for reference, Chairman Tomsich noted that with the exchange now complete, work to change the Thompson Farm Road could continue

Recreational Trail Development

Supervisor Tuchel touched on the background of the matter, stating that several groups had differing interest in the use of land surrounding the McKinley Park Gravel Pit and existing ATV/walking trails. Four members of the community were present to give their opinions on the use of the land:

Doug Erickson: Noted that as a 100% disabled person, use of an ATV to enjoy the wooded area was necessary, removing the ability to use an ATV in that area would completely remove his ability to utilize that public land. He further stated that he was not interested in having a special permit due to his disability, he simply did not want the trail use to change. Mr. Erickson also explained the dangers of creating a law prohibiting ATVs in the area; as a former law enforcement official (DNR), he explained that most emergency calls in the woods could last several hours or even days; further, working in the woods is physically dangerous and was concerned that the current law enforcement (Breitung PD) did not have the training or the equipment to engage in calls of that nature. Additionally, he noted that if the current law enforcement was on a call out in the woods, that would take away from the duties in town; because the property is owned by Breitung, it would be the jurisdiction of the Breitung Police.

Paul Coughlin – Noted that he walks trails often and has not seen a single ATV, he does not understand why if there is good co-existence, why a change needs to be made.

Doug Anderson – Noted he was an 18-year resident, a conservationist and steward to the land and had been clearing trails, cleaning, and maintaining for years. He feels the ability to keep the trails open to ATV users and hikers alike is important and provided a letter stating as such. Within the letter, Mr. Anderson points out that there are no reports of injuries by ATVs in the area, ATVs may be used to suit individual physical abilities, concern that hunting could become an issue as well, and that foot traffic so low in the area that there are no distinguishable foot paths. The full letter is available for review in the clerk's office.

Terry Mullery – Concerned that if changes are made which limit the use of the trail, this type of proposal will expand and continue to impede ATV or other recreationists. He stated there are lots of trails in the area, so many that there are more than can even be fully utilized – Mr. Mullery referenced the Lake Vermilion – Soudan Underground Mine State Park as one source of non-motorized trails.

The board thanked the members of the community for their input. To make sure all sides of the issue have a fair say, the board decided to hold off on making any changes at this time. The board will consider any more input and decide on the issue of closing of the ATV trails at the next regular board meeting in June.

Hoodoo Point Loop Trail Project – Blandin Grant

Chairman Tomsich noted that the grant was submitted and will have a decision in July. If the grant was awarded, JPJ would start the application to the DNR and IRRR for trail construction; Chairman Tomsich noted that if received, it may cover 100% of the cost of the project. If not, Breitung and Tower would have to work together to determine portions of the remaining cost.

Animal Ordinance concerning chickens and other non-domestic/barnyard animals

After discussion, the board determined that they were comfortable with the current number of animals but that the ordinance could be cleaned up a bit to provide clarity; they further requested that the ordinance state that in Soudan-proper, 3 animals were allowed per dwelling. Clerk Zak would work with Bob Pearson to get an ordinance ready for the June meeting.

Stuntz Bay Access Road

The pre-construction meeting was held on 4/25/2024. Chairman Tomsich noted that the work would be done later in the summer; the road would need to be shut down for about a week, Supervisor Tuchel checked Jim Essig at the State Park to see if there would be a possibility of utilizing their entrance for landing users during that time. He also noted that the funding for the project was coming from the State Park Road through the DNR

2023 Infrastructure Improvements

The pre-construction meeting was held 4/25/2024. Chairman Tomsich noted that the work on 1st Avenue and Church Street would happen at the same time as the Stuntz Bay Road. Change Order #1 for Project Number 22-126 changing the final completion date from 7/15/2024 to 08/31/2024 as requested by Contractor was presented.

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to accept and have Chairman Tomsich sign the change order 2nd by Supervisor Peitso

Motion Passed 3-0

2024 Infrastructure – IRRR

Chairman Tomsich discussed combining the Center Street project, Thompson Farm Road project, and Echo Point Road project and submitting to IRRR for funding. The construction would not happen until 2025, and could potentially including Broadband to Echo Point Road. With funding also coming from MnDot, CDBG, and LRIP, Tomsich was hopeful that the IRRR would also contribute. Additionally, engineering fees of \$89,000 were not eligible for coverage by the current grants, Chairman Tomsich had reached out to Senators, Representatives, DNR, and trail groups to help with the funding of engineering fees. He also noted that the LRIP project was moving forward, the county being the fiscal agent, and the project would happen in 2025.

New Business:

G.R.E.A.T. Families Training

Police Chief Reing requested Time and Reimbursement to attend training in Phoenix, Arizona on July 11 & 12. Reimbursement would be for flight, hotel, and meals. Reing further noted that the State generally gives money back to agencies for large portions of their training costs and he was hopeful that this would be the case in the upcoming fiscal year as well.

Motion by Chairman Tomsich to approve the training and reimbursement request
2nd by Supervisor Peitso
Motion passed 3-0

Memorial Benches – Order and placement

Two benches were submitted for approval of order and placement with plaques as follows:

“In Memory of Lon Lamppa 1949 – 2022”

“Keep your eye on the ball and your heart in the game. In loving memory of Terry
‘Bearhunter’ Anderson”

Both benches match previously installed benches in Breitung Township and would be placed on either side of the concession stand at the ball field. Both benches would be fully funded by donations.

Motion made by Supervisor Tuchel to approve the ordering and placement of benches
2nd by Supervisor Peitso
Motion passed 3-0

Pay Bills as Presented

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to Pay Bills as Presented
2nd by Supervisor Peitso
Motion Passed 3-0

Blight

Current blighted properties were discussed including 2 on properties on Superior Street, 1 property on Jasper Street, a property on the corner of 5th Avenue & Gordon Street, and a property on the Spring Road. The property at 5th & Gordon has a refrigerator outside with the door attached, Police Chief Reing agreed to address it. The Spring Road address would be sent a letter concerning the blight.

Facebook

In order to better connect with the community, it was decided that a Facebook page should be set up for the township. Supervisor Peitso and Clerk Zak agreed to be administrators for the site; the ability for users to comment on posts would be turned off.

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to have the clerk create a Breitung Township Facebook Page
2nd by Supervisor Peitso
Motion Passed 3-0

Community Picnic

A date was set for the community picnic of Saturday, July 6, 2024 from 12:00 – 3:00 PM

Application for non-domesticated animals - Zak

The board heard a request to keep quail and indicated that the specific animal should be addressed within the ordinance. It was directed that a quail should constitute 1/8 of an animal unit and that roosters would be allowed so long as they did not create a noise nuisance. This addition to the animal ordinance would be voted on in the June meeting.

Letter of Support for Hwy 169 Taskforce

Greg Dostert had dropped off a request for support shortly before meeting time.
Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to send a letter of support of the Hwy 169 Taskforce
2nd by Supervisor Peitso
Motion Passed 3-0

Road Alteration and Road Vacation Hearing – Thompson Farm Road

Tuesday, June 18th, 2024 6:00 PM at the Breitung Community Center

Next Regular Board Meeting

Thursday, June 20th, 2024 at 6:00 PM at the Breitung Community Center

Adjourn

Motion by Supervisor Tuchel to adjourn the meeting @ 7:45 PM
2nd by Supervisor Peitso
Motion passed 3-0

Respectfully Submitted
Amber Zak
Clerk, Breitung Township