

SAGAMORE HILLS TOWNSHIP – REGULAR

Monday, March 9, 2009 – media notified

The regular meeting was called to order by Chair Hunt at 7:00 pm. R/C Hunt-present; Snell-absent; Barrett-present; Fiscal Officer Gale-present.

Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

Mr. Barrett moved to approve and dispense with the reading of the minutes of the Regular meeting held on Monday, February 12, 2009; Seconded by Mr. Hunt. R/C Vote: Hunt-aye; Barrett-aye; Snell-absent.

PENDING WARRANTS

Mr. Barrett moved to approve the Pending Warrant Report dated February 2009 in the amount of \$430,833.88. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. R/C Vote: Barrett-aye; Hunt-aye; Snell-absent.

WEB SITE

Chair Hunt reported the web site statistics for February 2009 were 714 visitors, 505 were unique visitors and 1,900 pages viewed. It was explained that a unique visitor is a person that visited the site one time during the month. The remaining visitors entered the site more than once.

RESOLUTIONS

Mr. Barrett moved to adopt RESOLUTION 11-09 for appropriation modifications for the police department. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. R/C Vote: Barrett-aye; Hunt-aye; Snell-absent.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Police Department

Barrett: Dispatch handled 468 calls for service and dispatched 525 calls for service, 57 calls were dispatched for the Northfield Center Fire Department for Sagamore residents. There were thirteen (13) investigations with twelve (12) closed - two (2) by arrest. One (1) letter of appreciation was received for three Dispatchers for the assistance they rendered to the Macedonia Police Department during a funeral. There was forty (40) hours of training, fourteen (14) hours of overtime for Dispatch and fifty-two (52) hours of overtime in the Police Department.

Zoning

Barrett: There was one sign permit issued in February for a total of \$50.00 in fees.

Fire/EMS

Barrett: Sagamore Hills had 62 total runs; 50 EMS and 12 fire. Northfield Center 36 total runs; 28 EMS and 8 fire. Mr. Barrett is disputing the 62 runs for Sagamore Hills. He will discuss this with Frank Risko. Barrett explained that a lot of those calls (almost 20%) were Brandywine calls. They are actively trying to get that taken care of. Total for the year for Brandywine is 30 calls. Sixteen calls were in February. Risko explained that a committee met with the Brandywine owners to figure out a plan that would help the situation. The plan that Brandywine decided on is not working. Another meeting will take place soon to rectify the problem.

Roads

Hunt: The Road Department has plowed and salted the roads; removed snow piles from cul-de-sacs; and repaired mailboxes and street signs that have been knocked over. There is no apparent shortage of salt in the Township due to our conservation.

Maintenance has been done on the trucks and snow plows and repaired the light on Township sign; cold patched roads; flushed storm drains; and now working on lawn equipment.

Trustees

Barrett: Our January expense to Northfield Fire Department is \$43,696.95. We have not received the February bill yet.

Barrett: The county has taken over Lifeline. We have 24 participants.

Hunt: Mentioned fiscal responsibility. He reminded the group that funding is going to be cut back from the state. In 2009 the local fund will be cut back by 7% and could be as high as 12%. Also, estate tax received will be affected because the evaluations of properties are dropping.

Hunt: Attended the Summit County township association meeting. The treasurer and fiscal officer's representative reported on tax collections. In 2005, collected in 2006, there were \$26+ million dollars uncollectible; 2007 was \$33 million uncollectible; 2008 was \$37 million; 2009 anticipated the first half was \$48,323,000.04. The residential delinquencies were \$23,030,358. The message at that meeting was "if we don't collect it, you're not getting it. There is no rainy day fund to borrow from." The Township has been cutting back and the goal is not to lay off any employees this year. Funds will be short.

Hunt: Recognized three e-mails a resident sent regarding his interest in the operation of the Township. The new buzzword is sustainability. We think sustainability all the time. Last year we proposed redoing all the bathrooms in the park with motion sensing faucets with timers that would run for one minute. Typical commercial faucets might be \$40 with our discount. Motion sensor faucets are \$180. Retrofitting the Township for sustainability is very expensive. Sustainability also refers to the environment. The first time somebody erects a wind turban, there will be a problem. The homeowner is going to save the environment but their neighbors are not going to like it. We are very

conscious of this and I want to recognize our resident for his efforts to remind us of that. Anything we do in the future, we will think sustainability which is basically the environment and our carbon footprint.

Barrett: Reported on the American Recovery Investment Bill which is the stimulus package we applied for through the state. There are also federal dollars that tap into this. The county is filing for us for serious problems that we have with some of our roads. We filed for some park improvements. Nothing has been rejected but that doesn't mean that we will get it.

Hunt: We received calls from people with suggestions for storm water projects using the economic stimulus. We were given only four days to file the requests which included Engineering. We are very fortunate that we already talked to the county engineer last year about the engineering on some of our road projects and those are the projects the county filed for us. I understand there will be a second round where we can address the storm water projects.

Fiscal Officer

Gale: Presented the February report with a Beginning balance of \$4,345,421.43; Receipts at \$673,729.64; less Expenditures of \$432,183.85; less memo expenditure of \$1,349.97; which matches the Pending Warrant amount of \$430,833.88; ending balance is \$4,586,967.22.

Gale: Reported that we received our check through FEMA for Hurricane Ike. We requested \$21,609.71 in matching funds from the government. We received a check for 75% back in the form of a grant. In next month's report we will, per the resolution passed last year, be creating a new account according to the guidelines set up by the federal government and then disbursing that money to reimburse us for expenditures during that time.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chair Hunt made a Motion to bring off the table the request from the Zoning Commission to hire consultants to redo our zoning. Motion seconded by Mr. Barrett. R/C Vote: Barrett-aye; Hunt-aye; Snell-absent.

Chair Hunt made a Motion to postpone any action on this business indefinitely. Motion seconded by Mr. Barrett. R/C Vote: Barrett-aye; Hunt-aye; Snell-absent. This business is effectively removed from further discussion.

CITIZENS' FORUM

Ed Galewood opened the forum about Brandywine Ski Run and the owners in St. Louis. He asked if we received the \$30,000 they owed us at the end of last ski season.

Mr. Barrett answered that we did not receive the money.

Ed Galewood explained that Sagamore Hills subsidized the support of that ski run since the 70's; sent police cars down there; and tied up ambulances. If ambulances are tied up at Brandywine, we are going to have to call for mutual aid. That should be a bigger issue than whether they need to transport people for a sprained ankle, or a cut finger. They have been abusing this township. As far as the tax money, we only get tax money from the property value. They get 50 times the service. It should be stopped. We should take legal action to collect that money or stop any future service and take them to court if we have to. We should publicize it.

Allan Fee with the Nordonia Hills Soccer Association introduced himself. He offered to clarify who they were and answer any questions the board had in reference to the minutes from January 12th. NHSA is a soccer league with youths from 4 to 10 years old and includes 63% children residing in Sagamore Hills. Mr. Fee created the league with the intention of serving the entire area. Their goal was to get into Northfield, Northfield Center, Macedonia but really focus on Sagamore Hills because it was convenient to the people and there was already a league in Macedonia. He is a resident as well as his vice president, Tom Seasholtz.

Allan Fee referenced the minutes that suggested there were some problems they were not aware of -- swearing, rock throwing, a letter that was received from a resident who lives far away from where they play. NHSA is a non-profit organization; they paint the fields at their own expense. A lot of the money comes out of Mr. Fee's pocket or actual charity work they do. The cost to the kids is \$60 for new players and \$40 for returning players. Mr. Fee explained the soccer season starts on April 23rd and felt it didn't seem right to charge to have an off duty officer and for the fields. Mr. Fee said they are a self-sufficient group and were just using the space down in the corner. He explained the fields are not necessarily in the best of shape; they are slanted; and they have to spread the fields out.

Allan Fee commented the minutes stated the Township could put up some "maintenance only" signs for vehicles to alleviate the problem of parking on the grass and that "nothing was going to stop these people from parking there." He explained they would love to follow the rules but asking for a fee in the eleventh hour seems a little excessive. They will park anywhere that they are asked to park. They feel it is an honor to play on those fields. Mr. Fee explained Mayor Milani has donated his two fields where they play on Houghton Road for free.

Allan Fee stated there is a misperception in the minutes that this is Mayor Milani's league. Victor Milani is a soccer parent in the league where his son plays. Vic Milani has helped by donating his soccer fields like other parents make donations. Mr. Fee is asking the same thing from

Sagamore Hills. He is concerned that they are going to get hit with a fee that they can't afford. He said they have been good with the fields and have maintained the fields themselves and there have been no problems that they have been informed of.

Mr. Hunt answered that he appreciated the comments. He explained that the Township has created an application form. Vic Milani sent his son on Friday to pick up the application and approximately 5 minutes later was on the phone with Ms. Cosgrove and, basically, started complaining. Vic Milani was asked to complete the form and return it to the Trustees in order for them to meet and discuss what they would do. The meeting would take place within the next week because Rose Mary Snell is in charge of the park and she was not at the meeting.

Mr. Hunt commented the Trustees want to work with the league as well as to make sure that the park does not get overused and try to spread out the use of it.

Allan Fee said they were only asking for Thursdays for one hour from 6 to 7 pm and one hour on Saturdays from 11 till noon.

Mr. Hunt explained that is the reason the Trustees want to have the meeting. To understand what NHSA needs in relation to days and times and to straighten out the perceptions that the league has. For instance, the league perceives that Sagamore is going to charge for a policeman. The statement on the application actually says "may." There are some activities which might require the police. If somebody comes in which a fund raiser and possibly have a country or rock band, hiring the police might be required. It is not every activity. It says "may." Mr. Hunt understood their concern but reinforced the request to meet, talk it over and come to a resolution.

Frank Kopas talked about occasions when he tried to walk the perimeter of the park with his wife and it appeared soccer was being played. There were so many cars they could not find a place to park. He thinks this was definitely an over use, or possibly an abuse of the facility. He explained he has been asking Mr. Gale to please provide a cost on the park -- from fertilizer, to cutting the grass, to picking up cans, to policing it, to taking care of the rest rooms, etc. As a resident, he is concerned about how much is being paid for the park. Is there going to be an overview about the use of it? Are other communities, our neighbors, sharing in a good program? Mr. Kopas is sure the soccer program is an excellent program but is the league sharing in the cost? It may have been started in Sagamore Hills but are the fields in Northfield Village used? Is there anything available in Northfield Center? What's wrong with Macedonia?

Allan Fee answered they are in all of those areas. Mayor Milani has donated two parks. The whole U10 team plays out of there.

Frank Kopas asked how many fields they carve out of that along with the baseball going on? That is his major concern along with the cost. He always thought the premise was that the weekends were available to the community first come first served and there was no setting aside on the weekend.

Mr. Hunt agreed with that statement that the weekends were first come first served.

Frank Kopas thought it seemed like maybe that was going to change. He hoped that it would not.

Ed Galewood further expanded on this concern. He remembered last year the board decided there was going to be a \$15 per field fee in order to help avoid layoffs and tax increases in the future. The decision was made because there was a cost incurred to prepare a field regardless if it was just sitting there all fixed up and ready to go and not being used. Another issue was regarding some residents that live on Sandstone complaining about the noise when you get 200 people at one time playing games there. Those people have an issue of their own and they need to be addressed if we are going to load up those fields but done in a sensible way. With the one mile trail around there and an access to the bike trails, we need to take into consideration the residents want to use the park, too. When people reserve a pavilion and then find somebody sitting in there because they decide they want to use it, they need to go. The people that reserved the pavilion get it. We should make sure this is enforced.

Jeff Kunkel(?) commented that, regardless of costs for fertilizer, cutting the grass, maintaining the fields, it needs that stuff anyway. The kids need a place to play. What it comes to is sharing some of the expenses. He asked if anybody talked to NHAA or some of these other baseball organizations to do improvements with their own money on these fields? Has anybody offered to make them repay for some of the stuff they are taking out of this community? Jeff coached in Jackson Township and every year they took their money and put it into the community - water, water fountains, back stops, dug outs, new fencing, safety fencing, etc. These people would be glad to donate that kind of stuff, thus reducing the burden on the tax payer dollars.

Brian Barth added a few words on behalf of the football program. He said that his group takes 2 fields in the park for about 2 hours on Saturday mornings. There is a total of about 80 kids that are involved. It was a brand new program last year. It filled a void for them either having to go to Twinsburg or CVCA. Mr. Barth participated as a coach in both programs. He feels that it would be a shame not to use it to the capacity that it is right now for adding a value to the residents. Even with the 200+ in the soccer and pushing 100 in the football, Mr. Barth feels they still use less than 1/2 of the field. There is still plenty of room open for flying kites, walking dogs, etc.

Mr. Hunt asked if his program is different than the others that were present.

Allan Fee answered that he coached together with Mr. Barth in the NHTA. They went off and branched into football. They co-exist at the same time.

Mr. Hunt asked if Mr. Barth's group was under NHTA's blanket insurance and if they put in a request for the use of the field? Mr. Hunt also questioned if he was with i9Sports.

Brian Barth indicated he just found out about the application that afternoon. He also indicated that he was not part of i9 but that was the organization that used the fields.

Mr. Hunt explained that i9Sports is for profit. Consequently, Sagamore Hills will not allow "for profit" groups to use the park. If he wants to continue to work under i9Sports, the group will have to apply for 501(c). The Township has turned away motorcycle groups and car groups that wanted to do things for profit and determined that use of the park would be strictly non-profit.

Vic Milani indicated that, for this evening, he is resident / citizen Milani. He explained that when he called the Township office, it wasn't to complain. It was to get to the bottom of this. His name is mentioned in the January 12th minutes and wanted to know why he has not been asked to answer any of the issues. His name is mentioned as being the ring leader of the whole thing. The soccer league is a 501(c)3. It is a non-profit. They currently have 235 to 250 kids. He asked to use the fields for 2 hours a week.

Pete Lachina, a resident living on Sandstone, indicated that he understood that the rock throwing was high school kids. As for the noise, the park was there before Sandstone was put in. When you build a house next to a park and you move in, there is going to be noise. Some of his neighbors play in the soccer league. It's a park and it should be used.

Mr. Hunt clarified there is one resident who has written three letters which he has replied to. Letters come back and he is not making any progress with this family.

Paul Schweikert doesn't find it unconscionable that the Trustees are looking for fees if the goal is not to lay off people and not to raise taxes. That was a creative way of avoiding those things and he applauded their efforts. He urged the board to find a compromise.

Carol Lewis remembered being present at the discussion about raising the money to buy the park land so the Township would have green space. So an area could be created that kids and adults and the seniors alike could share. The Township's been doing a fabulous job of it. That is the one thing that we can't lose sight of. The park is for everyone. If it takes a couple hours away for soccer and it takes a few more hours away for baseball, so be it. That is what it takes to keep the kids active and keep them in something that is constructive instead of destructive.

Kim Griner asked why penalize the kids? Go after the people that owe the Township money. Start there. Collect the \$30,000 from Brandywine instead of penalizing the children.

Mr. Hunt finished with a comment about estate tax. If we are going to collect estate tax money, when I die, I don't want the Township fixing a sewer with it. Put it into the park. Basically, that is what is being used to grow the park. When you see that the estate tax money is going to dwindle and next year the federal part of it disappears. The state will not let that happen. But we will have less money to put into the park. We have to keep improving it. We can't have people parking on the lawn. Grant money is a nice thought but the grant that we had for Applehill and Cherrywood Circle ended up being a loan of \$155,000.00 for a \$321,000.00 project by the time we got done with cost overruns. Money is just not available so we are tightening our belt. We are trying to make everything as cost effective as possible.

Mr. Barrett addressed the soccer league. We need that meeting because in scheduling fields and properties we have to know the needs. We have to be structured. You cannot use the fields if other people come ahead of you and apply for it. Everybody pays a fee in that park.

Mr. Hunt addressed the group's perception that he was against their league was wrong. He's dealt with the complaints. We start out being nice to people. There used to be two people flying model airplanes. We now have 35 to 40 people flying model airplanes on weekends coming from three different counties; flying planes with wing spans up to 10 feet. This is why the point was to work on getting the park under control. We have 3 or 4 people out there on Saturday morning with their golf clubs driving golf balls. The golf balls are not dangerous until they are lost and the mower picks them up and turns them into a missile. So golf has been eliminated from the park. Model airplane flying, if you look at the rules that you got, there is an asterisk next to it. It might be done with special permit but nobody else will be in the park when they do that. That's how it got out of control. We are just trying to get it back in control. We are going to try to take care of everybody that we can and we are going to try to protect the park at the same time. Believe me, we will work out something.

Scott Barrett suggested that we move on to other issues.

There was no further business. Mr. Barrett moved to adjourn at 8:02 pm. Seconded by Mr. Hunt. R/C Vote: Barrett-aye; Hunt-aye; Snell-absent.