**Topinabee Development Association**

Eleventh Annual Meeting – Township Hall

June 29, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 10:03 am, by Mary O’Hare, TDA President. Attendance was counted as 45+ persons. All were thanked for coming and participating in this annual meeting. Acknowledgement was given to the two new businesses in the community; Tanner Electric and Topinabee Nail and Hair Salon.

Board positions that expire at year end are: Tom O’Hare, Director; Graham Tillotson, Director; Dawn Bodnar, Vice President; and Claudia Holland, Secretary. Two other individuals volunteered to serve in vacant Director positions; John Gross and Linda Miller. A call for other individuals to serve was made and none offered. A motion to elect the 6 nominations was made by Connie Ogg and seconded by Tony Naylor. A vote was taken by the membership and the six individuals were approved with none opposing.

Treasurer Ken Hoehn read the 2018 Annual Treasurer’s report. Starting balance as of January 1 was $24,405.96. Income obtained from dues and contributions was $968.17, less expenditures for supplies, community memberships, donations, and expenses of $1259.81, for a total net gain of $2708.86. Closing balance as of December 31, 2018 was $27,114.82. A motion was made by John Gross to approve the Treasurer’s Report, seconded by Tony Naylor and approved by a vote of the membership.

President O’Hare continued the meeting indicating that the TDA Annual Report was sent to everyone in Mullett Township as a way to keep the lines of communication open between the community and TDA. We value your input and ideas. The minutes from last year’s meeting of June 23, 2018, are available on the website at [www.topinabee.org](http://www.topinabee.org). Minutes for this meeting will be posted there as soon as approved by the board. If you wish to have a paper copy, please see one of our officers.

President O’Hare also commented that there appears to be a need for a long-range plan within Mullett Township. Such a plan would identify what you, as community members, want in the future and how such goals are going to be achieved. Proposed plans would be outlined in a realistic time frames and have an associated budget. This way the community would be aware of start and end dates along with reasons for delays. Too many projects are often introduced, discussed and partially worked on but somehow get lost in the shuffle. There have been many false starts and much tax payer money wasted in the process. Engineering and architectural plans are contracted and paid for by the township but often the project is not acted on. The unfortunate consequence of this is that when they return to a project, they often have to update the engineering and architectural plans among other things, which is an added expense. If the streetscape effort were part of a long-range plan, I believe it would have been completed by now instead of being in year number eleven of the project.

The meeting continued with the introduction of Mary Jan Miller from the NICE Committee. NICE stands for Neighborhood Improvement Community Enhancement. It was formed last year by members of our community who were growing more and more concerned about blight in the community and wanted to do something about it. Blight has been a top issue for Mullett Township taxpayers since 2013. NICE members and other community leaders have been lobbying the Township Board to pass a blight ordinance. The board has indicated they have a final draft of the blight ordinance and will be voting on it in the July meeting.

NICE would also like to establish a simple process that would allow residents who need assistance in cleaning up their property access to a group of volunteers willing to help them. Some grant money from the Cheboygan County Community Foundation is available to help offset the expense of dumpsters and two properties have already requested help. Please consider volunteering for this community project.

Next speaker was Linda Miller concerning the relocation of the library. There appears to be a large percentage of community members that do not feel the library should be relocated to the top of the hill in the old schoolhouse. Currently, renovations are taking place on the schoolhouse in order to maintain the integrity of the building. Many indicated that additional money shouldn’t be funneled into the building until a planned use of the building has been established. Others think the schoolhouse should be given to the Topinabee Fire Department as part of their fire education classes. It has been suggested that public hearings should take place or the issue be put on a ballot for voters to decide the future of the building.

Hobie Kirsch spoke next indicating that a basic blight ordinance is ready and the board will be voting on it in the next board meeting. This is an ordinance that will still allow those who make a living from their home by fixing autos, etc., to still continue to do so. Those work areas in question should be behind a fence, a row of bushes, or somehow hidden from view. There are still a few issues to be resolved, one of which is an enforcement officer. Hobie is available for questions via email at hobiekirsch@gmail.com or call his office.

Fire Chief Mike English was up next speaking on behalf of the Topinabee Fire Department. The fire department has been working very hard to reduce their fire classification and as of August 1st the fire classification will be an 8B, down from a 9. What this means, if you are within 5 road miles of the Topinabee or East Mullett Fire Hall you can reduce your insurance premiums. There is still room for more improvement and they are working towards the next level down. Education is an ongoing process for the whole crew; classes have been taking places and three new firefighters have passed their book classes and joined the team. Mike had the drawings for the new fire hall on display and requested the attendees to take a look, ask questions, or make suggestions. He’s looking for your input on a building that belongs to the community.

Rachel Osborn spoke on the continuation of the streetscape. The biggest hold up to the completion of the parking area was the size of the runoff drains. This has been finalized and the bid will go out the beginning of next year. There are a few minor changes that will eliminate a retaining wall and fence allowing for a cost reduction.

Question and Answer Period:

There were a few questions concerning the blight ordinance and how enforcement will be handled. Hobie indicated that the township still has to select a blight officer, notification will be by a noticed delivered by hand or posted on the residence, and then by US Mail if nothing is done. It’s understood that there are elderly or fixed income residence that need help, that’s why NICE has stepped in hoping to have their volunteers help those asking for assistance.

A couple of questions concerning the work going on in the old schoolhouse. First, no decision has been made as to whether the library will be moving into the old schoolhouse or not. Basically, the work being done is to maintain the building. Asbestos abatement has been performed, old electrical wiring and water pipes will be replaced to keep the building up to code. All the historical memorabilia have been moved into a storage unit to keep it safe.

The meeting was concluded at 11:17 am with President O’Hare thanking everyone for attending.

President O’Hare concluded with “What we do here today is not so much for us, as it is for the generations that follow. It’s our responsibility to “Pay it Forward” knowing that future generations will look at the fruits of our labor with the same gratitude we have for the efforts we know others made who came before us.”

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia Holland

TDA Secretary