

Topinabee Development Association

Twelfth Annual Meeting – Conference Call

June 20, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 am, by Mary O'Hare, TDA President. Attendance was counted as 27 connections made to the conference call. Exact number of attendees is unknown due to multiple people in attendance on a single connection. All were thanked for participating in this annual meeting via conference call. Several restrictions have been put in place and group gathering/meetings are not permitted due to Covid-19 in the State of Michigan.

Dawn Bodnar explained there are two board positions held by Ken Hoehn and Mary O'Hare that expire at the end of this year. Ken Hoehn has agreed to another term in office if re-elected. Mary O'Hare is resigning after being president for thirteen years. A call for other individuals to serve was made and none offered. A motion was made by John Gross and second by Dan Slanec. A vote was taken by the membership and Ken Hoehn was re-elected.

Claudia Holland, Secretary, presented a synopsis of the 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes. The meeting minutes, in their entirety, can be found on Topinabee.org website. A motion for the acceptance of the 2018 meeting minutes was made by Mary Jan Miller, second by John Gross and accepted by the voting membership.

Treasurer Ken Hoehn read the 2019 Annual Treasurer's report. Starting balance as of January 1 was \$27,114.82. Income obtained from dues and contributions was \$2474.99, less expenditures for supplies, community memberships, donations, and expenses of \$1361.67, for a total net gain of \$1113.32. Closing balance as of December 31, 2019 was \$28,228.14. A motion was made by Graham Tillotson to approve the Treasurer's Report, second by Mary Jan Miller and approved by a vote of the membership.

President O'Hare continued by congratulating the community on voicing their concerns during a public meeting held last July 2019. Many people were excited to express their point of view on some of the issues listed below:

- Blight
- Lack of Annual Township Meeting
- Location of the Library
- Status of the Streetscape
- No 5-year plan for the township to reduce unnecessary and repetitive engineering costs
- Failure to follow through with existing projects showing a lack of direction

- Township board ignoring offers by TDA for assistance

It's unfortunate that the township board only listened and did not participate with open and honest dialog as community elected officials. None of them responded directly to issues and concerns that were raised. We can only say that we are hopeful there will be an improvement in transparency and communications from the Mullett Township Board.

Director Reports

Tom O'Hare started off the next segment of the meeting concerning Streetscape issues. For the area north of the library and around the pavilion the grass area dries up in the summertime. Last fall the TDA offered to pay for the installation of sprinklers to improve the condition of the grassy area. TDA approached Aqua Lawn and received a proposal for the work. After several months of repetitive offers to the board they agreed to accept TDAs proposal. The board then decided they would like to upgrade the lawn area with new soil and re-seeding. This will likely take place in the fall with the sprinkler and lawn installation being coordinated.

For the parking area south of the library which is currently gravel and dirt, the plan was to have this area paved, drainage connected to the system that was installed when the park was initially built, and new walkways. This project has been going on for many years and has been re-engineered several times. The last board plan basically keeps only the bare essentials of an asphalt parking area without landscaping and, of course, this now has to go back to the engineers to have the plans updated. So much wasted taxpayers' money because of the lack of proper planning. The board estimated \$194,000 for this project and they currently have \$157,911 in the parking lot savings account. However, they also have \$320,451 in the schoolhouse savings account. There appears to be ample monies available to complete the parking area along with the landscaping needs for the area.

Mullett township has a number of properties which are in need of care. Chamberlain Park once had beautiful flower gardens, but now it's overgrown with weeds. Volunteers tried to take care of the park, but with the taxes being paid and the money available this should be taken care of by the township. The back of the library is beginning to rot and is in need of re-painting. Perhaps there is better use for the funds in the schoolhouse savings account.

There is still strong opposition to moving the existing library into the old schoolhouse. Once the new firehouse is in use there will be plenty of room in the township hall that can be repurposed for township activities and meetings. Twelve years ago, plans were drawn up for a new facade to the township hall. It was suggested that the township board revisit these plans before spending a large amount of money developing a building that is essentially out of sight and out of mind.

Finally, in 2021 MDOT will be doing street maintenance through Topinabee on US-27. We are hoping that our township board will take advantage of the situation and have streetscape enhancements, including crosswalk markings and sidewalks, completed.

John Gross began his discussion on the website www.topinabee.org thanking his predecessors for all their hard work and noting that the website contains historical information of the community.

Website topics cover several audiences:

- Year-around residents. In addition to the TDA's activities, we try to keep them informed on community events, such as summer programs at the library and the timing of the annual Firemen's BBQ.
- Seasonal residents. We try to keep them informed regarding things like snowmobiling conditions, ice conditions for ice fishing, and the peak time for fall colors.
- Potential visitors. We try to make those who may not be familiar with our community aware of the many interesting things it has to offer.

Please keep the TDA website in mind we are always looking for new material to post.

Linda Miller reported on the beautification of the post office. For the past several years the TDA has planted the flowers in the flower boxes. This year, in addition to the flower boxes, we will be planting shrubbery along the front porch.

Guest Speakers

The meeting continued with the introduction of Mary Jan Miller from NICE (Neighborhood Improvement Community Enhancement). After many years of lobbying the township board for a blight ordinance, one has been passed on May 23, 2020.

Two objectives for NICE were to engage and mobilize the residents of Mullett Township taking action to address blight and to recruit community volunteers to assist residents in cleaning up their property when they are unable to do so because of age, health, or financial restrictions. NICE will work with the township board whenever necessary on behalf of the resident.

The blight ordinance is complaint driven via a letter to the township board with location of property and photos if possible. The next step is getting together a group of volunteers willing to give a hand. Please think about joining this community effort to keep Topinabee looking beautiful.

Rachel Osborn was unable to participate on this conference call, but has passed along a letter to be read to the attendees. This was a personal message and not one reflected by the Mullett Township Board. In her message she hopes that the TDA will continue to support the historical character of the Mullett Township community. Mullett Township continues to work maintaining the various township properties. All sides of existing and new issues/projects will be considered by the individual board members and resolutions will be determined by what is best for the community. The goal of the board is to make sure that Mullett Township remains debt free and is a place where individuals can enjoy recreational, intellectual, and a safe place to live.

The Mullett Township Board is up for election this year and we wanted to introduce you to 4 individuals that will be running for these seats. The TDA, as a 501c3 organization, cannot lobby or advocate for these individuals. We only want you to be aware and to give them a chance to say "Hello" to our organization.

- Laz Surabian running for Supervisor
- Brenda Bowes running for Treasurer
- Mike Goerke running for Trustee
- Brett Lindgren running for Trustee

Question and Answer Period:

There were no questions and the meeting concluded at 11:00 am with President O'Hare thanking everyone for attending and to please renew your membership. At the end of this year Mary O'Hare will be resigning as President and she looks forward to assisting the new President with ongoing support and encouragement.

Our mission statement: The Mission of the Topinabee Development Association is to preserve and enhance the unique historical character and charm of Topinabee while promoting future growth and development of its business district.

The minutes from this annual meeting will be posted on the website at www.topinabee.org. If you wish to have a paper copy, please notify one of our officers.

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia Holland
TDA Secretary