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**Topinabee Development Association**

Thirteenth Annual Meeting – Zoom Conference Call

September 19, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm, by James Hilyard, TDA President. Due to the Covid Delta variant spreading it was determined that having a Zoom call would be safest way to conduct this year’s annual meeting. All were thanked for participating. Exact number of attendees is unknown due to multiple people in attendance on a single connection.

James explained there are two board members up for renewal, John Gross and himself, James Hilyard. A motion was made by Graham Tillotson to renew the 3-year term for John Gross, second by Ken Hoehn, and passed by the membership. Graham Tillotson made another motion to renew the 3-year term for James Hilyard, second by Ken Hoehn, and passed by the membership.

Next was the election of officers and Mary O’Hare made a motion to re-elect James Hilyard as President, second by Graham Tillotson, and passed by the membership. Mary also made a motion to re-elect Claudia Holland as Secretary, second by Linda Miller, and passed by the membership. Another motion was made by Mary to re-elect Ken Hoehn as Treasurer, second by John Gross, and passed by the membership

Claudia Holland, Secretary, presented a synopsis of the 2020 Annual Meeting Minutes. The meeting minutes, in their entirety, can be found on Topinabee.org website. A motion for the acceptance of the 2020 meeting minutes was made by Tom O’Hare, second by John Gross, and accepted by the voting membership.

Treasurer Ken Hoehn read the 2020 Annual Treasurer’s report. Starting balance as of January 1 was $28,228.14. Income obtained from dues and contributions was $2821.22, less expenditures for supplies, community memberships, donations, and expenses of $7968.85, for a total net loss of $5147.63. Closing balance as of December 31, 2020, was $23,080.51. A motion was made by John Gross to approve the Treasurer’s Report, second by Tom O’Hare, and approved by a vote of the membership.

President Hilyard continued with a motion to change the by-laws on Article III-Directors, Section 1- Composition and Qualification to read as follows: “The Board of Directors shall be composed of not more than eleven persons”. This change, increasing the board from nine to eleven members, will allow the TDA to move forward by adding additional perspectives from local business owners and individuals who can bring expertise around fundraising and volunteerism. This motion was second by Ken Hoehn and passed by the membership.

Our final motion was presented by James to create a reusable sign that can be place in an area where the TDA has made contributions or secured donor funding. The general community is not always aware of the work performed by the TDA and this would be an opportunity keep all informed. The Mullett Township Board has approved such a sign, as well as small plaques on various donations like window boxes, benches, etc. This sign will be 24”x 36” and made of metal to be reused throughout the community. The sign has a 60-day placement limit per location and TDA will be responsible for storage when not in use. A schedule is to be given to the Mullett Township Board when and where the sign will be used. This motion was second by Tom O’Hare and approved by the membership. James will be taking the lead on procuring the sign.

At this point in the meeting, we took the time to introduce the TDA Board to the attending membership.

**Director Reports**

**Topinabee Community Park Sprinklers (Tom O’Hare)**

Tom O'Hare started off the next segment of the meeting with the Topinabee Community Park sprinklers. Last year, the TDA facilitated the installation of an irrigation system north of the library. As a result of that effort, the township board decided to install new topsoil and reseed the entire area. This year, township board decided to hire the company Evergreen to fertilizer and put down weed killer throughout the park. It is looking very nice now and we thank them for their efforts in this regard.

South of the library was seeded around the newly constructed parking area. The TDA worked again with Ed Shovan from Aqua Lawn and Irrigation, who did the area north of the library. Ed has been great to work with and has provided generous discounts to the community for his services over the years. Ed was able to locate the conduit running under the trail, which contained a sprinkler line running from the beach front park. This conduit was installed when the park was re-done a few years ago in anticipation of a possible sprinkler system in this area. Ed is currently working to finalize this installation.

One noteworthy challenge was getting water to the island directly in front of the library. The TDA reached out to a directional drilling company to have them drill under one of the driveways and run a water line under it. The company is WB Directional Drilling owned by Jon Morrow of Indian River; they also own the Pine Cottages. We would like to thank them because they are donating this service to the TDA for the benefit of the community.

**Parking Lot Landscaping Enhancements (Tom O’Hare)**

Landscaping enhancements have been installed by the township in the new parking area and around the library. New trees, along with flowering bushes and shrubs were planted in nicely mulched flower beds and additional pathway steps were also added. The plan for this area, developed over several years by the previous board, did not include any landscaping. So, it is great that the current board is addressing the aesthetic aspects of this latest development.

As part of the improvements, the TDA suggested to the board that some of the fencing be removed from around the drain field south of the public restrooms and that boulders be installed instead to improve the appearance of the area and keep cars and snowmobiles off the drain field. They concurred, so we reached out to the parking lot contractor and negotiated a price to obtain and install the boulders that you now see in the area.

Brenda Bowes, our new Township Treasurer, has taken on the Topinabee Community Park enhancement project and we thank her for it.

**Post Office Window Boxes (Tom O’Hare)**

The TDA paid to have the shrub beds in front of the post office replanted. This turned out very well and is a nice change from the sad looking plants that had been there previously.

The window boxes at the post office were initially paid for and installed by the O’Hare’s and Ogg’s and in the beginning the annual flower planting was paid for directly by the Tillotson’s and the Garlick’s. For the past few years, the TDA has funded the planting of the window boxes by Kelly’s Flowers in Indian River. The flower box on the north side of the post office has been empty for several weeks due to storms in our area that ruined the flowers. To remedy this situation Dave Jacalone has offered to build and install an awning above this window that the TDA is funding.

Credit should be given to Deb, our Post Master, for the wonderful job taking care of the flowers and shrubs through the many summers and keeping Topinabee Post Office looking like a real credit to our community.

**Village Planning Committee (James Hilyard)**

At the last Mullett Township Board Meeting the board agreed to have the TDA assist in developing a 5-year strategy for village improvements. This will include pedestrian safety, accessibility, aesthetics and village commercial asset investments to attract new business, strengthen existing businesses, and entice visitors, tourists, homeowners, and potential visitors to our area.

This committee will serve as a resource to the township board and provide the following:

* Provide Topinabee Village 5-year Strategy Plan
* Pedestrian Safety & Community Aesthetics Recommendations
  + Include defining project scope, a realistic roadmap with a detailed timeline for the above
  + Include source and potential funding from grants, facilitate fundraising efforts, and interface with government agencies
* Commercial Asset Investments & Support
  + Identify potential businesses representing a good fit for the village and community
  + Network, identify, and recruit potential business investors to help facilitate growth potential
* Seasonal Commercial & Recreational Support
  + Determine if there are seasonal commercial opportunities available or activities, i.e., Christmas tree lot, farmers market, or other pop-up shops

The Village Planning Committee will consist of the following members:

* 2 Topinabee Development Association Members
* 1-2 Topinabee Business Owners
* 1 Mullett Township Board Sponsor
* 1-2 Representatives from Northern Lakes Economic Alliance (NLEA) and/or County Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Our plan is to have the committee confirmed and approved by the Mullett Township Board at the October meeting.

**Membership (Lori Hoehn)**

We completed this year’s mailings of the annual report and renewal forms with thanks to Graham Tillotson for his donation of time and postage. We are currently at 81% of our renewal goal and we believe this is due in part to the positive changes in the new township board and current improvements within the community.

Currently, membership data is being processed manually. We are looking at ways to automate this method by providing an easier way for members to renew and new members to join. We continue to gather email addresses that will also allow us to be in better contact with our members and provide them with more up-to-date information and volunteer opportunities.

**Community Outreach (Mary O’Hare)**

At the last TDA board meeting it was decided that the TDA will make a greater effort to seek out and engage the businesses in and around Topinabee. This is important because the business community is a beneficiary of our effort and provide essential products and services to residents and visitors. Their presence will help insure Topinabee continues to thrive as a vibrant community in the years to come.

Members of the TDA Board are in the process of connecting with owners of restaurants, service stations, lawn and yard care businesses, sports equipment suppliers and other services in our area to better understand how we might help them to be even more successful in our community. Many of the businesses are listed on the topinabee.org home page and plans are in the works to continue to feature old and new businesses on the website. We also hope to include information and/or announcements from those businesses in a TDA email newsletter.

Several business owners have been contacted as part of our effort. Four years ago, Renee Beck opened Topinabee Nail and Hair Salon, today it takes weeks to get an appointment. Her high standards and those of her colleagues have earned her a great reputation. Topinabee Market has stayed open during a very difficult year despite a shortage of help. Breakers Bar continues to be a “go to” place for residents and visitors alike. Aqua Lawn and Irrigation and Michigan Lake Product’s generosity have contributed to the aesthetics of our village. These are just a few of the business people we have spoken with.

**Guest Speaker**

The meeting continued with the introduction Laz Surabian from the newly elected Mullett Township Board.

The new board was sworn in November, 2020 with the following as members:

Denise Ackerman – Clerk

Brenda Bowes – Treasurer

Mike Goerke – Trustee

Brett Lindgren – Trustee

One of the things mentioned from a previous TDA meeting was the lack of an annual Mullett Township Hall Meeting. We held this meeting in July, 2021, to keep open the line of communications with the community.

We are re-instituting the Parks and Recreation Committee with Brenda Bowes being the liaison. Appreciation was given to the TDA for their assistance in the survey that was completed to help develop the 5-year plan for this committee. This plan will be posted 9/27/21 and is open to a 30-day public comment period.

The library Committee has been re-vitalized with Denise Ackerman as the liaison and Judy Jacalone as the new library director.

The East Mullett Hall has seen some upgrades with a new furnace and new kitchen.

For Mullett Township a new website is being created, the depot has been painted, a new logo has been created, the parking area is paved with only a few items left to do, and the crosswalks will be added after MDOT has finished paving US-27. Re-surfacing of Mail Route was completed a year early and a meeting has been scheduled with the Road Commission to develop a road plan for the township.

New computers and software will make things communications easier between the treasurer and clerk for balancing the books and you can now pay your taxes online for a minimal fee.

The tennis and basketball courts have been power washed and will be re-stripped. There is a new township fire agreement with Burt Township. The boat launch is in need of repair and we are now going through the permit process. A dry hydrant will also be added at this location for easy water access for the local fire department.

The board approved the Cheboygan County blight ordnance, which after all local steps have been exhausted, will allow the sheriff to issue a citation allowing prosecution of the homeowner. This will be effective in April, 2022, giving the township time to notify community homeowners of the new ordnance.

So, many things have been completed and many things are ongoing.

**Question and Answer Period**

Question 1 – It’s understood the fire agreement between Burt and Mullett Township differs from what was originally discussed in a previous meeting. What is the new agreement?

Answer: Term is shorter than the original 10 years. Currently, Mullett residences pay 1.5 mils and Burt was paying $30k, which is less than .5 mils. New agreement will have Burt paying $50K (.7mils) 1st year, $68K (just less than 1 mil) 2nd year, and then they will continue until the 5th year of the agreement at 1mil.

Question 2 – Many ideas have been proposed in the past years and have never been followed through. How are you going to follow thru on new proposals?

Answer: The Village Planning Committee will define the strategies for the next 5 years. They will put forth to the township board the recommendations, timelines, and resources of a project. Thus, allowing the board to make informative decisions and follow thru with new projects.

Question 3 – How does one get involved with the TDA and/or the projects that require unique skillsets?

Answer: Getting involved can happen in various ways like volunteering, becoming a member, or serving on the board. We are going to do a survey to determine how our constituents would like to get involved, like in cleaning up a park, to support or work on a committee looking for businesses that might want to invest in Topinabee.

Email Question – Why is most of the focus on the west side of Mullett Lake.

Answer: In today’s environment the township board is focused on the entire township. Our organization and its primary focus are on Topinabee Village. We look to enhance and invest in the village by bringing businesses, tourism, and improvements which overall will enhance the township. If the eastside of the lake has an organization which is in need of our help, please come to us and we’ll do all we can to assist. Laz indicated that the township board is open to all request and input from both sides of the lake.

Comment 1 – Don’t forget to use smile.amazon.com and select TDA as your charity!

Comment 2 – A “Thank You” from the fire department for the Facebook push publicizing the barbeque. Also, letting everyone know of the upcoming roadwork through Topinabee.

Comment 3 – Would like to thank all for the for the respect and ability to work together in a professional manner. We are all in this together and working with the new township board has been refreshing.

**Next Annual Meeting**

Please save the date of July 23, 2022 for our next annual meeting followed by an ice cream social at the pavilion.

Any thought or questions from this annual meeting can be sent by email to [topinabeecommunity@gmail.com](mailto:topinabeecommunity@gmail.com).

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

Respectfully submitted,

Claudia Holland

TDA Secretary