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REPUBLIC TOWNSHIP PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 14, 2016 @ 12:00 NOON

The Public Hearing began at 12:00 Noon. All board members were present with the exception of Trustee Feldhusen. The purpose of this hearing is to discuss the grant for the Old Bank Building.

BILL OLSON FROM UPEA: This hearing is to allow the public to hear information regarding a potential grant application and to ask questions if they so desire.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Jim Brennan asked how much the grant was for and what matching funds would be required. Mr. Olson responded first with a list of deficiencies that the building has such as a leaking roof, structural and mechanical issues, barrier free restrooms, as well as some masonry and plumbing issues. The complete project is projected to cost about \$330,000 with a 75% grant and (with enough points) and a possible 28% Township match as of this moment. It is important to note that if the Township chooses not to go for the full grant that there are certain things that cannot be pushed aside such as barrier free access to the building and to the restrooms, a dangerous roof, a poorly functioning furnace; these are safety issues and cannot be removed. Also it is important to note that the more the Township can be responsible for matching funds the better score we receive on the grant application. Mr. Brennan also asked if this grant included funding for additional bathrooms in the rear of the building or was it strictly to reconfigure the existing bathroom. Mr. Olson's response was that it was only to reconfigure the existing bathroom.

BILL OLSON FROM UPEA: Bill discussed his conversation with Mary Carlisle who is in charge of the Upper Peninsula grants for the DNR. She stated she had visited the Old Bank Building and thought that the business inside there was taking up too much space; that more space should be dedicated to the Trail Head Center. Mr. Olson thinks that she may address this when the application is submitted. Supervisor Johnson wants to have a meeting with Mary Carlisle of the DNR and the Concessionaire currently in the building to work out these details. There was additional comment from Liz Hargas, the owner of the Chicken Coop currently housed in the Old Bank Building. She stated that she had spoken to Ms. Carlisle last year and had asked then for more informational brochures or whatever could be gotten for the Iron Ore Heritage Trail with Republic being the Trail Head. She has spoken with people from the Trail and they stated that the only thing they needed was the Kiosk that is currently outside the building. Liz Hargas also stated that she could free up one whole side of the building for them, but as of yet she has received nothing from them to display and until she does she will continue to fill the building with her displays of merchandise to keep the building from looking

haphazard. Liz had informed Mary Carlisle of this when she last saw her and it didn't seem to be a problem then. Liz is prepared to make the entire left side of the building available for the welcome center if/when that happens. That way the bathroom is on the welcome center side and the welcome center side is immediately in front of you when you walk in the front door, they will not have to go through the shop to get to it. Then Mr. Brennan asked about the matching funds required which looks to be about \$90,000.00 and is a great deal of money for the township to put up in one year. Treasurer Koski stated that in fact the Township does not have that much money to dedicate in one year, but over a 3 year project it is simply a matter of budgeting the funds. Mr. Brennan also expressed concern about the money the Township was putting into the building and it seems that the Heritage Trail is the only one benefitting. We are being dictated to by them with no funding help from them. They should be paying part of this bill. It should have been sent through the capitol improvement committee while taking more time to find some other funding. Bill Olson stated that the reason that we need to rush this is because the roof on the building has been actively leaking for 4 years, not to mention that the furnace will not last through another winter. Supervisor Johnson stated that the Heritage Trail has offered money towards costs of the sign. He also said that we have tried many times to fix the roof and it isn't fixable. Bill Olson then stated that if the grant is approved, the Township can accept only what they wish to accept. Let's get the grant approved and get the initial work done, like the roof and if you change the scope later, which is doable. Supervisor Johnson then closed the public comment portion of the hearing.

GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT: There was none.

**REPUBLIC TOWNSHIP SPECIAL MEETING
MARCH 14, 2016
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC HEARING**

Supervisor Johnson asked for a motion to approve the resolution provided to us by Bill Olson for the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant for the Old Bank Building. Treasurer Koski made the motion to support, seconded by Supervisor Johnson, discussion: Trustee Knapp has reservations regarding investing 1/3 of a million dollars into this building for such a small return. He felt it necessary to fix the roof of course, but has difficulty accepting the rest. Treasurer Koski then agreed with Trustee Knapp. Why can't we just worry about fixing the roof and revamping the bathroom to create barrier free access? Trustee Knapp felt about 1/3 of this grant total would be sufficient to accomplish this goal and would make our matching funds concerns more doable, then discuss it further when this was accomplished. Supervisor Johnson then reminded everyone that the building technically does belong to the DNR and we have a responsibility to restore it and maintain it. Also we could get the grant fix what immediately needs fixing, we also have \$25,000 coming from the Heritage Trail and re-evaluate at that time. Then Bill Olson stated that it would be in our best interest to scale back the grant as we stand a much better chance of approval by asking for less money. There would be no need for an additional Public Hearing because the Board is basically responding to what concerns were brought up in Public Comment in a meaningful way and since I have the figures right here in front of me and can easily come up with a new estimate. There is also nothing stopping the Township if, down the road, they wish to do more to the building, they can go for another grant at that time. The things that need to be done immediately are the roof, a barrier free restroom and a barrier free building access. The total dollar figure for these items is about \$50,000. **The first motion was set aside.** Supervisor Johnson asked for a solid figure from Bill Olson and to re-visit it on March 31st which is the next board meeting. Bill Olson brought up a point that in the past if a unit of government could keep their request at no more than \$50,000, plus the local

match the DNR would automatically approve it; just something to consider. Motion by Trustee Knapp to direct Bill Olson to come up with new numbers, Supported by Supervisor Johnson, all in favor, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Liz Hangas asked for permission to come up with some drawings that represents what her vision of what the welcome center should look like. Or should she wait for someone else to do it? Bill Olson suggested that the board should let Liz take the lead and get this organized. Treasurer Koski made the motion to support Liz, seconded by Trustee Knapp, all in favor, motion carried. It was also discussed that the signage should really promote Republic first and the heritage trail second.

ADJOURNMENT: The Hearing/Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Marilyn Brancheau
Clerk

DRAFT