

VERGENNES TOWNSHIP
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2005

The regular meeting of the Vergennes Township Board was called to order by Tim Wittenbach at 7:00 p.m. in the Vergennes Township Hall.

Members Present:	Tim Wittenbach	-	Supervisor
	Mari Stone	-	Clerk
	Jean Hoffman	-	Treasurer
	Al Baird	-	Trustee
	Vern Nauta	-	Trustee

Minutes of the December 20, 2004 Regular Board Meeting stand approved as presented as well as Minutes of Special Meeting of the Township Board dated January 5, 2004. Motion by Hoffman, second by Baird, to approve bills as read. **Motion approved.** Motion by Nauta, second by Baird, to approve Agenda as presented. **Motion carried.**

Unfinished Business:

1. Road Commission Work Order 2005 Road Projects. Motion by Stone, seconded by Nauta, to approve Road Commission Work Order for 2005 Minor Road Projects in the amount of \$40,150.00. **Motion approved.**

New Business:

1. Resolution Regarding Voting Equipment, School Elections. Help America Vote Act of 2000 enables Township to receive new voting equipment. Resolution 2-2005 gives Clerk ability to apply for grant for new voting equipment. Motion by Baird, seconded by Hoffman, to adopt Resolution 2-2005 regarding new voting equipment. **Motion carried.** In 2003, the legislature passed legislation which denotes all local clerks administer school elections. Resolution 4-2005 gives Clerk permission to enter into an agreement with County to handle school elections. Motion by Baird, seconded by Nauta, to adopt Resolution 4-2005. **Motion approved.**
2. Discussion Regarding Community Development Grant Funds. Stone noted that Vergennes Township received notification that it had \$13,000 in unprogrammed Community Development Grant funds. However, that total may be incorrect. Stone to check. Motion by Nauta, seconded by Stone, to grant \$3,000 of Community Development Grant funds to Rockford Ambulance. **Motion carried.** Motion by Stone, seconded by Nauta, to grant \$3,000 of Community Development Grand funds to North Kent Transit for the 2005-06 fiscal year beginning in July. **Motion approved.**
3. Consideration of Escrow Deposit Minimum. Motion by Stone, seconded by Hoffman, to raise the minimum Escrow Deposit from \$500 to \$1,000 with \$500 increment deposits. **Motion approved.**

4. Comcast Franchise Agreement. Currently twenty-four customers. Township Attorney reviewed agreement. Motion by Nauta, seconded by Stone, to grant Supervisor Wittenbach approval to sign Comcast Franchise Agreement pending acceptance of Township attorney changes to the Agreement. **Motion carried.**
5. Resolution Authorizing Alternative Starting Date for March Board of Review. Stone made a motion, seconded by Hoffman, to approve Resolution 3-2005 authorizing alternative starting date for March Board of Review. **Motion approved.**

Citizens Comments:

Marsha Wilcox. Regarding Annexation - Encourage Board to discuss 425 plan; not give up Township master plan zoning. At risk, community cooperation; friends & neighbors; buffer between city and rural; wet lands; trout stream. Request Board approval of Open Space Committee holding meeting re annexation for interested residents.

Mac McPherson. Requests that property stay in Vergennes Township. Owners could still profit by developing land within Vergennes Township guidelines.

Penny Rosema. Hope that Vergennes Township does not give up property to City of Lowell. Would approve meeting regarding annexation for interested residents.

Roger Odell. Understands that development of the property is inevitable. City of Lowell has not demonstrated "good neighbor" characteristics. At a minimum insist on a minimum 20-40 year 425 agreement and keep zoning within Vergennes Township requirements. Feels there is a very good case for Vergennes Township with the Boundary Commission considering their other decisions and criteria.

Marianne Menger. Attended joint meeting between Township and City of Lowell to discuss annexation. She believes the City made it clear that they want the land for a broader tax base and seemed to be looking toward annexing more land in the future. She would support a strong statement from the Board against annexation.

Carolyn Medendorp. She received the impression that City of Lowell wants to take more township land in the future. As far as this annexation is concerned she would approve the expenditure of many dollars to hire attorneys, lobbyists, etc. – whatever the cost to stop annexation.

Kate Dernocoeur. Asked attendees to see her to be put on a group list for open space committee newsletter. Requested the Board to stand firm against 425 and annexation. Resist City of Lowell's attempt to tie in past water issues with the annexation issue at hand. She supports the Vergennes Master Plan.

Steve Plat. Member of Open Space Committee. Suggested finding acreage within Township to put forth a model of an open space development arrangement. Nauta noted that the open space development model has been presented to several developers by the Planning Commission but they were not interested. Nauta indicated the Township has a very good attorney and as far as the 425 agreement – the Board has a very firm stance as to what would or would not be agreed to

with the City of Lowell. He indicated that the Boundary Commission requires that both sides attempt to come to an agreement on the property among themselves.

Pete Gustafson. Pete gave a very logical and easily understood synopsis of the annexation process as well as a 425 agreement. He also indicated that in his opinion the Township had a very good case against annexation.

Tim Wittenbach. Tim indicated that the Boundary Commission Meeting will be held March 3, 2005. There is to be a second meeting between the Board and the City of Lowell before March 3 but it has yet to be scheduled. The Commission does not require a development plan to agree to the annexation of the property. The Commission would like to see a 425 Agreement indicating that the parties involved can come to an agreement.

Bill Scheur. Bill inquired as the density attached to a 425 agreement. The number of homes allowed per acre by the City of Lowell is four.

Mari Stone. The builder of the development for the property in question indicated the development would be "multi-use" and that he needs sewer as the area doesn't perk. He also indicated he would not displace a wetland to build. Stone is not opposed to growth in the Township as long as it is within the confines of the Master Plan for development.

John Forrestberg. Although he did not come to the meeting to voice his opinion about the annexation issue, he would like to offer his assistance. John lives at 846 Montcalm and he and other neighbors are having problems with his next door neighbor. These residents rent from a landlord who lives in Spring Lake. In the Spring, Summer and Fall, there are problems with very loud music, parties, swearing, shooting of guns, etc. He has spoken to the owner and also the Kent County Sheriff Department. This is a continuous problem. He is speaking to the Board in the hopes of "nipping in the bud" the problem before warm weather arrives and would like to know what options he and his neighbors have regarding this problem. Tim Wittenbach suggested he speak to the new Community Police Officer assigned to Vergennes Township from the Kent County Sheriff's Department.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mari Stone, Clerk