The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chair Paul Voge.

Present: Paul Voge, Jo Thompson, Jerry Hauge, John Schifsky, Brigid Pajunen, Wayne Dahlberg, and Larry Zanko

Absent: No one

Also present: Sue Lawson - Planning Director, Don Sitter - Town Board liaison, Don McTavish, Clint Little - MN DNR and Stacey Seering.

The agenda was approved as written.

The minutes were approved with the following change: John asked that the final phrase: “so there is no issue over that with the City,” Line 147, be omitted.

**Director’s Report**

Sue said that the Town submitted their MS4 SWPPP application to the MPCA thanks to Jo and Val Brady.

Jo said that there will be a public comment period, but she was not sure when. After the public comment period, the application is approved or disapproved. If it is not approved, the Town has to modify it accordingly. If it is approved, the Town has a year from the approval date to complete the tasks in the application. She said that there are groups of MS4s working together, but there are no small MS4s on those committees and big city solutions will not work for smaller MS4s.

Sue said that a Conditional Use Permit application for a high frequency short-term rental has been submitted by Stacey Seering. The permit application can be considered as a Conditional Use or an Interim Use. That is usually decided by the Commission at the hearing. There are new conditions in the Ordinance in Article VIII Section 15.A for STRs:

1. All short-term rentals require a minimum lot size of two (2) acres.

2. The side and rear setbacks shall be fifty (50) feet unless the adjacent property is zoned commercial, FAM or LIU, then the setbacks shall be as required for the applicant’s land use district. All SENSO and SLO setbacks apply regardless of adjacent property zoning.

3. Licensing and permits. The owners shall obtain any and all licenses, permits, or other governmental approvals required by any governmental agency, board, department, or other governmental entity with jurisdiction.

4. Property oversight and complaint response. Thirty (30) days prior to rental of the property in any calendar year and anytime the contact information changes, the property owner shall provide to the Township Planning Director the name and phone number of a contact person with the capability and authority to address complaints or concerns regarding the property. This phone number shall also be provided to all other property owners within five hundred (500) feet of the lot boundary. The contact person must be available at all times during rental periods, and able to be at the property within thirty (30) minutes.
5. Rental Frequency. Low-frequency short-term rental frequency is limited to once during any thirty (30) day period. Once during any thirty (30) day period means that a subsequent rental cannot begin less than thirty (30) days from the initiation of the prior rental. The allowable rental frequency for high-frequency short-term rentals will be established as part of the conditional use permit.

6. Rental Records. A log shall be kept of the renter, date of arrival, date of departure, and number of guests for all rentals. A copy of the log shall be provided to Planning Director upon request.

7. Parking. Off street parking shall be provided.

8. Temporary Sleeping Facilities. No temporary sleeping facilities may be used on the property during rentals (i.e. recreational camping vehicles, tents, etc.).


Sue said that these are the minimum conditions for a short-term rental CUP. Additional conditions can be imposed by the Commission.

Sue showed a map of the property on Google Earth. The driveway comes off of Wildwood Road and is a shared driveway into the property. The driveway branches to go to a new home near the property line that is not on the current photo in Google Earth.

Stacey Seering said that the driveway is a half mile long and is shared by three property owners. The building to be used as the rental was an art studio when the previous owner lived there.

Wayne moved that the notification area for the CUP be all of the property owners on Wildwood Road east of Homestead Road in addition to the minimum required area of a one-quarter mile radius of the property.

The motion was approved six to one.

The notifications and materials for the Community Participation Report will be sent out at the beginning of the following week.

Budget

Sue presented the draft budget for 2015. Receipts were a little lower than budgeted for 2013, $5080 versus $7000, but permits have been picking up, so it is reasonable to leave assumed receipts at $7000 for 2015. The levy request for 2013 was $20,749, which is down some since 2011. Our goal is to spend as wisely as possible and not have to increase the requested levy.

Wages will increase with COLA, the cost of living adjustment used by SSA to determine social security benefits, which is 1.5% for 2014. That is what proposed wages for 2015 are based on. Also in 2015, we are likely to have an increased workload associated with any construction that disturbs more than one acre. This will probably affect us for the last six to nine months of 2015.

Sue said that it is impossible to estimate what this will cost at this point. Generally, it would apply to new single family construction or large accessory buildings. There were four new SF homes in 2013.

Jo said that even though the SWPPPs for these will be issued through the MPCA, it is up to the Township to monitor for compliance. This is a part of the new MS4 regulations.
Paul suggested increasing permit fees for construction that disturbs more than one acre. He also said that it was his understanding that if you disturb more than one acre you have to submit a SWPPP to the MPCA. We could include that on our land use permit application. He asked if there might be grant money available to offset the costs of the new enforcement requirements.

Clint said that there may be money available through the MPCA. It is possible that the Coastal Program could provide support in the form of training, equipment or tools, but not for the actual MS4 program.

Sue said that once we have amended the Ordinance, which we will have a year to do after our SWPPP is approved, we can consider options for covering costs associated with the enforcement, whether we raise permit fees only for those who will require monitoring under the new MS4 regulations, or we find a way for the cost to be absorbed across the Township in the interest of preserving the Town’s natural resources and quality of life.

For the postage budget estimate, Sue said that postage is related to the number of public hearings we have in a year.

Under new equipment, $300 was budgeted in 2013 and $700 in 2014. Sue said we would be getting a new computer and printer with this money.

Training is set for $200 for both 2014 and 2015. Training will probably be needed in conjunction with the new MS4 requirements.

Don Sitter suggested dropping the proposed budget for mileage by $10 which would make the proposed budget for 2015 the same as 2014.

Jo made a motion to approve the 2015 levy request as amended to $20,550. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Clint Little from the MN DNR was at the meeting to talk about the trail planning process. Clint created a map based on the information Commission members provided at the last meeting. A number of major roads were identified as major routes. Trails included are the Korkki Nordic ski trails, the trails off of East Shilhon, and the Knife River Recreation Council trail. He does not yet have the trail system at the North Shore Community School or the new frisbee golf course, but he will be including those. The bike routes are basically the major road alignments.

Sue said that the original idea was to identify what trails exist in the Township and then start to think about what people would like. She said that the Town could look for grant money for the trail planning process if there was interest.

Clint said this type of project would potentially be considered an eligible project by the Coastal Program, either through their annual grant program which opens in the fall, with the money available at the end of August 2015, or through a Star Grant which could have funds available sooner.

John asked if it would be helpful to let people in the Township know that these are the trails we have identified and then find out if people really want more or not.

Sue said that the Commission could conduct a survey to evaluate interest in the Township.

Don McTavish said that it would have to be in the May or July issue of the Newsletter because March is full.
John asked if it would be possible to accompany it with a brief article identifying what we have in the Township.

Don agreed that an article would be good to introduce the subject.

Paul suggested we tie questions back to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan -- what would you like to see as a Town resident?

Sue said that any trail planning should be primarily focused on the Town. The Comp Plan says that the Township is not into major tourism. Nor does the Town have a lot of resources. If we were to want to have people come in, we would need a lot more resources.

Paul asked Wayne and Sue what the feelings of the residents were when the major planning was done for the CLUP.

Wayne said that it was mostly that as a community there were ways to get from A to B without necessarily having to use roads. It was definitely a local and community emphasis.

Sue said that they also were interested in connections between areas. Some of the conversation was about people wanting their kids to be able to experience some of the things they did when they were kids – camping on the Sucker River, for instance. She said that sometimes the more you formalize these kinds of areas and recreation opportunities, the more you endanger them. It is a conundrum.

Wayne said that he often wishes that he could go down the Bergquist Road past where it ends to the shore. In the old days, there were local byways that people knew about. We have trails in our neighborhoods that everyone uses, but if it goes beyond that, it becomes a management and monitoring situation.

Brigid said that there is a lot more traffic since she moved here. She has the distinct impression that a lot of that traffic is coming from outside the Town.

Don Sitter said that when the Commission started this project, they just wanted to inventory, not advertise.

Don McTavish asked if a survey was conducted and the results indicated that townspeople wanted a trail system, what would the Commission then do. He said that it would be nonproductive to ask questions that wouldn’t or couldn’t be acted on.

Paul said that he would like to see the questions to focus on where people would want trails, what types of trails they would want, and how often would they use them. The answers to these questions would be a starting point for a master plan. Another question would be if residents want the Town to invest time and energy in a master plan. If grant money were used to create master plan, would residents support it? He doubted that residents would want to be levied.

Clint said that in the Coastal Program, applicants often send a draft as a sounding board and the Coastal Program helps them fine tune it. A Star Grant is $7500. The next Star Grant meeting is in March. It could be reviewed and, if approved, have money available in July. He said that people were also doing some subcontracting to ARDC if they needed outside expertise.

Sue said that the Town can do the survey on its own. Don McTavish has done the annual survey for the Town for years. Then, if there is interest on the part of the Township residents, we could look at Star Grants.
John said that he never thought of the trail plan as including networks of trails that individuals have established in their own neighborhoods, but trails that would be available to the public, including people from outside the Township. Nor was it his intent to create something that would draw visitors to the Township. He feels as though there are two townships – the one below the freeway and the one above. There are a lot of trails along the rivers that attract large numbers of people. The biking and hiking activity is not going to go away.

Paul said that everyone seems to have a different idea of what a trail should be. The bike path along North Shore Drive seems adequate. North of the freeway, you see kids and adults walking and biking on roads with no shoulders or narrow shoulders and no sight lines and that is not safe. His idea would be to provide a safe way within the main right-of-way – something that keeps kids and adults and dogs off the road and safer.

Brigid said that improving trails and roadways for the safety of our Township residents seems doable and not so nebulous. It is about getting people out and enjoying our Township safely on foot or on bike and is in line with the community vision.

Paul agreed and said that he felt like the focus should be on main routes – Homestead, Ryan, and Bergquist, for instance.

Jo said that the Town would have to get cooperation from the County and the State.

Brigid said that the idea of a trail along Homestead was broached when Homestead was repaved but there was resistance from some property owners along Homestead.

Sue said that there has never been a strategic approach.

Clint said that Lake County is currently working on the Gitchi Gami trail and is looking at other funding sources. The Town may want to tap into that group and access their knowledge. The trail portion by Lutsen cost a little over a million dollars per mile.

Sue said to keep in mind that there would be requirements associated with any money that came from federal or state entities.

Don McTavish said that this helps focus the survey. What about including questions about the Congdon trust land in the survey?

John distributed a handout detailing his progress on the Congdon trust land. In addition, Jan Green gave him a large number of documents and maps, including legal documents for each parcel of land and numerous letters from the Congdons to the City detailing their vision for the land. He has provided others with digital copies of these. He and Sue met with Judy Gibbs from the City of Duluth. This is an issue she is interested in. Judy is going to locate a map of the Congdon trust lands and is also going to try to find out if the City considers the land park or city land and who has authority over it.

Sue said that they talked about planting some shrubs, maybe even this spring, in the areas that were stripped of vegetation for the culverts.

Regarding the work on building structure size versus lot size, Brigid said that it was likely to require some discussion on the Commission’s part and suggested looking at it at the next meeting.

And on the brochure, Brigid said that she has the text entered and some new photos, so it is coming along.
Sue said that Ann has established a standard for the calls she gets from realtors. She gets a lot and she now asks them to email their questions. It helps define the queries.

Brigid suggested that it could be a yearly assignment to do a mass email to realtors reminding them of the information available on our website.

Sue agreed and said that it could include language that it is important to know what the zoning is in the Township if you are going to sell property there.

Don Sitter said that one approach to enforcement is to emphasize education instead of enforcement. The brochure is one of the main mechanisms for educating people about the Township. He wondered what the cost would be to send one out with each newsletter that goes out to Township residents.

Brigid said that it would be 12 pages of color printing.

Sue said they got a grant from the Duluth Superior Community Foundation for the original brochure.

**Concerns from the audience**

None.

Don Sitter said that there are two Town Board positions open. Dave Miller will run again and Dave Edbom is running. Barb Crow is stepping down.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25.