Regular Town Board Meeting Town of Gnesen

August 28, 2023

The bi-monthly meeting of the Town of Gnesen was held on Monday, August 28, 2023. The following officers were present:

Jon Nelson Chair

Nancy Poppenberg Supervisor

Gary Juten Supervisor

Sarah Blix Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Nelson.

Motion to approve the agenda was moved by Supervisor Juten, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All voted in favor.

Minutes of the August 14, 2023, Town Board Meeting were unanimously approved with a motion by Chair Nelson, second by Supervisor Juten.

**DISCUSSION**: Supervisor Juten questioned the new sick and safe time law. Sarah said she reached out to MAT and was told they do not currently have any training offered but will be providing something for townships soon. Supervisor Juten asked if Mary could investigate Gnesen’s employee hours and provide an estimate on how sick and safe time could look with our budget.

**OLD BUSINESS**:

Normanna Road Violation – Gordon Ramsay attended tonight’s meeting to discuss some options the township has in order to deal with the squatters living at a property on Normanna Road. The Township had already implemented the administrative fine enforcement ordinance and issued the landowner, James Biskey a fine which he paid and ultimately this opened discussion between the township and the landlord which was not the case previously. The landowner provided some much needed information abut the situation and then based off that, the township reached out to Sheriff Ramsay for guidance. Sheriff Ramsay explained the issues with squatters and the process that is involved to get them civilly evicted. Sheriff Ramsay said he would provide the Biskey’s with his contact information and offered to assist them through the process as you can’t evict squatters without a court order. Supervisor Juten questioned who serves the notice to which Sheriff Ramsay stated a St. Louis County Deputy will. Chair Nelson brought up a separate citizen complaint that came in recently regarding a home on Hemlock Drive. Sheriff Ramsay said neighbors providing good information such as dates, times, license plates, or photos all help tremendously towards building a strong case. Sheriff Ramsay said cases take some time to build but with the help of neighbors the process moves much quicker. Mike Polzin questioned the use of ring cameras and placement. Sheriff Ramsay said it is best to install cameras on your own property, but you can certainly aim them at the road. Sheriff Ramsay stated that home cameras are one of the best tools to help solve property crimes.

Hemlock Drive – Another citizen complaint was turned in and was provided to Sheriff Ramsay tonight for guidance on action that can be taken to deal with this issue.

Zoning Officer Update – Mike Polzin and Rick Hogenson were both hired to fill the Zoning Officer position. Both are residents of Gnesen and will be sharing the duties to provide more efficient/timely services for the residents of Gnesen and to deal with the building permit backlog issue. Chair Nelson welcomed both. Sarah has reached out to Downtown Computer already to get both laptops set up and will provide keys, new hire paperwork, etc so that they can get started as soon as possible.

GCC Garage Floor Drains – Cedar Drive Excavating has been donating time to try to find where the garage floor drains daylight out. Supervisor Juten stated that all the garage floor drains are clear and flush water to the outside of the building. Supervisor Juten stated that he believed if a sump was installed next to the wall and the snow melt could just dissipate into the ground that the building could be heated and used to store various equipment over the winter. Supervisor Juten said one of the pipes that leaves the building has a blockage but because he is unsure of where the septic is located and can’t locate any records, he does not want to do any digging. Dave Opack said Jerry Watters assisted with putting in the septic. Supervisor Juten asked Willie Watters, who was in attendance at tonight’s meeting, for his assistance to locate the septic to which Willie said he would. Darin asked about getting a bid for insulating the garage ceiling. Supervisor Juten said he will meet with Darin and Beau to formulate a plan and will provide it at the September 11th meeting.

MIG Variance Issue – Carter said the Planning Commission discussed a variance to correct the issue but was wondering if the Town Board could bypass the variance process and instead draft a resolution allowing buildings to remain as it and get it recorded. Sarah will draft a resolution and provide it at the September 11th meeting. Chair Nelson will reach out to someone from the MIG group and explain the situation to them prior to the September 11th meeting.

DNR Grant – A letter was received from a DNR Grant Specialist informing the Town of Gnesen that a resolution needs to be passed stating that Gnesen, as the applicant, has funding available for their matching portion of the grant. Chair Nelson stated that money was already dedicated towards the grant from ARPA funds. Supervisor Juten made a motion to approve Resolution #23-13, Grant Funding Assistance for DNR Outdoor Reaction Grant, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. All vote in favor.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Home Business Application – There is verbiage existing in Ordinance #10 but there is no official application. P&Z provided a draft application for approval. Chair Nelson questioned numbers 1 & 2 under Additional Considerations requiring State and County permits/license and if it was necessary to have them remain in the application. It was decided to remove them both. There was also discussion on the “Home Business Standards found in Ordinance #10” and if they were all already in the ordinance. Sarah will double check and bring back to the September 11th meeting. There was discussion as to who this application applies to. Carter said this would not be for existing home businesses and is not for stopping any home businesses rather it’s for new incoming businesses to make sure they are following the guidelines.

**ZONING OFFICERS REPORT:** Chair Nelson asked if there is any training available for new zoning officers. Hannah said she heard through Duluth Township of a lawyer who is willing to talk with planning commissions/zoning officers. Hannah will get more information and provide it at the September 11th meeting.Carter reported that MN Power has their final plat scheduled to go to public hearing on September 20, 2023. Carter also mentioned that the communication tower near Thompson Lake has not followed through on their required testing. Chair Nelson said that an initial letter went out but with the loss of our Zoning Officer it has been overlooked. Sarah will dig up the emails that were exchanged between our previous zoning officer and the communication tower representative and provide them at the September 11th meeting. Sarah said the deadline for grandfathering in short term rentals is Friday, September 1, 2023. The residents from Waters Edge Drive who had applied for a STR but could not supply a septic certificate of compliance because their septic was deemed non-conforming have decided to get a new septic installed so they can move forward with applying.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

No further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:18 pm with a motion by Supervisor Juten, second by Supervisor Poppenberg. No objections, meeting adjourned. (This meeting is taped for transcribing purposes only.)

Visitors attending the meeting: Jay and Marcia Haller, Carol Jacobson, Al Werner, Dave Opack, Michael Cole, Dave Stewart, Bruce Halverson, Pete Bergman, John Armstrong, Jessica Spaeth, Randy and MaryJo Dulinski, Mike Polzin, Janes and Erlana Biskey, Rick Hogenson, Jill Sherold, Willie Watters, Gordon Ramsay

Employees present: Darrin Franckowiak, Beau Halverson, Carter Williams Employees absent: None

**Upcoming Meetings:**

Town Board Meeting – September 11, 2023 – 7:00pm

MN Power Platting Public Hearing – September 20, 2023 at 6:30pm

P&Z Meeting – September 20, 2023 - 7:30pm

Town Board Meeting – September 25, 2023 - 7:00pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Sarah Blix, Clerk Jon Nelson, Chair

Date approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_