

## Draft – Harsens Island Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes

Meeting held June 13, 2021 at The Lions Club

Meeting scheduled for 3:00 was called to order at 3:10 PM by Skip Tornow. Meeting delayed due to lack of a quorum.

<b>Roll Call</b>	Harold Bain	absent
	Margie Baldwin	present
	Gary Beaulac	present
	Dennis Szymanski	absent
	Wayne (Skip) Tornow	present

**Approval of minutes from March 23, 2021 meeting** – Motion by Bain to approve – second by Beaulac. Motion approved 3-0.

**Treasures Report** – report by Beaulac – (attached)

### Old Business

**Communication Report** – Tornow updated progress on establishing a HITA website. Site is established and active. Web address is [www.harsensita.com](http://www.harsensita.com). We are having issues with getting the “donate now” button established thru PayPal. We have to provide HITA’s EIN number along with additional documentation in order to activate it. In the meantime, anyone wishing to make a donation can mail a check to HITA – PO Box 28007, Harsens Island, MI 48028. Residents can provide their e-mail addresses at the website to receive e-mail updates and notifications. There is also a comments section which residents can use to ask questions/make requests.

**Audit** – Beaulac reported that per discussions with Township Supervisor Bryson the audit is due by August 31. Beaulac will work with the township to generate the report.

### Updates on Meetings with Officials

- **Legal Opinions** - Baldwin gave an overview on information regarding the formation and powers of HITA provided by the Clay Township Attorney, Davis – Burket – Savage- Listman. The correspondence will be posted on the harsensita.com website.
- **Clay Township Board of Trustees** – Baldwin & Bain met the Clay Twp Board and presented HITA’s history and needs. Request was made for the following - funding from the township, legal advice & use of the township attorney, and assistance with the required annual audit. The township agreed to assist with the audit and provide limited legal assistance. It was requested that Supervisor Bryson reclude himself from any forthcoming discussions on the proposed bridge due to a conflict of interest. He agreed to do this.
- **Bridge Company** - Baldwin summarized recent discussions with the Ambassador Bridge Company. The Bridge Company is “rolling full steam forward on approvals and permits”. Baldwin stated that the estimated cost of a bridge is \$76MM. Half of this is for the bridge portion (\$38MM) and half for the bastille (draw bridge). The bastille is required by the USCG in order to facilitate passage of ice breaking vessels on the north channel. Beaulac requested that

the Bridge Company give a presentation on finances and depreciation of the proposed bridge, operating costs, usage data, etc. Beaulac and Tornow agreed to schedule a meeting with the bridge company to request this.

- **MDOT** – Baldwin reported that she has experienced difficulty in determining who at MDOT has responsibility to work with HITA on issues/concerns. She will continue to pursue scheduling additional meetings. As previously discussed, any meeting will be attended by 2 HITA members.
- **Michigan State Police (MSP)** – A follow up meeting with MSP will be scheduled by Baldwin/Bain to review procedures regarding any proposed ferry rate increases.

### **New Business**

- **Mission Statement** – Discussion was had on the need to have a consistent mission statement as there are several different iterations. Motion was made by Baldwin, seconded by Beaulac to propose the following. “HITA’s mission is to plan and establish safe, reliable, and cost effective transportation to Harsens Island.” Motion passed 3-0.
- **Budget** – Tornow requested a list of items for which funding is needed. A list was generated for review with Senator Lauers and will be discussed at the next HITA meeting.
- **Grant Writer** – Discussion was had regarding a Grant Writer. This is one of the items which needs to be addressed in a proposed budget. The grant writer needs to be experienced with requesting government funding. There are federal and state funds available for a bridge. Once funding for HITA is received perhaps the bridge company can suggest a potential grant writer.

### **Public Comments** – Comments were limited to 3 minutes. Following are some of the comments

- A request was made that the committee obtain some type of public address system for use at the HITA meetings as it is difficult for the attendees to hear the board members.
- Question was asked as to whom the grant writer is for Clay Township and if this individual could be utilized by HITA. This will be investigated.
- Question was raised if HITA had contacted Bluewater Area Transportation Commission (BWATC) for assistance in determining who the appropriate contact at MDOT is. This had been done previously.
- Has a traffic study ever been conducted which shows how many vehicles cross over on the ferry on a daily basis. Baldwin stated that Champion Ferry has that data but has been unwilling to share it. This question will be raised at the upcoming meeting with the Ambassador Bridge Company.

**Motion to adjourn by Baldwin at 3:32 PM, seconded by Beaulac**