



2017 Newsletter

Volume 5

February 17, 2017

SLT Township Board

- * Lee Mindemann
Chairman
- * Ron Peterson
Vice Chairman
- * Victor Johnson
Supervisor
- * Jeff Michaelson
Clerk
- * Ronola Richards
Treasurer

Website:
starlaketownship.org

Inside this issue:

Election & Ann Mtg	1
2016 General Election	2
Dent Vol Fire Dept	3
Resort/Casino Update	4
LASLCP	5
Road Services	7
Township Info	10
SLT Financials	12

STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Written/compiled by Lee Mindemann

Welcome to the 5th Edition of the Star Lake Township (SLT) Annual Newsletter. The Board of Supervisors hopes that you find this newsletter helpful and informative. This newsletter and the periodic email notices that we began in 2016, are the Board's only way of communicating with you, our constituents. If you have email, please consider registering on our website, starlaketownship.org. This will allow us to transmit email notices, and the annual newsletter to you electronically thereby saving us the cost of hard copy distribution. *Your email information will not be shared/sold to anyone else.*

You are reminded that the monthly board meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month (unless otherwise posted) at 7PM, and SLT taxpayers & residents are always welcome to attend.

In a couple of weeks (March 14th) SLT will conduct its annual election followed that evening by the Annual Meeting. Voters will cast their ballots for an open Supervisor position (3 yr. term); polls will be open from 5PM to 8PM at the town hall. The Annual Meeting will convene promptly at 8:15PM, also at the town hall. Amongst other matters, registered SLT voters in attendance will be asked to approve the annual tax levy for 2018. **As of this writing, it is the intention of the SLT Supervisors to recommend NO CHANGE to the annual levy.**

Please mark this important date on your calendar now, and plan to vote and attend.

MARCH 14, 2017 - SLT ELECTION & ANNUAL MEETING
VOTING 5PM to 8PM
ANNUAL MEETING 8:15PM

2016 GENERAL ELECTION

On Nov. 8, 2016 the general election was held. Star Lake Township had an impressive voter turn-out of 94%, while Otter Tail County had a 92% voter turn-out, also a stellar number. SLT also registered a significant number of new voters, and most of those were first time voters. Strong voter turn-out and young people getting involved by exercising the right to vote – very good news! SLT specific results were:

- Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton by a vote of 159 to 64.
- Incumbent U.S. Representative Colin Peterson defeated David Hughes by a vote of 118 to 111.
- Incumbents Bill Ingebrigtsen, State Senator; and Bud Nornes State Representative each defeated their opponents by nearly a 2 to 1 margin.

The election was administered in SLT by Town Clerk Jeff Michaelson at a cost of \$2,746.77. Our thanks and appreciation go out to the following election judges for their time and service:

Alma Ronningen	Mary Pfeffer
Doris Champlin	Carole Nodsle
Ron Gilbertson	Joy Dillon
Lee Mindemann	Ron Peterson

A separate but related note regarding elections - an Oct.15, 2016 article in the Star Tribune written by John Reinan and MaryJo Webster states, “Along with the “vacant” ballot slots, 60% of all local offices in MN have only a “single candidate” running unopposed. In all, two-thirds of local offices statewide have either no candidate running or just one.”

This is a huge issue for townships, including this one. Whether a township supervisor, church committee, lake association, youth sports team, or a local volunteer fire department – getting & keeping volunteers is a critical issue. We all seem to want/ value these organizations, but only a few answer the call.

I submit that each of us need to ask ourselves – What am I doing to serve my community? Where can I add value? Am I carrying my fair share of the load? If you’re having difficulty answering those questions; I implore you to step up and get involved, our collective future depends upon it. SLT will likely have Supervisor openings in each of the next two years, and those are “paid” positions.

Mark Your Calendars Now
March 14, 2017
Election Day & Annual Meeting

DENT VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT (DVFD)

The Dent Volunteer Fire Department provides fire protection and first responder medical support to Star Lake Township, as well as Dead Lake, Edna, Dora Townships, and the City of Dent. Each of these entities pay an annual fee that is based upon the value of buildings within their individual jurisdictions. Accordingly, SLT paid \$11,815 for coverage in 2016, and will pay \$12,489 in 2017. Your SLT taxes include these amounts.

SLT's share of the total DVFD budget is about 18%, which is also about the same % as the # of fire calls made, and the # of first responder calls made to SLT properties in 2016. So, we are paying our fair share. The DVFD financially is a pretty lean organization with annual receipts of \$120,000 vs. expenses of \$110,005. They were able to purchase a used Pumper/Tanker Truck in 2016 for \$136,820, and are budgeting for replacement air packs for their firefighters in 2019. They are well managed, well trained, and very much in need of volunteers.

Remember the remarks above regarding volunteerism. DVFD currently has just FOUR active Rescue Squad volunteers. I'm told there were four instances in 2016 where the 911 call came in, but the Rescue Squad was unable to respond.

So, still wondering what you can do to serve your community? If interested in this opportunity, call Fire Chief Curtis Seifert (218-298-0676), or Perry Coleman (218-758-2100) for more information.

As a bonus, for every Star Lake Township resident signing on with the DVFD in 2017, I (Lee Mindemann) will treat to lunch at Nootzi's!!!

Star Lake Township extends its thanks and gratitude to the members of the DVFD Firefighters and Rescue Squad for their dedicated service.



SHOOTING STAR RESORT & CASINO PROJECT

You may recall from last year's newsletter that after months of speculation & rumors, the White Earth Nation (WEN) announced on 9/25/15 that they were indeed planning to develop a resort & casino project adjacent to Star Lake.

We will not attempt to recap every single aspect of this issue in this newsletter as there has been much written, and multiple meetings held on this subject. Please refer to the following websites for more specific information:

Otter Tail County (OTC): co.otter-tail.mn.us - Proposed Star Lake Casino page

Star Lake Property Owners Association: starlakeassociation.com

Star Lake Concerned Citizen Group: slccg.info

These sites, particularly the SLCCG site, have lots of information on the subject. The issue is multi-faceted, very complex, and regulated by a host of governmental entities – seemingly each with their own set policies. An article in the Perham Focus dtd 1/19/17, and the Fargo Forum dtd 2/8/17 appear to be the most accurate and timely articles available as of this writing. These are both posted on the SLCCG.info website.

The following is what the Star Lake Township (SLT) Board is relatively certain of at this time:

1. The Limited Area Star Lake Comprehensive Plan (LASLCP) was finalized on 1/4/17 and is posted on the OTC and SLT websites. More on the LASLCP later.
 2. The projected cost of \$130 million and the employment of 500+ people makes this one of the largest, if not the largest, commercial development in OTC history.
 3. The purchase of the 255 acres of fee status land make the WEN bona fide property owners within SLT, and their rights are to be respected as with any SLT property owner.
 4. The WEN are acting within their legitimate rights under the provisions of the 1855 Treaty between the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) and the U.S. Government, the Indian Gaming Act of 1988, and Gaming Compact signed with the State of MN in 1991. The MCT is comprised of the WEN and five other tribes.
 5. There is strong public interest in the proposed project;
 - a. The SLCCG claims to have 700+ signatures of area stakeholders requesting that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be conducted before the project can proceed. An EIS is the highest level of environmental review.
 - b. The LASLCP public meetings were well attended.
 - c. The number of public comments submitted for the state wetland mitigation peti-
-

RESORT & CASINO ... cont'd from page 4

tion, the county conditional use permit application, and the Army Corps of Engineer (ACE) petition to fill wetlands has been significant.

- d. There has been significant media coverage on the subject.
6. As of this writing (2/17/17), there have been NO PERMITS approved for the project, as the Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) process has not been completed.
7. The WEN which initially projected an opening of Summer of 2017, is now projecting an opening for late fall 2018.
8. The construction activity that has occurred on the WEN property thus far is related to activities required by the EAW. The EAW has not yet been received by OTC.
9. There have been no specific decisions made regarding the intersections of Cty. 41 and State 108, or Cty. 41 and Cty. 35; regarding any changes that may be deemed necessary. A feasibility study is being implemented to provide specific recommendations.
10. The potential sanitary sewer availability for residents along 380th St. east of Cty. 41 has yet to be determined, and the developer in cooperation with the Star Lake Property Owners Association (SLPOA) is in the process of determining potential costs, and the interest level of the residents in the that area.

There are many unanswered questions as it relates to the proposed Shooting Star Resort & Casino (SSRC). The SLT Board will continue to do our best to keep you informed of the projects status, and to represent the best interests of all our property owners.

LIMITED AREA STAR LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (LASLCP)

As mentioned earlier the LASLCP which began 2/23/16 and concluded on 12/12/16 was published in final form on 1/4/17. It is posted on the OTC website, as well as the SLT website. It is a 160-page file which includes not only the study itself, but a copy of the OTC Shoreline Management Ordinance (SMO), and copies of the all public comments. If you are so inclined to print a copy I would suggest just printing pages 1 – 79 as that is the actual study.

Again, I will not attempt to recap this entire document here, but rather offer some observations/thoughts regarding it. Hopefully this will be helpful.

1. The LASLCP was a joint project of OTC and the White Earth Nation, and was paid for equally. SRF Consulting was the firm that prepared the study. “Study” is my word for this as in my eyes it is more of an assessment or study, than it is a “plan”. A plan in my experience, provides “specific actions/next steps” – I see none here.
-

LASLCP ... cont'd from page 5

2. The purpose was to better understand and plan for “potential” changes in transportation, utilities, “LAND USE”, recreation, housing, and more. In other words, “IF” this project is completed, it is likely to have an impact on many aspects of the daily life of local residents. This study attempts to identify some of these potential impacts. It is important to note that the study’s growth projections are based upon a total build-out of currently undeveloped lake shore property over the next 20 years. That may or may not be accurate. The projection of a 42% increase in housing units (500 units) in the Star/Dead Lake Twp. area is based upon that assumption.
3. While OTC has a very comprehensive SMO, its jurisdiction is limited to land use within 1,000 ft. of a lake or waterway. There are NO land use ordinances in OTC for land that falls outside of 1,000 ft.. So, if the casino is successful and it draws additional retail/residential development outside of the 1,000 ft. line there currently are no restrictions on building specifications, how many lights are used, how high/big billboards may be, building set-backs, or what types of businesses may be built, etc..
4. While MN Statute allows for townships to adopt “land use” ordinances, *the Supervisors currently feel the requirements of staff, and financial resources to do so would be too onerous for Star Lake Township to undertake by itself.* A previous SLT Board must have thought so as well in October of 1992 when they took board action to abdicate this jurisdiction to OTC. The SLT Board is supportive of that decision as it seems clear that OTC is best suited to manage this responsibility. It also would seem to do little good if SLT enacted land use ordinances while neighboring townships did not.
5. On pages 73 to 77 in the LASLCP it details 21 “Opportunities to Consider” as possible next steps; 11 of those indicate the primary entity responsible for that action to be the township. There are no comments made regarding “how” SLT would undertake this work, or how it be funded.

The SLT Board has begun an initial review/discussion of this subject at its 1/12/17 regular meeting, and will continue at up-coming meetings. *No official actions have been taken on the matter, nor will there be without direct voter approval.* There may be more to come on this subject to include a possible SLT public meeting to provide stakeholders a chance to provide their input.

**For more info about LASLCP
see OTC website**

2016 ROAD MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

The year 2016 was a good year for SLT roadways. We had no road closures and no significant equipment failures. We were able to meet our objective of applying gravel to 100% of township roads over the past 5 years. In all we applied gravel to 9.8 miles of road in 2016 at a cost of \$17,876.

In a joint project with Maplewood Township we widened 1,300 ft. of 280th Ave. (south of State Hwy. 108) to a minimum roadway width of 22'. This section was flooded in the high water years of 2009-10 and had been elevated, thereby decreasing the width of road to a point where it was designated as a one-way road. Since this section of roadway is a "Line Road" (borders between SLT & Maplewood Twp.) it was a joint responsibility for both twps.. Total cost of this project was \$16,729, which was divided equally between the two townships. Per the Line Road Agreement for this road, SLT has primary maintenance responsibility for this section of road and therefore was responsible for coordinating the project.

There are two separate sections of 390th St. located just to the east of the intersection with 280th Ave. which also need widening. We anticipate widening one or both of these in a similar fashion in 2017, depending upon finances. Since this is a school bus route we feel strongly that public safety requires this work be done. This is not a line road, therefore SLT will bear the full cost of this project(s).

At the other end of 280th Ave. (north of Hwy. 24) SLT shared in the costs to repair and widen a .5 mile section of that road. In this case, Maplewood Twp. has maintenance responsibility and coordinated the project. SLT's share for this project was \$877.90.

A small widening project on 380th St. near Camp Joy was also completed in the late fall. Clay was added to the south side of the road on the inside of a curve, to create a small shoulder where there had been none. This has been an accident prone location for many years. Cost of this work was approximately \$800.

Lastly, we are planning for a culvert installation in 2017 on Beaver Dam Point to alleviate a repetitive washout problem. The 2017 Road Report will be conducted in April, at which time we'll be able to better view road conditions and determine what additional repair/ improvements are needed.



TOWNSHIP ROAD MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS

Star Lake Township (SLT) has road maintenance agreements with neighboring townships. The following highlights those agreements (for more detailed information on this consult the website under the “Road Services” tab):

1. **Maplewood TS.** – maintains the following:
 - a. 280th Ave. north from Hwy 24 .5 miles,
 - b. 280th Ave. south from Hwy 24 .3 miles to “Minimum Maintenance” barricade,
 - c. Skyhawk Drive. East from Hwy 24 for .5 miles,
 - d. Contact Info: Lyle Boehm 218-205-1865
2. **Maine TS.** – maintains Brightwood Shores Drive east off Hwy 35. Contact Info: Joanne Seeger 218-495-3737
3. **Dead Lake TS.** – maintains Beaver Dam Road from 380th Street north to Beaver Dam Trail. Contact Info: Justin Kirchenwitz 218-298-4024
4. **Dora TS.** – maintains West Rosewood Dr. Contact Info: Gregory Meyer 218-758-2181

Residents that live along these SLT roads should contact the township official noted above with any road concerns.

ROAD RIGHT OF WAY ISSUES

For the benefit & safety of township employees, yourself, and of the travelling public, please keep our road right of ways (ROW) **clear of all obstructions**. The ROW for all township roads is 66 feet (33 feet either side of the center of the roadway), 120 feet for all cul-de-sacs, and 33 feet for the very few cart ways we have.

This notification and any specific notices by SLT help protect the township from potential liability claims. It’s pretty simple – **don’t put/leave anything in the right of way!** If you have a question on this discuss it with your insurance agent or an attorney.



WINTER OPERATIONS

The SLT Board would like to remind residents of the following:

1. *Township residents are reminded that the placing of snow from sidewalks, driveways, approaches and streets onto a TOWNSHIP ROAD is against the law. MN Statute 169.42.*
2. **PLEASE DO NOT PARK VEHICLES ON THE ROADWAY** in advance of an anticipated snow event!
3. The Township plow will not operate on private property/roads unless so directed by law enforcement or the Town Board,
4. The Township plow operator will not offer physical assistance to extract private vehicles that may be stuck in the snow, unless directed to do so by law enforcement or the Town Board.
5. The Township has no responsibility for damage to any or all items left in the Road Right of Way, including but not limited to outdoor lighting, landscaping, vehicles, trailers, etc.,

The entire Snow Removal Policy can be viewed on our website under the “Road Services” tab.

DUST CONTROL POLICY

Residents may obtain a copy of the Dust Control Policy by visiting our SLT website, starlaketownship.org, or contacting the Town Clerk.

Briefly, the policy states that the township will coordinate & contract for Dust Control Applications to those areas where the residents have requested it be done, and have agreed to pay for it in advance.

Two key dates: if you want dust control have your application submitted to SLT by **April 1st**, and if you really want it done have your payment check to SLT by **May 1st!**

Thanks so much for your cooperation on this – these dates help us get the best possible price from our vendor, and importantly helps us get to the top of list for application date. The cost of dust control will remain at \$.66/linear foot for an 18’ span.

TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENTS

In our continuing efforts to improve/maintain the condition of the town hall buildings & property the following were accomplished in 2016:

1. Accumulated scrap iron and old tires were properly disposed of,
2. A basement window was replaced,
3. An exhaust fan was added to the garage,
4. A thermostat was added to the inside of the meeting room to control the temperature both there and in the heated shop/garage,
5. A light fixture was replaced in the back stairwell,
6. Locking filler caps were installed on the bulk fuel tanks in the town yard

The following items are planned for 2017 & beyond, depending upon finances:

- Replace siding on town hall (within 3-5 yrs),
- Add metal siding to equipment lean-to on back garage,
- Pour concrete pad for treated sand storage & loading,

STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP BOARD/STAFF

The SLT Board is comprised of three Supervisors, a Clerk, and a Treasurer (see back page for specific contact information). The current township staff is as follows:

Ray Harthun:	General Maintenance & Brushing Operations.
Ron Peterson:	Ditch mowing operations.
Mike Sundblad:	Motor Grader Operator.
Jeff Michaelson:	Snow Plow Operator. Back-up/Ray Harthun
Vic Johnson:	Snow Grader Operator. Back-up/Mike Sundblad
Town Treasurer:	Ronola Richards—Welcome to our new Treasurer!!
Town Clerk:	Jeff Michaelson

The Supervisors would like to thank each of our staff for their excellent work during 2016, and are pleased to report no accidents and no injuries.

Carol C. Peterson – Star Lake Township Treasurer. We were deeply saddened by the passing of Carol Peterson this past Dec. 1st. Carol was 74 and passed away after a long illness. She and husband Ron, were married for 55 years. They have two children, six grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. Carol was an accountant by trade and had worked for the Fergus Falls School District, the Fergus Dairy, and Gerald Evenson Trucking of Pelican Rapids. Carol was born and raised in Star Lake Township, was an avid quilter, and loved her miniature horses. Carol had been Star Lake Treasurer since 2013.

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS!

The Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) will again be awarding \$1,000 scholarships to up to six high school juniors in this school year.

Students must be attending a MN public, private, or parochial high school or a home study program, and planning to further their education by attending a college, university, or vocational school.

\$ Scholarship Opportunity \$

Applicants must complete an application form and submit it along with a written essay discussing: **Sustainable Water - The Foundation of Minnesota's Environment, Economy, Health, and Well-being.**

Submissions must be postmarked 5/1/17, and judging will be completed by 10/1/17. For more information contact the Township Clerk, or any Supervisor.

NOXIOUS WEEDS

SLT maintains an active monitoring program for MN DNR identified noxious weeds with primary emphasis on Canadian Thistle and Poison Ivy, as well as invasive species. The road right-of-ways are of primary interest, but infestations on private property are also under township/county jurisdiction.

Periodic inspections are made during the growing season and if infestations are noted the appropriate land owner will be notified



and asked to take corrective action. Corrective action normally involves cutting/mowing, or the application of approved herbicide.

If verbal notification is not effective, written notification will be provided and land owners will have 10 days to take corrective action. If still no action is taken, the report will be forwarded to the East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District for appropriate follow-up. Last year we had four such reports, all of which were quickly resolved by the property owners.

If you see such an infestation you can help us with this program by notifying a SLT Supervisor. Thank you for your cooperation.

DID YOU KNOW...?

1. The Star Lake Fire Signs (the red & white ones – though they're mostly all faded out now) are worthless for emergency reporting purposes. According to OTC, they were phased out shortly after the 911 addressing system went into effect. Anyway, to avoid emergency dispatcher confusion and perhaps a costly/tragic delay, it is suggested that you remove the old SL Fire Signs. They look pretty good on the shop wall ☺ ... but make sure your 911 sign is up and clearly visible.
2. That Star Lake Township was established on January 18th, 1880. Happy 137th Birthday!!

STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP ANNUAL FINANCIAL RECAPS

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Levy Amount*	\$113,200	\$123,200	\$143,200	\$143,200	\$173,200
Total Income**	\$143,754	\$151,887	\$187,660	\$194,171	\$222,735
Beg. Chk. Balance***	\$36,178	\$58,048	\$57,649	\$44,987	\$61,063
Working Balance+	\$179,932	\$211,008	\$245,309	\$239,158	\$258,881
Total Expenses++	\$121,884	(\$153,359)	\$187,352	\$178,095	\$197,818
Chk. Balance Forward	\$58,048	\$57,649	\$44,987	\$61,063	\$85,957
Emergency Reserve Fund	\$18,849	\$19,183	\$32,536	\$69,713	\$104,841
TOTAL CASH ASSETS	\$76,897	\$76,832	\$77,523	\$130,776	\$190,798

* Included in Total Income

** Levy + Misc. Receipts, e.g. gas tax, delinquent taxes, etc.

*** Balance carried forward from previous year

+ Sum of beginning balance & total income

++ Total Expenses

(\$ #) Total expenses exceeded total income

This Page Intentionally Left Blank



Star Lake Township
39840 Star Hills Drive
Dent, MN 56528

Star Lake Township Board

Chairman: Lee Mindemann (2015-2018)

218-298-2010 email: sup2@starlaketownship.org

Vice-Chairman: Ron Peterson (2016-2019)

218-758-2455 email: sup1@starlaketownship.org

Supervisor: Victor Johnson (2014-2017)

320-333-3066 email: sup3@starlaketownship.org

Clerk: Jeff Michaelson (Appt'd 03/08/2016)

612-201-6144 email: clerk@starlaketownship.org

Treasurer: Ronola Richards (Appt'd 12/08/16)

218-205-7916 email: treas@starlaketownship.org

starlaketownship.org

Star Lake Township Annual Mtg

Agenda for Annual Mtg on March 14, 2017 (8:15 PM)

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Election of Moderator
- Read Agenda for Meeting
- Minutes of Last Meeting
- Board of Audit
- Hospital District Report
- Supervisor Comments
- Annual Budget & Levy
- Motion for Board to expend \$1000 for social, health & recreational services
- Other Business—Set time & place for next annual meeting
- Discussion of Items of Concern
- Motion to Adjourn



*** BE SURE TO VOTE TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2017 ***

VOTING HOURS: 5PM—8PM

STAR LAKE TOWN HALL

31030 380TH Street, Dent, MN
