



2018 Newsletter

Volume 6

February 26, 2018

SLT Township Board

- * Lee Mindemann
Chairman
- * Keith Aune
Vice Chairman
- * Tammy Ziegler
Supervisor
- * Jeff Michaelson
Clerk
- * Ronola Richards
Treasurer

Website:
starlaketownship.org

Inside this issue:

Election & Ann Mtg	1
Resort/Casino Update	2
MAT Scholarship	3
Noxious Weeds	4
Road Maintenance	5
Road Services	6
Township Staff	8
Town Hall News	9

STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

Written/compiled by Lee Mindemann

The Board of Supervisors extends a Happy New Year greeting and sincere thanks to the residents and tax payers of Star Lake Township (SLT). We appreciate your continued support, and welcome any input/feedback that you may have on this newsletter as well as any other aspect of SLT operations.

If you have email, please consider registering on the SLT website, starlaketownship.org. This would allow distribution of this newsletter as well as periodic email notices in a more cost efficient and timely manner. *Your email info will not be shared/sold to anyone.*

Please be advised that SLT Board Meetings are open to the public and are often the best way for citizens to communicate their concerns. You are always welcome to attend. Please note, beginning in April 2018 the monthly board meetings will be held on the second TUESDAY of each month, unless otherwise noted (**Meetings currently are held on the 2nd Thursday of each month**). Meetings are held at the Town Hall and begin promptly at 7 PM.

In a few weeks (March 13th), SLT will conduct its annual election followed by the Annual Meeting. Voters will cast their ballots for TWO open Supervisor positions:

- One position is for a standard THREE-year term and,
- The other is for a remaining ONE-year term created by the resignation of a supervisor,

Polls will be open from 5PM-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 2019. **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 13, 2018 - SLT ELECTION & ANNUAL MEETING
VOTING: 5PM to 8PM | ANNUAL MTG: 8:15PM | TOWN HALL

STATUS: SHOOTING STAR RESORT & CASINO PROJECT

Most likely the biggest question remaining on SLT citizens and tax-payer's minds is the status of the proposed Shooting Star Resort & Casino. The following is a copy of our most recent E-Bulletin providing an update to the status of the proposed project.

A response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regarding the status of the proposed Star Lake Resort and Casino has recently come available.

To more thoroughly understand this information, it is important to remember the following:

- **8/22/17** OTC Board of Commissioners determined that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required for a variety of concerns. The developer accepted this decision and no appeal was submitted.

The Star Lake Twp. (SLT) Board is pleased with that decision, as it has long been our position that the size, scope, location, and nature of this project presented a host of potential environmental issues that deserved to be given the most stringent analysis/review. The EIS requirement imposed by Otter Tail County was the necessary next step to allow for this enhanced analysis to occur.

- **9/5/17** OTC Board of Commissioners Provides ESTIMATE OF EIS SCOPING COSTS: An early task in the EIS process was to estimate the costs associated with the scoping process (i.e. identifying the specific issues to be addressed within the EIS). The scoping costs were estimated to be \$29,595. The estimated scoping costs must be paid by the proposer before any EIS scoping work can begin. To date, this has not been done.

The recently obtained FOIA request provides the following relevant information:

- **11/20/17** the USACE notified the WEN tribal attorney advising among other things the following (note: you can view the full letter on our township website):
 - RE: The "Dredge & Fill" permit application, that additional information is required regarding on-site alternatives,
 - That *"By law, the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative is the only alternative which can be permitted by USACE"*.
 - That *"Your project does not require access to, or proximity to, or sitting within a wetland to fulfill its purpose."*
 - That *"If we do not hear from you within 60 days of this letter, we will assume you are no longer interested in obtaining this permit, and we will close our file"*.
-

RESORT & CASINO ... continued

- As of Jan. 19, 2018 the developer had not responded to USACE.
- **11/29/17** the MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) advised the USACE that on 9/22/17 the WEN tribal attorney submitted a letter to MPCA withdrawing the 401-permit application, (this is part of the essential “Dredge & Fill” permit). This permit cannot be completed until the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) decision is completed. MPCA also advised USACE that a “Antidegradation Assessment” will most likely” now be required. MPCA further advised that they would send a letter to the developer advising of such.

TRIBAL CONCERNS: As mentioned in earlier updates, we understand there is on-going discussion among White Earth members and Tribal Council regarding the proposed Star Lake Casino, and many other important issues.

How all the above plays out remains to be seen. It does appear that for now the casino project is at a standstill. We will continue to follow the process, and keep you posted if/when there are significant developments.

ATTENTION PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS!

Parents of high school juniors – do you have a student that is planning on post high school education?? If so, you probably are already thinking about the financial aspects of that. Each year the Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT), of which SLT is a member, awards a \$1,000 scholarship to six high school students competing in its annual essay contest. It’s not a tremendous amount of money, but every little bit counts and more importantly, the experience of competing is a valuable one for a future college/vocation school student.

It sure would be nice to see a Star Lake Township student win one of these. **Congratulations to Ms. Jacey Schlosser of St. Olaf Township right here in Otter Tail County!!** Jacey was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship this past May.

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. Applicants this year must complete an application form and submit it along with a written essay of 450-500 words. This year’s theme is: ***Powering Our Future – Energy to Build on in Your Township.***

Submissions must include a current high school transcript, and a recommendation from a high school teacher/counselor. Submissions must be postmarked 5/1/18, and judging will be completed by 10/1/18. For more information contact the Township Clerk, or any Supervisor.

\$ Scholarship Opportunity \$

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 two such reports, both of which were quickly resolved. Thank you property owners.

If you see what you think may be an infestation please contact:

SLT Supervisor Tammy Ziegler at:
Phone: 701-367-7164, or
Email: sup3@starlaketownship.org

Thank you for your cooperation.

Note: We are pleased to announce that a special presentation will be given at the annual meeting regarding the very destructive and rapidly spreading Palmer Amaranth. This weed generally grows to a height of 6-8 ft., with the female plant producing up to a million seeds each. Once established resulting yield losses are up to 91% in corn, and 79% in soybeans. The potential impact on the agricultural economy can be devastating. Please join us for this very important presentation.



Image: Alan Cressler



Image: University of Illinois

2017 ROAD MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

It was a good year for Star Lake Township (SLT) roadways. We had no road closures and no significant equipment failures. We applied routine gravel to 9.5 miles of road at a cost of about \$18,000.00.

Supervisor Tammy Ziegler led the work in completing what we believe to be the first ever inventory of culverts in the township. A project that has been on the “To Do” list for several years. She identified 45 existing culverts, recorded their specifics, and did a preliminary assessment of future maintenance needs. This year we will undertake the task of “marking” each culvert location, and developing a maintenance plan for those in need of repair.

This was a time-consuming effort but should provide good dividends in developing our plan to improve our roadway drainage issues. In the world of effective gravel road maintenance there are three key elements; DRAINAGE, DRAINAGE, & DRAINAGE. Repair or replacement of culverts is much easier and cheaper to accomplish during the dry season, versus “after” the road has washed out.

Lastly, we completed a drainage improvement project on Beaver Dam Road just north of the intersection with County 35. Landlocked wetlands on both sides of the roadway have been a continuing problem in degrading the roadway and requiring additional gravel/fill each year.

The project involved cleaning the ditch on the west side of the road and installing a center-line culvert to connect the two wetlands. The purpose is to allow the wetland water to flow south under Hwy 35 and eventually into Star Creek. The project was coordinated with Dead Lake Township, Otter Tail County Land & Resource and Highway Departments. Cost of the project was approximately \$4,000.

The 2018 Road Inspection & Report will be conducted in April, at which time we’ll be able to better view road conditions and determine what repairs and maintenance may be needed.

Since the levy increase in 2016 we have made good progress regarding our financial health; closing out 2017 with a reserve fund of about \$105,000, and total cash assets of over \$200,000. More specific financial information will be provided at the annual meeting on March 13th.

This is very important for the township as nearly all of our expenditures on our roads have been remedial in nature – many times just re-fixing what we fixed last year and the year before that, but not really addressing the root causes. Hopefully with improved finances we can move more to road improvement versus just repair, as well as upgrading equipment when appropriate. The Board of Supervisors thanks you for your continued support in this regard.



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.

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/"plant" anything in the right of way!**

If you have a question on this discuss it with any Supervisor or your insurance agent.

TOWNSHIP ROAD MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS

Star Lake Township (SLT) has road maintenance agreements with four neighboring townships. Those affected roadways are: 280th Ave., Skyhawk Drive, Brightwood Shores Drive, Beaver Dam Road north of 380th St., and West Rosewood Drive. Routine maintenance questions regarding these roads should first be addressed with the appropriate township. For more specific information visit starlaketownship.org and consult the “Road Services” tab.

DUST CONTROL POLICY

Residents may obtain a copy of the Dust Control Policy (and related application) by visiting 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, submit your application 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 an application date. The cost of dust control in 2017 was \$.66/linear foot for an 18’ span. At this writing, we will not know if this rate will change, or remain the same.

LANDOWNERS

Are you aware you can generate revenue by allowing public hunting on your private land?? Otter Tail County is included in the MN DNR’s “Walk-In Access Program”.

For “Walk-In Access” program participation, eligible land parcels must be at least 40 acres and be covered by high quality natural vegetation. Landowners are paid by the acre to allow hunting access from Sept. 1 to May 31. Bonuses are paid on parcels that enroll in a three-

year contract, are more than 140 acres, and are located near a state wildlife management area or federal waterfowl production area. Walk-In Access parcels are for public hunting only and no motorized vehicles are allowed.

For more information on this program contact the East Otter Tail SWCD at 218-346-4260 or go to www.mndnr.gov/walkin.

(Photo credit: MN DNR)



STAR LAKE TOWNSHIP BOARD/STAFF

The SLT Board is comprised of three Supervisors, a Clerk, and a Treasurer. (See back page of this newsletter for individual contact information.)

The current township staff is as follows:

Ray Harthun:	General Maintenance & Brushing Operations.
Terry Johnson:	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
Town Clerk:	Jeff Michaelson

The Supervisors would like to thank each of our staff for their excellent work during 2017 and are pleased to report no accidents and no injuries.

Township Supervisor Resignation. In July we regretfully accepted Ron Peterson's resignation as Supervisor. Due to a change in personal circumstances Ron changed his personal residence to Fergus Falls and therefore could no longer serve as a Star Lake Township supervisor. We are very thankful for Ron's dedicated service and we wish him well in all his future endeavors.

We were very fortunate to have **Keith Aune** agree to assume the role vacated by Ron Peterson. Keith is a former Star Lake Township Supervisor and Board Chair, as well as a successful businessman and manager; and good friend. **Welcome back Keith!**

Because Keith was "appointed" to replace Ron, it is necessary to have him stand for election to serve out the remaining one-year term of that Supervisor position. Therefore, you will see his name on the ballot at next month's township election.

TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENTS

In our continuing efforts to improve/maintain the condition of the town hall buildings & property the following were accomplished in 2017:

1. One window was repaired,
2. The back-garage building was extended 15 feet to more safely accommodate the motor grader with V-Plow, and to provide additional covered storage space for treated sand for winter sanding operations.
3. A well was installed to provide on-site water for equipment maintenance.
4. A significant amount of tree damage was caused by the 6/14/17 storm and several trees had to be removed from the property.

The following items are planned for 2018 & beyond, depending upon finances:

1. Replace siding on townhall (within 3-5 yrs),
2. Pour concrete pad for treated sand storage & loading area,

DO YOU WANT TO DANCE?

Well, you may just have that opportunity come June 9th.

Some local artists have applied for a MN grant to conduct several local events featuring old time music and square dancing for the enjoyment of local citizens.

The first of several such events in Otter Tail County this summer is tentatively scheduled for June 9, 2018 at the Star Lake Town Hall.

Mark your calendars now and come join the fun! More details will be announced as the time draws nearer.





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: Keith Aune (2017-2019)

218-457-0520 email: sup1@starlaketownship.org

Supervisor: Tammy Ziegler (2017-2020)

701-367-7164 email: sup3@starlaketownship.org

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

612-210-6144 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 13, 2018 (8:15 PM)

- Meeting Call to Order
- Election of Moderator
- Read Agenda for Meeting
- Read Minutes of 2017 Meeting
- Read Financial Reports
- Board of Audit (Election)
- Hospital District Report
- Supervisor Comments
- Annual Levy Recommendation
- Motion for Board to expend up to \$1000 for social, health & recreational services
- EOTSWCD Presentation – New noxious weed in MN
- Other Business – Set time/place for next annual mtg
- Motion to Adjourn



*** BE SURE TO VOTE TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 2018 ***

Voting Hours: 5PM—8PM at Star Lake Town Hall

31030 380TH Street, Dent, MN
