
Florence Township

www.florencetwp.org • florencetwp1@yahoo.com

Goodhue County, MN • 2017 Annual Newsletter • March 2017

PO Box 97 • Frontenac, MN 55026

Your Township Government:

Florence Township is governed by five elected officials

Your Current Board is:

Mike Blair, *Chair*
mjblair3@embarqmail.com

Joe Ellingson, *Supervisor*
jellingson31@kmwb.com

Jim McIlrath, *Supervisor*
jimmcilrath@embarqmail.com

Sue Eisenmenger, *Clerk*
smeisen@pressenter.com

Tom Gnotke, *Treasurer*
gnotke@embarqmail.com

AGENDA

The annual meeting is at 8:00P, Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at Township Hall.

1. Call the meeting to Order
 - a. Declare the election closed
2. Elect a Moderator to conduct the Annual Meeting
3. Pledge to the Flag
4. Read the minutes of the 2016 Annual Meeting
5. Committee Reports:
 - Friends of Town Hall
 - Planning Commission
 - Parks Commission
 - Heritage Preservation
6. Present the Audit report for 2016
7. Present the proposed budget for 2018
8. Public comments and discussion
9. Announce the election results
10. Establish the time and date of the 2018 Annual Meeting
11. Adjourn meeting



This newsletter is being distributed to the residents of Florence Township in order to inform and prepare them for the Annual Meeting to be held Tuesday, March 14, 2017 at 8:00P at the Florence Township Hall. At the Annual Meeting you have the opportunity to express your views and help determine your taxes

***The election will be held
Tuesday, March 14, 2017
at the Florence Township Hall.
The polls will be open from 4:00P until 8:00P.
The Annual Meeting will follow.
In case of inclement weather,
the meeting will be held
Tuesday, March 21.***

Two Positions are up for election this year:

- Supervisor for a three year term
- Clerk for a two year term

Candidates that have filed:

- Supervisor: Joe Ellingson
- Clerk: Tom Gnotke



Building Permit Procedures

A building permit is required for all new construction and most remodeling. To determine if you need a permit, call the County Zoning and Land Use Management Office at 651-385-3104. All building permits need to be approved by the Florence Township Planning Commission. They meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at 6PM. If you live in Old Frontenac you must also receive approval

from the Heritage Commission. They meet on the 2nd Tuesday at 6PM. The final approval is received by calling Sue Eisenmenger at 651-388-0097 to get on the town board agenda for their approval. The town board meets on the 3rd Monday at 6PM. Permit applications are found on the township website.

Goodhue District 4 County Commissioner Report

By Jason Majerus
Goodhue County Commissioner
What's new in Goodhue County

Roads, one of the main functions of the county still continue to be underfunded. The county continues to contribute the same amount on a yearly basis with hopes that the state will increase its funding level. While it would take many millions of dollars to get the county highway system to the level many of us would find ideal, county staff does a very good job of identifying the projects that are most in need throughout the county. County roads 2 and 5 received makeovers around the Lake City area, with

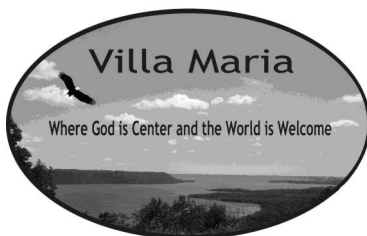
the remaining portion of County 5 into Lake City being finished this year. County 6 from Goodhue to Zumbrota was completed and is now a concrete driving surface with paved shoulders. As some of you may have heard, there was an adventurous individual that drove around the barricades, and decided to drive on the fresh concrete that was poured. Repairs were made to the damaged sections, and new cement was poured in sections that could not be repaired. It was supposedly a white Ford Focus, so if anyone has seen such a car with a nice concrete undercoating, let me know. The county levy went up just under 7% or about 2 million dollars. To the average taxpayer, if your assessed value did not change at all, you will not see a change in the amount levied by the county. I did not support the

levy increase. We can do better, and until I am fully convinced that every tax dollar is being spent wisely and in the best interest of the Goodhue County residents, I cannot see myself supporting any increase in the levy. The County has purchased parcels of property adjacent to the Health and Human Services building. The lots will be used for parking and any future expansion of the HHS building. The County/City owned landfill is still a topic of discussion. A solid waste plan was approved by the county and the state, but there are a few more issues that need to be worked out with the city and local garbage haulers before the state will approve taking over control of the landfill.

If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to contact me.

*Thank you to all the
volunteers who make our
township work so efficiently.
We couldn't do it without
YOU!*

Villa Friends and Neighbors



We wanted to share with you some updates concerning Villa Maria Retreat and Conference Center.

The Leadership Team of the Ursuline Community for Central province, made the decision to move the gravesites from the Villa Cemetery to St. Mary's Cemetery in Lake City where there would be perpetual care of the graves. We are grateful to St. Mary's Parish Cemetery Board for working with us and offering space in the cemetery in Lake City. We are happy to share that this project is now com-

plete and all the graves have been moved. We can assure you that the transfer was done with utmost care and respect.

Currently there are temporary markers on the gravesites and permanent markers that will be set in the spring as weather permits. We also plan to have a blessing ceremony of the gravesites later in the spring and we will keep you informed of the pending date.

We would also like share with you that a prospective buyer for the Villa, Commonwealth, Inc., from the twin cities has entered into an agreement with us to purchase the property. At this time the buyer is in the due diligence period where studies and surveys are conducted on the property. Hopefully all will go well and the closing can

happen in late spring. Continue to keep this in your prayers and may the future use of the building and land continue to bring peace and joy to the lives of many.

Let us all be grateful for the many blessings God has bestowed on us through Villa Maria. May God bless each of you and your family.

Sr. Rita Ann and *the Ursuline
Leadership Team*



Florence Township of Supervisors 2016 Review

Accomplishments

Road & Streets: 305th-306th streets and cul de sacs were paved by Heritage Acres Development Inc.. The Township paved the remaining 810' to join the new and old paved segments at a cost of \$25,000. This will reduce the costs of grading, plowing and dust control in the future. It will make the area more attractive for new home builders. The Township also partially repaved Staehli Park Road and 325th St. The gravel pit on 305th street has been closed and is under reclamation. Several culverts in the Township were either repaired or replaced due to heavy use and heavy rains. We are working with Goodhue County Land Use Management on protection of our roads from heavy truck use in and out of rock quarries, sand pits, and businesses by requiring Conditional Use Permits (C.U.P's) and bond postings.

Financial Management: The financial management and cost control are exceptional!! This allows the Township to take advantage of lower costs for repairs & improvements, unscheduled or budgeted. Weather still remains the unknown factor and our largest expense which is road maintenance.

Legal Matters: The Steamboat Landing legal challenge was awarded to Florence Township. It is now being registered to the Township after a year (plus) legal battle at the Goodhue County Court, Minnesota State Court of Appeals, and Minnesota Supreme Court. Suggestions for its use will be open for discussion at the Annual Meeting.

Local Clean Up: We are also working with Goodhue County on enforcing County and Florence Township ordinances on maintaining reasonable appearance and repair of their properties. No one wants a junkyard or two feet of grass next door. Common sense and respect for neighbors says that unmaintained property looks ugly and devalues all property in the area. The Township and the county have and will send out notices for compliance. The County will be the enforcement when necessary.

New Proposed Projects:

- * An Olympic class ski jump on Mt. Frontenac at the down-hill ski area. No permit application has been submitted to date.
- * Villa Maria to be restored and converted into a 5 Star hotel and restaurant. No permit application has been submitted to date.
- * SolarStone Inc. has applied for a permit to build a 35 acre solar

energy garden on Territorial Road at the location south of the Sportsman's Club on the Mathy gravel pit property. The permit is issued with a conditional addendum now controlled by Goodhue County.

Volunteers Needed:

The Parks, Planning, Heritage Commissions and Friends of the Town Hall are all at a very low ebb of membership. At our annual budget meeting, we are going to ask for an increase for the governing bodies that will this time include a stipend for Planning Commission members. The last time this was done has been over 10 years and is still a question mark. No one we have spoken with can give a definitive answer. People willing to work in local government is nationally at an all-time low. Some small cities are without mayors, clerks etc.. We would like to stay ahead of this trend and try to attract and encourage people (especially young people) to be active in Florence Township. We are inviting suggestions, ideas, and success models. Please attend the Annual meeting on March 14th, 2017 **vote** first, and remain at 8:00 to share your thoughts.

Jim McIlrath, Board Supervisor

Planning Commission

2016 has been a busy year for the Planning Commission. Home building has picked up this year, and as a result, we've had several permit applications for new homes along with home additions, garages, and outbuildings.

We welcome all new and future new residents to Florence Township and appreciate our current residents.

We've also been approached by The Friends of American Ski Jumping Association for the possible construction of an Olympic size ski jump at Mt. Frontenac and



a destination recreation center. We held a public meeting for feedback, which was very positive. Solar gardens have also appeared on our agenda this year. We updated our website this last year, and gave it a new look and posted some helpful information on it to assist you in your needs. We are always open for feedback on any other website information that you may like to see posted.

We appreciate all the work the Board of Supervisors has done on getting clean up done around the township. Such a beautiful area

deserves to look its best for everyone concerned.

We are always in need of additional Planning Commissioners, so if you would like to help serve your community, please submit a letter to our township clerk. The list of duties is posted on our website, so please take a look and consider joining. Feel free to attend one of our meetings, held on the second Monday of the month and sit in on our activities.

We wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous 2017.

Friends of the Florence Town Hall

In keeping with Township Comprehensive Plan, established in 2003, Friends of the Florence Town Hall continue to explore and share Florence Township's rich history.

Historic maps were acquired the past year and have been valuable tools at programs presented at two History Fairs in 2016. Maps available to view are: 1853 (before statehood), 1857, 1866 Goodhue County, 1874 State plat book. If you would like to view these come to a Friends' meeting and/or attend next History Fair.

Well attended History Fair programs in 2016 were presented by Lisa Hanni from Goodhue County Land Use Management on the first survey of Florence Township in 1853. James Clinton from Goodhue County Historical Society presented Central Point, Florence Township's Ghost town.

Friends have been successful with the ongoing effort to fund the purchase of additional display pages for the stand in the Town Hall. Grants, memorial gifts, and donations by many are "Making History Happen." A grant recently received from The Greater Lake City Area Community Foundation (GLCCF) has allowed us to place the order and pay cash. The GLCCF grant came with the acknowledgement "the wonderful work your group does researching ... and supporting the history of the area is a true benefit to our region. Keep up the good work."

In the near future Florence Township Neighborhoods will be on the display stand. You too can "Make History Happen" by sharing your neighborhood history.

Thank you to the Florence Township Heritage Commission and Board of Supervisors for your ongoing research, contractor interviews and time spent preparing for the Town Hall exterior work. Join Friends of the Florence Town Hall the second Sat. of each month at 10:00 a.m. If gardening is your interest, help maintain the Florence Strupe Memorial Garden. Two rose bushes were added in 2016 in memory of Evelyn Kiester.

Everyone is invited to the Spring History Fair, April 22 1-4 p.m., at the Town Hall, program to be announced.

Our Town Hall is 142 years old and continuing to serve as the government center of Florence Township.

Virginia Oliver, *Friends of the Florence Town Hall*



Erected 1875

Park Commission

This past year has been a busy one for the Parks Commission. We replaced boards and painted picnic tables at all the park sites. We continue to work on Valhalla Park, trimming trees and removing buckthorn. This year we are focusing on cleaning up the debris at the beach, and refreshing the deck on the dock. The use of the Steamboat Landing property will be discussed at the Annual Meeting



Florence Township Community Center

For Information and to Schedule an Event contact

*Robin Mesenburg
651-388-6666*



Florence Township Historic Preservation Commission

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is a board created by and appointed by the Florence Township Board of Supervisors to encourage restoration, preservation and conservation of historic properties in the township.

The Florence Town Hall and the Old Frontenac Historic District are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a program administered by the National Park Service. The Florence Town Hall is the oldest continuously used

Town Hall in the state. The HPC takes part in maintaining the Town Hall and some public property within the Historic District. The HPC also has the authority to make recommendations to the Florence Town Board regarding the issuance of building permits for properties within the Historic District.

As with the previous year, the main focus of the HPC has been the restoration of the exterior of the Florence Town Hall. The south and west sides of the

building are in need of painting, or residing.

The HPC meets the second Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Florence Town Hall. Commission members are Bill Bruce, Clay Ruggles, and Cathy Kouchich and the Town Board representative, Mike Blair.



Florence Township Budget History

	Actual Figures				Budgetary Figures			
	2014	2015	2016	Proposed 2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
General Fund								
Salaries & Education	\$15,291	\$14,943	\$14,780	\$17,500	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Town Hall	10,147	2,640	2,952	3,250	3,450	3,050	3,000	3,000
Town Hall Improvements	14,430	0	0	15,000	15,000	15,000	8,000	8,000
Parks	8,584	6,795	10,579	10,345	7,615	8,700	12,000	10,000
Park Improvements	0	8,220	0	5,000	5,000	5,000	13,000	5,000
Community Center (Net)	2,756	125	241	1,400	1,100	1,800	1,500	2,000
Planning	10	0	845	500	0	1,000	2,500	2,500
Heritage	0	0	0	0	0	500	500	1,000
General Government	30,690	1,927	35,119	29,675	31,525	34,035	17,000	18,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>81,908</i>	<i>84,650</i>	<i>64,516</i>	<i>82,670</i>	<i>79,690</i>	<i>85,085</i>	<i>73,500</i>	<i>65,500</i>
Road & Bridge Fund								
Road Grading & Repair	30,217	42,066	71,178	45,000	40,000	40,000	45,000	50,000
Snowplowing	66,321	28,242	33,963	50,000	60,000	65,000	50,000	48,000
Rock/Gravel	22,493	31,540	31,910	35,000	35,000	30,000	35,000	23,000
Blacktop	54,000	0	108,052	100,000	75,000	75,000	50,000	30,000
Chloride	5,084	7,350	4,350	5,000	5,000	5,000	8,000	5,000
Brushing	2,634	14,516	6,774	6,000	8,000	5,000	5,000	3,000
Special Proejcts & Reserve	53,653	16,273	30,473	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Federal Sign Reflectivity Pr	1,439	738	1,247	1,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Road Ditch Mowing	2,940	2,940	3,815	4,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Street Lighting	691	576	517	600	700	800	800	750
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>239,472</i>	<i>144,241</i>	<i>292,279</i>	<i>276,600</i>	<i>258,700</i>	<i>255,800</i>	<i>228,800</i>	<i>194,750</i>
Gas & Gravel Tax Revenue	(33,651)	(40,463)	(37,829)	(38,500)	(35,000)	(30,000)	(28,000)	(28,000)
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>205,821</i>	<i>103,778</i>	<i>254,450</i>	<i>238,100</i>	<i>223,700</i>	<i>225,800</i>	<i>200,800</i>	<i>166,750</i>
Emergency Services Fund								
Fire contract	23,370	25,493	24,479	20,000	21,500	31,500	25,000	22,000
Ambulance Contract	6,384	9,460	0	0	0	9,000	13,000	13,000
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>29,754</i>	<i>34,953</i>	<i>24,479</i>	<i>20,000</i>	<i>21,500</i>	<i>40,500</i>	<i>35,000</i>	<i>35,000</i>
TOTAL	\$317,483	\$223,381	\$343,445	\$340,770	\$324,890	\$351,385	\$312,300	\$267,250



Florence Township
PO Box 97
Frontenac, MN 55026

Frontenac State Park Update

In 2016 Frontenac had 138,510 visitors in the park, 18,963 of which were overnight guests. This is up about 5% over 2015. All campsites in the park were reservable last season and that transition has gone fairly well. The park attracts many new users to parks and trails and they are always shocked how beautiful the bluff lands are. Several eagles nest are active, which is always nice to see nesting pairs in the park.

Skiing this winter has been hit or miss. A few times the trails were in really good condition, but all the January rain made skiing and grooming a challenge. Conditions were pretty good for the candlelight event on January 14th, and we estimate 350 visitors attended which is a record.

For resource management in 2016, we successfully burned 505

acres and will be looking to burn another 600-700 acres in 2017. Japanese barberry was found in the park this last year and we have added the removal and treatment of barberry to our management plans. Buckthorn continues to be a focal point of our removal efforts, along with black locust, parsnip, and garlic mustard. In 2016 year we had a 2 day whitetail deer hunt in the park instead of 3 days. The harvest was 33 deer, which was near the target number. We continue to see increased oak regeneration with the current deer population. Deer target oak seedlings in winter months making oak regeneration extremely difficult if the area is overpopulated. We would like to add more tree cages in 2017 to oak seedlings to help them get out of

the reach of deer browse.

Volunteers continue to play a critical role in visitor services and resource management. We had around 2000 volunteer hours in 2016 which is extremely valuable to the success of the park.

The Mississippi Bluffland trail plan was completed in 2016. There has been no word of movement or funding associated with the trail, but the plan has been finalized. The legislative language states that the trail is to go through a portion of Frontenac State Park, if it is ever developed.

Feel free to stop in the park office or call us at 651-345-3401. The next events we will have are a few birding hikes in May so stop on in to get more details as spring arrives.

Caleb Jensen, *Park Manager*