

Bridgewater Township Newsletter

November 2018

Storm Cleanup

The cleanup from the storm on Thursday, September 20, began that evening and continued over the following 2 weeks. The Township spent \$403,956 on debris removal. Some work clearing stumps from the right-of-way will continue for the next month or so. It appears that the State will make an emergency declaration which will enable the Township to recover a portion of the amount spent on debris removal. Once the reimbursement amount is known the Township may make assessments on properties where debris originally on private property was placed in the right-of-way. If assessments are made, property owners will be notified and a public hearing will be held prior to assessment being recorded with Rice County.

Long-Term Planning

For a number of reasons, the Town Board is considering changing the governance model of the Township. Our annexation agreement with Northfield expires at the end of 2019. It has served us well since signed in 1999. In July, the Board formally requested the Northfield City Council to inform us if they are interested in negotiating a new agreement. We have not received a response. We think that having no agreement is not acceptable. Beyond that, members of the Board have been approached by residents and developers interested in building small housing clusters on land unsuitable for farming. Currently, Rice County limits the size of a cluster to 11 homes which restricts the Township to that number or less. We have also been approached with regard to limited industrial development in some areas which are marginal for farming. Again, the Township is limited in what it can do by Rice County zoning rules.

For these reasons, the Board has discussed ways to gain greater control over how the Township develops in the future. How can we protect the agricultural economy and the rural character of the Township while continuing to provide essential services and not drive taxes ever higher? If we are able to broaden the Township's tax base while delivering essentially the same services we do now, it means that the Township taxes for each individual or business will decrease.

It appears that the most practical path to take is to incorporate the Township. In other words, become a small city. This fixes our boundaries so that they can only be changed with our consent. It gives us control over zoning and development. We are in the process of determining if incorporation is really feasible. As part of this process, we will hold a series of Township Meetings in early 2019 to get opinions

and questions. We have engaged a firm, Northland Securities, to give us a neutral party's assessment of whether this makes sense. Their report will be available in late December.

Tentative schedule for Township Meetings on incorporation:

1. January 16, Wednesday, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
2. February 2, Saturday, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
3. February 7, Thursday, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
4. February 16, Saturday, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM
5. February 26, Wednesday, 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
6. March 2, Saturday, 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Meeting dates may change. They will be posted on the web site (www.bridgewaterwp.org) and at the Town Hall or you may call the Clerk, Frances Boehning to confirm. If you would like to be notified of upcoming meetings by email, send a note to clerk@bridgewaterwp.org.

Noxious Weeds

Bridgewater Township purchased a used JD Gator Golf Course Sprayer this past year. This allowed the Township better control over scheduling the timing of spraying Wild Parsnips to achieve the best results. Steve Albers agreed to be our dedicated operator of this sprayer and did an excellent job of spraying all of the areas mapped by 30+ volunteers that surveyed the township roads. The Bridgewater Township Road Superintendent, Mike Groth, developed a very effective mowing timetable that was a crucial part of the Wild Parsnip curtailment plan. In addition to Wild Parsnip, other noxious weeds including thistle were also targeted.

Township Residents were offered a “Do Not Spray” sign for \$5. This sign was to be posted in the right-of-way if they did not want the area sprayed due to plantings or pollinator plants. An agreement was signed with these residents that they would eliminate any noxious weeds by hand to prevent future infestations in these areas.

Bridgewater Township has a legal obligation and the authority to control all of the right-of-way from unwanted growth of noxious plants. Our mission is to ensure that this is done annually. Many people volunteered a huge amount of time and effort to make this a great start to diminishing the spread of Wild Parsnip and other noxious weeds. We encourage all governmental bodies and the private sector to work together to reduce the explosive advance of all unwanted plant species.

Snow Removal

We would like to remind Bridgewater Township residents that it is unlawful to deposit snow onto public roadways or to push snow across public roadways per Minnesota Statute 160.2715. Snow deposited or

pushed onto the road can create hazards to the public and future snow removal operations. Citizens that violate this statute could face misdemeanor and/or civil penalties if the snow creates a hazard that contributes to an accident. The Township snow removal/sanding trucks will be out as soon as possible following a 2" snow event. The Township is not responsible for any damage resulting from snow thrown in the road right-of-way.

Permits

Permits for remodeling and new building are required in the township. Permits are available online at our website: bridgewatertp.org. Planning and Zoning questions can be answered by calling Jim Braun, Zoning Administrator, at 1-800-851-3383. For Septic permits and inspections, please contact Darrel Gilmer at Cell: 651-775-6118 Email: dgilmerexc@yahoo.com.

Bridgewater Township Board

Supervisors:

Email: board@bridgewatertp.org

Gary Ebling

John Holden

Glen Castore

Road Superintendent:

Mike Groth (507-301-2984)

Treasurer:

Brad Pfahning

Zoning Administrator:

Jim Braun (763-389-3487)

Clerk:

Frances Boehning

Email: clerk@bridgewatertp.org

Website

Bridgewater Township does have a website: bridgewatertp.org. The website contains contact information, emergency information under "Alerts", building and planning information, and copies of past meeting minutes along with other topics.

Meetings

The Bridgewater Township Board of Supervisors meets on the second Wednesday monthly at 7:00 pm in the Bridgewater Town Hall at 500 Railway Street, Dundas. The Bridgewater Planning and Zoning Commission meets on the last Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm in the Bridgewater Town Hall. These meetings are open to the public. Any additional meetings will be posted on the bulletin board at the town hall.