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ST JAMES TOWNSHIP

PRESS RELEASE

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TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL MARINA GARAGE SALE

On Saturday August 15, 2020 from 9am to 3pm there will be a garage sale at the Municipal Marina North (formerly Anderson's Marina). Items for sale are from the former Anderson Marina Ship Store are mostly nautical items, but includes many miscellaneous items too, like sparkplugs, beach chairs, even an old refrigerator and drinking fountain. There are no early sales, cash only, please have correct change; all items priced by the dollar amount. Enter the pole barn building at the rear entrance.

TOWNSHIP MARINA UPDATE

Summer 2020 has proven to be a challenge for marina operations at the township's marina. Acquisition by gift of a new marina, near historic high-water level taking out power to both sets of docks, and COVID19 restrictions delaying the start of the season have been challenging to say the least. The marina staff and township board have met the challenges and met the needs of the seasonal and transient boating public despite the challenges.

Perhaps most noticeable to the general public is the work that has been completed at the Municipal Marina North, formerly Anderson's Marina, which was so generously donated to the township in October 2019 by John Woollam and the JA Woollam Foundation. Included with the donation of property was a significant financial and personnel commitment to certain necessary improvements at the aging marina.

Since spring 2020, much work has been completed by the Woollam Foundation's capable project manager, Lowell Eastman, and crew. Docks at north marina have been raised, customer dock access ramps rebuilt, dock waterlines repaired and the steel on the pole barn has been replaced. Upcoming work at the Marina North includes repair of the deteriorating fuel pier, replacement of the marine fuel dispensing system and safety upgrades at the launch site. Other improvements at the north dock will include converting the lakeside property into more of a public space and

providing parking across the street. Funding for these projects has come from the JAW Foundation and township grants received from Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and the MI DNR Waterways Commission Grant Program.

The Waterways Commission Grant Program also approved emergency funding for an electrical upgrade at the Marina South; the township provided minimal matching dollars for this grant. The South Marina electrical system is built below the docks and is currently unsafe to use because of the high-water level. The approved plan calls for the system to be rebuilt above dock level and with state-of-the-art electrical grounding equipment. This project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2020.

Staffing at the marinas this summer was under the capable hands of harbormaster Marlene Wisner. Her experience and that of facilities maintenance assistant Joe Johnson and dock assistants Tom Reynolds, Ed Rogers and Erin Wisner led to many small improvements at both the north and south docks and that our summer visitors were made welcome. Even with the challenges of the summer, seasonal and transient traffic remain strong. The township is looking forward to having all marina systems more than ready to run in '21!

TOWNSHIP CAMPGROUND UPDATE

The St James Township Campground Improvement project has been on hold as the bid packet is awaiting approval from state, slower than anticipated due to covid19 work changes at state level. There are two construction projects at the St. James Township Campground on the north shore of the Island. The first project includes clearing and excavation, site prep and grading for a bathhouse/shower facility, sewer system and water system; it is hoped this can be completed in late fall 2020 with site prep and grading at five new camp sites to be completed in early spring 2021. The second project includes the actual construction of a bathhouse facility, sewer system and water system, limited concrete sidewalks, bike path and ADA walk, graveled drive, parking area and foot paths; it is hoped this work can begin in late fall 2020 and completed before the camping season 2021.

This project is funded by a MI DNR Recreation Passport Grant with township matching funds. Performance Engineer, Inc. of Charlevoix is the Prime Professional overseeing the project; they will release the bid packet as soon as the state of Michigan approves it. Any contractor who may be interested in the project can contact Aaron Nordman at Performance Engineers, Inc. or Supervisor Kathleen McNamara to get more information about the project and request to view the plans.

ST JAMES TOWNSHIP SEEKING MEMBERS FOR PLANNING COMMISSION

According to current Planning Commission Chairperson, Patrick McGinnity:

Have you ever thought, “somebody should really do something about that?” Well those “somebodies” are your friends and neighbors! An active citizenry is absolutely vital to any small town. Residents of St. James Township have many opportunities to serve their community and to participate in decision making and implementation. One way you can contribute to helping our Township become the best it can be is by serving as a member of the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission is an appointed body that advises the Township Board on planning matters and provides community leadership on local planning and development policy. It has the responsibility to regularly update the Master Plan, which guides the regulations and standards in the zoning ordinance and any future changes to it. Commissioners are responsible for ensuring that any new development fits the community’s vision for a given site, with help from professional staff or consultants. The Commission oversees approval of site plans, and considers special use applications

Planning Commission meetings provide the main forum for discussion of changes to the zoning ordinance text and map. Changes can be proposed by property owners, the general public, or the Planning Commission itself, which holds a public hearing before ultimately issuing a recommendation to the Township Board.

St James Township is seeking three new members for its Planning Commission, to bring the commission to seven members rather than five. Current commission members include Patrick McGinnity, Robert Tidmore, Beth Croswhite and Paul Cole. Adam Anderson served on the commission for many years and will be missed as the work of the commission moves forward. It is the hope of the township that the work of the planning commission continues to evolve into a stronger planning and advisory role to help shape the future of the Island and support the needs of the residents. The township is seeking funding to align/update zoning ordinance to match master plan and is seeking to hire (as funds permit) a part time planning assistant to support the work of the commission.

Interested St James Township residents should contact supervisor Kathleen McNamara for more information and to submit a letter of interest.