

**Minutes of the Fairground Enhancement Grant Subcommittee Meeting
Of the Arenac County Board of Commissioners
Thursday, January 25th, 2024 at 6:00 P.M.**

Attendance:

Present: Woolhiser, Mrozinski, Daniels, Smith, Coughlin, Stawowy, Meihls (6:19)
(non-voting) Hazeltine
Absent: None
Guests: None

Meeting called to order at 6:00 P.M.
Roll Call taken.

New Business:

Nominations for chair and secretary. Sally Mrozinski nominated Leona Daniels as Chair of the subcommittee, seconded by Harold Woolhiser. Three calls for additional nominations. No other nominations were received. Unanimous ballot cast for Leona Daniels. Leona Daniels elected chair. Harold Woolhiser suggested Austin Hazeltine serve as secretary for the committee. Dennis Stawowy noted that Hazeltine is not a member of the committee and nominated Sally Mrozinski as secretary, seconded by Leona Daniels. Three calls for additional nominations. No other nominations received. Unanimous ballot cast for Sally Mrozinski. Sally Mrozinski elected secretary. Austin Hazeltine shall act as support staff to Mrozinski.

No public comment.

Motion: To approve agenda as presented. Motioned by Stawowy, seconded by Coughlin. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion: To approve minutes of December 14, 2023 meeting. Motioned by Woolhiser, seconded by Mrozinski. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of Michigan Department of Rural Development (MDARD) County Fair Capital Improvement Grant, the amount, qualifications, and eligibility. Discussion of the current fairboard lease. Grant requirement of five-year lease has been met. Leona Daniels mentioned that the fair was incorporated as an Act 80 fair. The Arenac County Agricultural Society must have a fair board, voting officers, etc. Must abide by the guidelines in Act 80. Continued discussion of MDARD grant. Harold Woolhiser noted that we must be careful to spend the \$2.8 million fairground enhancement grant on county-owned property. Discussion of the history of liability insurance for the fair. The local Ag. society can apply for the MDARD grant. Discussion of lease history, cooperation between the Board of Commissioners and the fair board, there are three acres owned by the Ag. society at the fairgrounds. Discussion of a mutually agreed upon calendar – whether the Ag society should be offered the first right of refusal for event dates. Discussion of offering at least a five-year lease.

Discussion of the preference to own the three acres owned by the Ag. society. Discussion of the calendar for events, that it should be scheduled by a set date every year. with a covenant in

the deed for ownership to revert to the Ag. society if the property is no longer wanted by the County. The Miller property purchase is nearly completed. The offer has been accepted, check received, and deed is being recorded at the Register of deeds. Discussion of scrap left on the property. Martin Coughlin will take a picture of the scrap and send to tractor club to see if there is interest in the scrap tractor. Discussion of potential liability concerns. Dennis Stawowy to provide release of liability forms. Discussion of potential offer to purchase the Ag. parcel. Discussion of the potential MDARD grant budget, for public safety (potential goal), and lighting, fencing, sound systems, public health and restrooms. Discussion of grant requirements to build a campground bath house. Discussion of complexity of managing the property. Discussion of bath house plans and design for the grant application.

Motion: To offer the Arenac County Agricultural Society up to \$50,000 for the property on Johnsfield Rd and negotiate an agreement with language allowing guaranteed future use by the Ag. society and if the County no longer wants the property, the property would revert back to ownership by the Ag society. Motioned by Stawowy, seconded by Meihls, motion carried unanimously.

Dan Meihls Jr. sent proposed plans to Nathan Smith for the grant. Discussion of the drainage information for the property. Woolhiser noted that Chris Gwisdala and Drain Commissioner Larry Davis may be available to provide guidance at the next meeting. Stawowy mentioned the property is in the city limits and inquired if it is connected to the city's storm drains. It is not. It was mentioned that there is a tank installed on the property for the wash bay. Roughly \$1,000 per acre for tiling, a preliminary estimate for the property would be \$30,000. Discussion of layout, project timeline, and alumni booth relocation. Discussion of how many campsites could fit on three acres, roughly thirty-eight (38) sites. Discussion of size needed for the horse arena, preferably a minimum size of 104 x 200 feet. Some of the buildings currently on the fairgrounds could be repurposed as part of the development project. Discussion of fencing pricing and material cost for fencing the fairgrounds. Meihls mentioned fencing is roughly \$17 per foot. Committee estimated the fencing material cost as roughly \$20,000. Discussion of bath house placement, indoor/outdoor access of event center bathrooms. Maintenance of the grounds and facilities was discussed. It was noted that more gravel and hard surfaces translate to more water mitigation. Discussion of potential farmers market at the fairgrounds. Daniels asked to talk about what vision has been crafted by the committee to the Arenac EDC, it was agreed that it is appropriate.

Motion: To adjourn. Motioned by Mrozinski, seconded by Stawowy, motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22 P.M.
Next meeting February 1st, 6:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
J. Austin Hazeltine
County Coordinator
County of Arenac