

September 12, 2005

On the above date the Incorporation Committee held another Information Meeting to give residents the opportunity to review and ask questions regarding the possibility of New Scandia Township incorporating. The following Incorporation Committee Members were present: Lee Sandager, Bill Havener, Kevin Nickelson, Peter Schwarz, LaVayne Dupslaff, Michael Harnetty, Christine Olson and Blair Joselyn. The following members were absent: David Hebert and Bruce Swenson.

Blair Joselyn informed the citizens that this meeting will give the residents the opportunity to speak and the Incorporation Committee will answer their questions. He also stated that a Public Hearing will be held on September 20, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. and the Town Board will also give the citizens the opportunity to speak at the hearing.

Jeff Peterson-12628 182nd Street

Mr. Peterson asked what the statutory reason is to Incorporate at this time. Michael Harnetty stated that there is no reason to Incorporate at this time, but we must look into the future for this community. He stated that New Scandia Township growth is not slowing down and the larger the community it is better to manage as a city. Mr. Peterson felt that we would lose our sense of rural community if we became a city. Mr. Schwarz felt that we believe we can maintain a rural community when annexation would start it is to late for Incorporation. The question of rezoning of commercial property was asked and Lee Sandager stated that particular issue was never discussed by the Incorporation Committee. Mr. Joselyn informed the residents that Grant Township stated the reason they incorporated was to remain rural and keep the 10-acre density.

Carol Dunn-23020-Manning Trail

Ms. Dunn expressed her concern regarding an increase in taxes with incorporation and the loss of funding from Washington County for Township roads. Ms. Dunn was informed that the \$25,000 was not significant and the increase of State funding could be made up in one year after we reach the population of 5,000.

Bruce McConoughey-19450 Parkview Lane

Mr. McConoughey questioned how the City would be operated, will there be a Town Manager, Mayor, Council and the cost issue of new government. There would be a Mayor and four Council Members, and there could be a combined Clerk/Administrator or a Clerk, Treasurer and an Administrator.

John McKinnon-22513 Nolan Avenue

Mr. McKinnon questioned the traffic situation on Manning and Highway 97. Peter Schwarz who represents New Scandia Township on the Task Force for Highway 97 stated at this time there are no plans for Highway 97 from Highway 95 to Manning Trail. The signals for intersections would be MNDOT Funding.

Larry Engstrom-14040 185th Street

Mr. Engstrom questioned if there would be an ordinance regulating hunting on property with incorporation. This would not change with incorporation.

Ernie Kertzsch-21350 Olinda Trail

Mr. Kertzsch questioned the report regarding the funding with incorporation. Mr. Joselyn stated the financial consulting firm would do a second phase financial review that would be much more in depth than the first phase of the report. Mr. Kertzsch also was concerned that someday the open space in plats would be subdivided.

John Lindell-11240 218th Street

Mr. Lindell questioned tax refunds from Washington County and losing the \$25,000 per year for the roads and population growth. He was informed who knows what it will be in 10 to 15 years. Mr. Harnetty stated he felt the population growth would be 5,000 in 5 years. Mr. Lindell questioned losing the county planning assistance of \$115,000 per year is a loss to the community and the need for county oversight in the community. He was informed the staffing probably would have changed without incorporation and surrounding communities are also reviewing incorporation. The committee stated we do not need duplication of government and we will have more opportunity to be heard with one government. Mr. Lindell questioned the legal aspects and requested copies of the State Statutes regarding Incorporation. This information will be obtained for Mr. Lindell from David Hebert the Township Attorney. Mr. Lindell asked what are the arguments for incorporation at this time and what does it mean the budget is set by the Mayor in a city and by citizens for a township. He hopes that the Town Board doesn't vote for incorporation and he thinks a lot of citizens here agree. He would rather see citizens have more control as to whether or not incorporate. Mr. Harnetty explained that in a city the City Council and Mayor set and vote on the budget. In a township form of government, the budget is prepared by town staff and town board supervisors, then voted on by the citizens. One citizen, or a group of citizens, can line item veto any part of that budget. Mr. Nickelson agreed that we would lose the money for roads and county planning assistance, and he doesn't think the link made between recouping losses with staff reorganization is correct. Mr. Nickelson said money would be recouped by charging expenses back to developers – what the county collects now. It will cost more to be a city, but the cost is outweighed by the benefits. There is no intention to increase growth, but there is no stopping it either. It would be better to manage growth as a city. Mr. Nickelson would like to see some commercial development to provide jobs in the community and local conveniences, like the store. Mr. Nickelson views it a benefit to be able to be more liberal with ordinances and a duplication of government is not needed. Mr. Sandager reiterated citizens' need to be heard on this issue, but reminded folks that the Committee is made up of citizens, too. They worked on everyone's behalf to study the incorporation issue. Mr. Sandager hears a conflict in views between bureaucracy and protectionism. He thinks you can be heard as a citizen either way as a city or township. Mr. Lindell responded that it would create bureaucracy at a lower level.

Jan Tockman-21788 Pomroy Avenue

Since the last meeting, Ms. Tockman said she read about the Columbus Township residents that want to annex to the City of Forest Lake. Ms. Tockman asked if it is likely the citizens at Hwy. 97 and Manning could petition Forest Lake for commercial rezoning. Mr. Joselyn responded that there are 50 landowners in Columbus behind their petition and he doesn't know the percentage of landowners required on such a petition, but it may be possible, but not probable. Mr. Harnetty stated that in the process of studying the issue, he found that only 100 people in the township can sign a petition to incorporation and it immediately goes to the State for consideration. He is glad that we had the chance to study the issue first before that happens.

Bill Clapp-between Otisville & Copas

Mr. Clapp opposes incorporation. His concern is growth management. It can happen fast or slow. How a town or city manages growth rates decides how soon a population of 5,000 is reached. He thinks it was a mistake for the Committee to not discuss rezoning. Mr. Clapp also asked why the answers were so fuzzy. He wanted more specifics on how the town will manage growth better as a city than a town. For example, change density bonus for cluster developments.

Tim Kohler - Oakhill Road

Mr. Kohler, a former resident and employee of Carver County, said they have cities within townships. He has seen pros and cons with this arrangement and was wondering if the Committee had considered incorporating a smaller city or would the whole town be incorporated. Mr. Joselyn stated the whole township would be incorporated. Mr. Kohler was undecided about incorporation, but expressed concern that the information published was slanted towards incorporation. He thinks the Committee did not look at both sides of the coin effectively. He would like the Committee to look at the issue again from the point of view as being a disadvantage to incorporate and publish those results.

Curt Hadland – 15280 Pilar Road

Mr. Hadland expressed skepticism as to who would be the winners and losers in this unmandated move toward incorporation. He was concerned that the town's ordinances would change to more complex city ordinances. Mr. Joselyn indicated the ordinances would not change as a result of incorporation.

Carol Dunn

Ms. Dunn asked if the city was going to use eminent domain to take property for commercial development. Mr. Joselyn said he didn't believe that would happen.

Don Mitchell-20233 Quinnell Ave.

Mr. Mitchell thanked the Committee for their good work and information provided.

Colleen Firkus-15710 Pilar Road

Mrs. Firkus stated that her recollection on how this all got started was at an annual meeting 3 to 4 years ago, one citizen asked the town board to investigate incorporating the township.

Greg Zauner – 15171 Pilar Road

Mr. Zauner asked the reason why the incorporation issue couldn't be put to a public vote. Mr. Joselyn indicated there were only two ways under state statutes that incorporation can be pursued. One is a petition from 100 landowners, and two, a vote by the town board.

Myron Lindgren-15040 Old Marine Trail

Mr. Lindgren stated that if we incorporate we don't ever have to worry about annexation. We will be Scandia forever. It will be worthwhile even if it costs more money.

Rob Raphael-22550 Manning Trail

Mr. Raphael expressed concern that as the number of townships decrease, then their political influence would also decrease in a time where there are less funds to go around. Mr. Seefeldt said taxes are a requirement of our society. In the last five years there were 115 governmental units in the 7 county metro area. Scandia was 75th in taxes – the bottom 1/3 of all municipalities. Mr. Seefeldt reminded everyone that we have much nicer facilities than May or Lakeland townships, which have lower taxes.

Tim Kohler

Mr. Kohler expressed a future concern if town is considering getting its own police protection. He wanted us to know it was less expensive to contract those services with the county. Mr. Joselyn indicated that is what the town currently does and has not plans to change.

Submitted by,

Dolores Peterson, Clerk



Colleen Firkus, Planning Commission Secretary