

Dan Musser Resigns From Board of Public Works After 35 Years

By Karen Gould

R. Daniel Musser Jr. resigned January 1 as chairman of the Mackinac Island Board of Public Works, and the city council has appointed F. Tom Lewand to replace him. Mr. Musser, who has served as chairman of the board for 35 years, notified the city in a letter to Mayor Margaret Doud, which she read at the Wednesday, December 21, City Council meeting.

"Age does funny things and it is time for a younger and more energetic person to take that job on," wrote Mr. Musser.

He recommended Mr. Lewand finish his term on the board, which expires in May, and Mayor Doud later told *The St. Ignace News* that she would then appoint Mr. Lewand to a full term as chairman.

"He certainly has the negotiating abilities and the pertinent knowledge to make a wonderful and dynamic chairman of the DPW," wrote Mr. Musser about Mr. Lewand.

While Mr. Musser chaired the Board of Public Works, the Island's sewerage collection and treatment system were constructed, a new water treatment and distribution system was installed, and the Solid Waste Handling Facility was established to separate trash for landfill, compost, and recycling.

His resignation comes just two weeks after he worked with Council to shore up the department's finances and secure funding for future needs. During its Wednesday, December 7 meeting, Council approved a one-mill property tax increase to fund the Island's landfill operations, an 87 percent water and sewer commodity rate increase, and a 5 percent readiness-to-serve water and sewer fee hike. The additional funding will put the DPW in the black and provide capital to repair and modernize the facilities.

"I have enormous shoes to fill because Dan has done a magnificent job to build the DPW during a period of fast and complex growth on the Island," Mr. Lewand told *The St. Ignace News*, Monday, January 2. "Dan has been great. He's done an excellent job of pulling the community together with people in Lansing and Washington to get the necessary funds we've needed for the Island facility."

Mr. Lewand is a partner in the Detroit law firm Bodman LLP, which also has an office in Cheboygan. He represents several county drain commissions in Michigan, and is "special master" for Federal Judge John Feikens. In that position, he helps the judge run the Detroit water and sewer facilities.

"We are sorry to see Mr. Musser leave the position," said Mayor Doud. "He has done an excellent job over the last 35 years. He felt it was time to retire, and we honored his request."

Mr. Musser is also chairman of Grand Hotel.

In another public works matter, Council noted that the Department of Public Works is installing a new sewer line along Spring Street and is allocating seven sewer Residential Equivalent Units (REU) for the project. An REU is equivalent to the requirements of a typical single family home and the city has been limiting new sewer hookups to 15 a year as its treatment capacity nears. With the new line on Spring Street,

the city allocated 9.359 REUs in 2005.

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission will be monitoring the Spring Street project for any archaeological significance.

Also at the December 21 meeting, Council approved an updated burn ordinance and set new standards for motor vehicle permits, as recommended by the ordinance and street committees.

The Ordinance Committee proposed what it feels is a more unified and fair motor vehicle policy and will allow the city to revoke a permit if a vehicle is used in violation of the ordinance.

Annual, seasonal, and short-term motor vehicle permits will be issued. Vehicles such as the Edison Sault Electric truck would receive an annual permit, lawn equipment and golf carts will be issued for seasonal use, and short-term permits would be for vehicles used for a task that "cannot be reasonably accomplished without the motor vehicle or the use of the motor vehicle is deemed to be for the benefit of the health, safety, and welfare of the community at large."

The city's new Burn Ordinance focuses on tighter controls over burn barrels. Only paper products can be burned in a burn barrel between October 15 and April 15, and only between the hours of 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Barrels must be at least 15 feet from the nearest structure and 10 feet from the property line. They must be attended throughout the burn and be extinguished completely.

A nuisance clause offers an avenue of complaint for residents who are being bothered by the smoke from burn barrels.

A burn barrel is defined by the ordinance as "a debris container constructed of metal or masonry with a metal covering device with openings no larger than 3/4 inch."

A fine not to exceed \$500 will be issued to anyone in violation of the ordinance.

Alderman Armin Porter

voted against the ordinance.

"I want the total ban of burn barrels," he said.

The ordinance will be reviewed in six months.

Council tabled discussion on setting one snowmobile speed limit for the entire Island and appointed Alderman Armand "Smi" Horn to attend the Friday, January 27, Mackinac Island State Park Commission meeting in Lansing so he can discuss the issue with park officials, since the city and the state park have different speed limits. The speed limit inside the city limits is 20 miles per hour, while the speed limit on state park roads is 35 miles per hour. A uniform speed limit

would streamline police enforcement and make it easier for snowmobile riders to comply, as boundary lines between zones are not always easily determined.

Two temporary motor vehicle permits were issued to Union Terminal Piers for annual coal dock repairs. Belonga Plumbing and Heating was granted three vehicle permits for snow plowing the Sunset Forest Association in the Stonecliffe area and for removing concrete from the tennis courts at the Hamady House. Phil and Lee's Homes received a temporary vehicle permit to move a work trailer to Stonecliffe.

City Asks Park Commission To Set Lower Speed Limit

By Karen Gould

The Mackinac Island State Park Commission, meeting Friday, January 27, in Lansing, told the City of Mackinac Island it has no control over the speed limits in the park, but offered to see if they could be lowered. The city has asked the Commission to lower its 35-mile-per-hour speed to 20 miles per hour in the interest of snowmobile safety in the winter.

Mackinac Island city councilman Armand "Smi" Horn, who attended the Lansing meeting, explained that lowering the speed limit on state roads would make it easier for police to control traffic on city streets. Fast snowmobile traffic on the Island's narrow roads also endangers horse-drawn vehicles. The city enforces a 20-mile-per-hour speed limit on all city streets.

Mackinac State Historic Parks Director Phil Porter said the State Park Commission has never set speed limits for the Island park roads and that Michigan law sets the maximum speed at 35 miles per hour on state park roads.

"There is a lot of merit to the request," noted Commission Chairman Dennis Cawthorne, although he held out little hope that the speed limit could be changed this winter.

Setting a speed limit on a state park road is a lengthy procedure, he said. The Commission has to work through the Michigan Administrative Procedures Act to institute a rule, especially if there is the potential for a fine to be issued to those breaking the posted speed. The process also requires input from the office of the attorney general and review and approval by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission. A public hearing would be advisable and possibly required, noted Mr. Cawthorne.

Commissioners said they would discuss the matter in March.

Frank Pompa, who owns property at Point Aux Pins, questioned the practicality of an island-wide 20-mile-per-hour speed limit, especially on the north end of the Island, which is remote from city streets. He also pointed out that snowmobiles need to go faster just to clean the plugs of excess carbon that results from slower

speeds.

Mr. Cawthorne said that M-185, the state highway that encircles the Island, may be subject to Michigan Department of Transportation regulations and, therefore, not subject to any commission-imposed speed limit. Their jurisdiction could even extend to Main Street, which is part of the highway, it was suggested.

Mr. Cawthorne also noted that the original resolution allowing the operation of snowmobiles is for the health and safety for Mackinac Island residents and was not intended to allow people to ride over the ice bridge from the mainland. It is these visitors who often travel at excessive speeds on the Island, the city has noted.

In another matter, commissioners breathed a sigh of relief when they learned during their meeting that all indications are the park budget will remain intact for the current fiscal year, though budget cuts can be expected for state agencies in the next fiscal year, which begins October 1.

"At this point, no major budget cuts are anticipated for the current year, thanks in part to a state general fund surplus from the prior fiscal year," said Mr. Porter.

He said the forecast for Fiscal Year 2007 is for a general fund shortfall of \$350 million. Governor Jennifer Granholm's budget recommendations were expected to be announced Thursday, February 9.

"We're anticipating the governor's budget will recommend cuts across the board," said Mr. Porter. "We're not expecting anything like last year's total elimination of the budget."

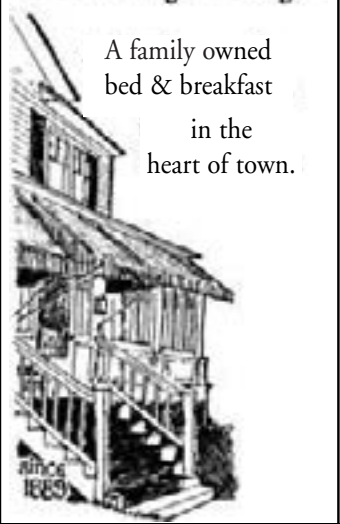
Last year, the governor suggested the state's \$1.5 million appropriation for Mackinac State Historic Parks be eliminated and that the Commission should make up the difference by charging heftier or new user fees. Its annual total budget is \$5.7 million, and most of its revenue is generated through admissions and other museum fees.

Commissioners approved a new 20-year lease for Island House, Inc. With seven years remaining on the current lease, Island House, Inc. asked for the new, long-term lease to help it

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