



**Meetings & Events
@ Town Hall
(unless otherwise noted)**

Township Board*

1st Wed/month @ 7 p.m.

Planning Commission*

2nd & last Mon/mth @ 9 a.m.

Advisory Committee*

Every Mon @ 9 a.m., Zoom only

Planning Commission Public Hearing continued*

10/6 @ 6 p.m.

***Meetings also via Zoom and open to the public**

MEETING ID:

841 1114 6136

PASSWORD: WabanaMtg2

Northwoods Creations Arts & Crafts Sale

10/2 @ 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Hunter's Supper

11/6 @ 5-7:30 p.m.

Exercise

Tues & Fri /wk @ 10 a.m.

Join area residents for free exercise and socializing

Special Election for School District 318

11/2 from 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Vote @ Arbo Town Hall

33292 Arbo Hall Rd

Note: Any changes to Meetings and Events will be posted on the website and at Town Hall.

Wabana Warbler

A newsletter for residents of Wabana Township

100th Anniversary Celebrated

The Wabana Township's 100th Anniversary Celebration was held at the Wabana Town Hall on July 31 - Aug. 1, 2021. Approximately 285 people attended the two-day affair put on by the Wabana Historical Committee. Attendees were very receptive and amazed by the amount and presentation of the historical artifacts and information presented in the Town Hall. The information traced family histories, the logging industry, schools, resorts, camps, lakes, dams, and roads. Wa-ga-tha-ka Resort, the Joyce Estate, Balgillow Island, and old family photos were especially interesting to attendees.

Artifacts displayed included logging hooks and chains found in Wabana Lake and Creek, Chief Wabana's gun from 1896, a replica of CV Smith's 1907 Stopping Place on Balsam Creek (built by Walter Smith), arrowheads found in Wabana and Balsam, various household items from the early 1930's, and items from the American Girl Camp located on Balgillow Island on Wabana Lake.

Wabana Township was formed in 1921 when it separated from Balsam Township. Currently there are 492 households. Pioneers came to Wabana during the logging days prior to 1900 and built their camps and homes. Some residents can trace their roots back to these proud and enterprising individuals. (Continued on page 2)



*Simmons-Downing Family History Display
John & Marcia Downing and Libby & George Colburn*

Thank You

The Historical Committee wants to thank Roger Linder for his many years of chairing this committee and for heading up the 100th Celebration. Many people helped in putting this event together, and I would especially like to thank my co-committee members, Anne Johnson, Jean Melin, Chris Bjerke, Jim Olijnek, Deb Kee, Steve Bjerke and Louie Gueltzow. We had great participation from residents who shared their family artifacts and information on the history of the Wabana area. My sincere thanks and appreciation goes out to John and Marcia Downing, Libby and George Colburn, Swanny Bekkedahl Voneida, Julie and Arnie Linder, Jean Koewler, and Steve Fleming.

I would also like to thank all those who helped with the outdoor activities from preparing and serving hotdogs, ice cream and lemonade to providing great music and organizing the cornhole tournament.

We are so fortunate in Wabana to have the participation of so many people and support from local organizations like the Township and WCOLA for events that benefit all.

*Carol J Speedling,
Wabana Historical Committee*



Carol Speedling, CV Smith Family

100th Anniversary, con't.

Friendships were made with the local Native American people, especially Chief Wabana. As the logging industry was depleted, many turned to farming and the tourist industry. Today, residents come to the Wabana area to enjoy the rural feeling with the many lakes and trails and peace and quiet to be found.

A great time was had by everyone young and old enjoying hotdogs and ice cream, a cornhole tournament, and meeting neighbors and friends. Cornhole Tournament Grand Prize winners of a \$100 gift certificate were new Wabana residents, "Team Two Charlies", Charlie Black and his son, Charlie Black Jr.

*Carol J Speedling,
Wabana Historical Committee*



History Displays in Town Hall



Cornhole Tournament Participants



Music by Jeff Powers and Friends (L-R, Pat Perry, Ron Palm and Jeff Powers)



Ice Cream Social Fun for All

Over 60 residents, families, and friends found this year’s ice cream social on August 20 to be a fun time to see old friends, make new friends, and enjoy some delicious ice cream, toppings, and cookies. Fun was had by all young and old. Ice cream was served by two of the three Township’s scholarship winners, Ashley Barsness and Derek Broberg, as well as volunteer residents. Thanks to the Community Fund and WCOLA for hosting this Township event!

Loon Count

The WCOLA reported a total of 35 loons counted on the chain of lakes with 30 adults and 5 chicks. The breakdown included:

- Wabana 14 adults and 1 chick
- Bluewater 1 adult
- Trout 15 adults and 4 chicks
- Little Trout none

In addition, Doan Lake had 2 adults and Little Wabana had 2 adults and 2 chicks.

Thanks to Paul Oberg, Jan Davis, Steve Melin, Bill Linder, Ken & Barbara Zimmer, Susan Hawkinson, and John & Cheryl Adams for doing the count.

Proposed Land Use/Zoning Ordinance

The Wabana Planning Commission and Ad hoc Advisory Committee has been hard at work developing a new Land Use/Zoning Ordinance. The proposed ordinance is based on 1) the Wabana Township Comprehensive Plan which outlines the township’s values, 2) input from the Township Attorney, 3) residents survey responses (from when the comprehensive plan was being developed), 4) the County’s Shoreland Overlay requirements, and 5) identified prohibited and not-permitted uses. The proposed ordinance was developed with goals that protect and preserve the township’s natural resources (water, forests, etc); the rural feel of the community; and value growth that reflects the township’s values and is sustainable.

A public hearing was held August 24, 2021, to receive input on the proposed ordinance. Over 40 people attended the public hearing in-person and via Zoom. This public hearing gave residents an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission continued the public hearing to October 6, 2021, at 6 p.m. The proposed ordinance is available online at www.wabatanatownship.com. Residents may leave additional comments on the Wabana website Contact Form tab. This proposed Zoning Ordinance would replace/supersede Ordinance 101 & moratorium, if approved.

Nov. 6 Deer Hunter’s Supper

It is hoped that the Deer Hunter’s Supper will take place this year on Sat, Nov. 6, from 5-7:30 p.m. at Town Hall. Details will be underway by early October, and will likely include a delicious pork loin dinner, raffle drawings, a silent auction, and baked goods sale. Help will be needed on Fri., Nov. 5 with room set up, and on Sat., Nov. 6, with food preparation, serving, & clean-up. Donations for the bake sale and raffle drawings are also needed. Notices will be posted if the Hunter’s Supper needs to be cancelled due to the pandemic. The Community Fund puts on the Hunter’s Supper, which serves as its largest fundraiser for student scholarships and other community events.

Wabana Ski/Hiking Trails

The Wabana Trails are to be mowed in the summer for hiking and groomed in winter for cross-country skiers by Itasca County Land & Parks Dept. They are also responsible for any other trail upkeep. The Trails are great place for beginner to intermediate cross-country skiers. The six miles of trails offer five loops through forests, a wildflower sanctuary (one of two designated county wildflower sanctuaries) and the Wabana Creek. The Wabana Trails are located on Cty Rd 59. *See page 4 for how you can help keep our Trails usable.*

At its September meeting, the Town Board

- received a financial update from Treasurer Kee.
- authorized the removal of the tennis court mats in order to obtain quotes for a new tennis court surface. Some of the mats will be sold and some kept, which may be used for a basketball court in the future.
- approved sending a letter to County Parks Dept. in support of the County providing maintenance of the Wabana Trails. This includes mowing in the summer and grooming cross-country ski trails in the winter.
- approved to proceed with obtaining a plumbing permit for work on the AIS decontamination site.
- approved the purchase of an updated Zoning District map to be located in Town Hall.

How Can I Help with Wabana Trails, you ask?

Residents are encouraged to send a letter in support of the County Land & Parks Dept. maintaining the Wabana Trails. The Trails are an important asset to our Community and have been neglected in recent years. A letter may be sent via the Contact Form on the Township website. A sample letter is also on the Township website for reference at www.wabanatownship.com.

Wabana Township Officers and Staff

- Lloyd Adams, Chairman (ph: 218-999-9749; email: lloyd2006@me.com)
- Steve Bjerke, Supervisor (ph: 507-327-5239; email: bjerkehome@hotmail.com)
- Ruth Fordham, Clerk (218-259-0228; email: ruthwabanaclerk@yahoo.com)
- Sarah Fordham, Deputy Clerk (email: sarahkfordham@gmail.com)
- Deb Kee, Treasurer (ph: 218-326-2115; email: dk317322115@gmail.com)
- Gary Oja, Supervisor (ph: 218-259-0732; email: gdoja@msn.com)
- Ken Aho, Maintenance (ph: 218-256-7230)

Township Meetings are held the 1st Wednesday each month at 7 p.m. at Town Hall, 30980 Clearwater Rd. & via Zoom. Any changes to the meeting date/time will be posted at Town Hall and on the website.

Jean Panchyshyn, Newsletter Editor, 952-250-6690 or email: jeanonwabana@gmail.com

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 Grand Rapids, MN 55744

Wabana Township Ordinance Timeline of Events

During the first public meeting held on August 24, 2021 for the Wabana Township ordinance there were a number of questions regarding the process from the start to the point where we are at today. We will try to give everyone a timeline of events.

The process started almost 2 and one-half years ago. This in part came about due to the incident on Bluewater Lake which involved the original Ordinance 101. The township board had discontinued charging fees or performing inspections on septic and building permits on March 7, 2007. The Ordinance 101 was not rescinded according to the proper procedure (Itasca County Court ruling on 25 Jan. 2019). There were 125 issues cited in the lawsuit of which Ordinance 101 accounted for only one (1) issue which was a side setback dimension. After the lawsuit ruling, the Township Board talked with the Township's legal counsel and it was decided to update the ordinance to match Itasca County Ordinance set back dimensions. Later, a moratorium that complements Ord. 101 was generated and it addresses PUDs, Campgrounds, RV sites, etc. Also at this time, the Township Supervisors took on the role of a Planning Commission on the advice of the Township attorney. This moratorium provided the Township Board a time period to address the ordinance issues. At a Township meeting in early 2019, the Board asked for volunteers to work on these issues. There was an initial group of 6 people who volunteered. At the first meeting one of the items discussed was that all the volunteers were lakeshore owners and it was felt as this task was a whole township matter, we needed representation from someone who did not live on a lake. Deb Kee was asked to be on the committee and she agreed. One of the lake people did drop off after a bit due to work commitments.

This group of people was called the Wabana Township Advisory Committee and was given authorization by the Board to proceed with the review of Ordinance 101 at the April, 2019 township meeting. After several meetings trying to determine how to proceed, it was decided the necessity to first do a Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) was to identify strategies, and guide future decisions for land use, natural resources, township facilities, and infrastructure. The Comp Plan serves as a blueprint for the Township to shape public policy & decisions moving forward.

We then hired an experienced local company to assist us in the development of this plan. The first thing they said we should do is try to get a feel from township property owners as to what they would like to see for the future of the township. This led to a township wide survey to ensure we capture the feelings to identify what is important to the Township's property owners. The survey was developed and set up to be done electronically through a survey website and there were paper copies that were made available at the township hall. One of the reasons it was decided to do this electronically was that we would be sending survey notices to 413 township property owners. The list of the property owners was obtained from the County auditor's office based upon the addresses where property tax statements are sent out. A letter was sent out on May 6, 2020 to the 413 addresses to explain what we were doing and how to go online to take the survey. The letter also stated that for those who did not want to take the survey electronically that paper copies would be available at the Township Hall. Also, we had in the letter that any people living in the household that were 18 years of age and older could respond to the survey. We had deadline of June 8, 2020 for people to return the surveys so we could compile the information and there were 228 responses by June 8th. The outside company we used said that number of responses was very good based upon the number of letters sent out. We then analyzed the information and started the next step of the process of developing a comprehensive plan.

The Advisory Committee then started work on the comprehensive plan with assistance from the local outside company. This plan was developed by taking into consideration the survey results, looking at other comp plans for other government entities (cities & townships), and input from our township attorney. An introductory Comprehensive Plan public meeting, for which all township property owners received a postcard invite, was held on March 10, 2020 and outlined goals, timeline, anticipated costs, etc. Later, when the draft of the Comprehensive Plan was ready, we scheduled a public meeting for August 19, 2020 to hear input from the township property owners. Again, all township property owners received a postcard invite which showed the date and time of the meeting along with the link to do a Zoom meeting or the option of attending the meeting at the Township Hall.

There were between 25-30 people who attended the meeting including the 6 people who are on the advisory committee. The draft plan was gone over and any questions were answered or comments noted.

The Advisory Committee took all these comments and finalized the comp plan and presented to the Wabana Township board at the Jan. 2021 meeting for approval. The Board approved the plan at that meeting. The final comp plan was then given to government entities that the township impacted by including Itasca County, the Minnesota DNR, the United States Forest Service, the Itasca County Water and Soil District, and neighboring townships. The final Comprehensive Plan was then filed at the Itasca County Courthouse, the Grand Rapids Public Library and the Wabana Township website.

The Township Supervisors felt it necessary to request a separate group of volunteers to serve as the Planning Commission instead of themselves. Requests for volunteers had been made in the Winter 2020 Warbler and during the Comprehensive Plan public meetings. Five people came forward to volunteer for the Planning Commission. On November 4, 2020, these 5 people were then sworn in as Planning Commission members. They would report back to the Board of Supervisors on a monthly basis.

The Planning Commission and Wabana Township Advisory Committee started work on the review and assessment of Ordinance 101 in earnest in mid-January 2021 and the group has been meeting weekly. Again, we looked at other township ordinances to help with the formulation of ours and our Township attorney would meet with us periodically to give us direction or answer questions. The fundamentals of the ordinance are based upon the survey results and comprehensive plan of which two factors stood out. One being to maintain the rural feel in the township and another one to protect our natural resources especially the lakes and rivers. During the development process we met with our Itasca County commissioner, Terry Snyder and the director of the Itasca County Environmental Services department, Daniel Swenson. We wanted to keep them apprised of what we were doing so the development of the ordinance would be able to work with County's Ordinance. As the work went on, we centered on four different areas that were different in our ordinance as compared to the county's. These areas were 1) variances, 2) conditional use permits, 3) zoning changes within the Shoreland Overlay District, and 4) proposed prohibited uses in the different zoning districts of our township. The Shoreland Overlay District, which is 1000 feet from the ordinary high-water level of lakes and 300 feet for rivers. Our proposed ordinance was required to be equal to or more restrictive than the County's Shoreland ordinance requirements. To simplify the equal portions of this section, we copied and pasted the County's wording for a majority of our ordinance.

In being a small township, we realized that we only have enough resources and energy that can be devoted to land uses in the township. This is why we focused on the above four areas which we felt we could handle and achieve the objectives of the township having a rural feel and the preservation of township resources.