

Florence Township

www.florencetwp.org florencetwp@yahoo.com

Goodhue County, MN

2024 Annual Newsletter

March 2024

PO Box 97, Frontenac, MN 55026

Your Township Government:

Florence Township is governed by five elected officials.

Your Current Board is:

Mike Blair, *Chair*
mblair@kreofsky.net

Jim McIlrath, *Supervisor*
macmcilrath44@gmail.com

Ed Hruska, *Supervisor*
ehruska@rochsports.com

Sue Eisenmenger, *Clerk*
florencetwp1@yahoo.com

Tom Gnotke, *Treasurer*
gnotketn@gmail.com

Agenda

*The annual meeting
is at 8:00PM, Tuesday, March 12
2024 at Township Hall*

1. Call the meeting to Order
2. Elect a Moderator to Conduct the Annual Meeting.
3. Pledge to the Flag.
4. Read the minutes of the 2023 Annual meeting.
5. Committee Reports:
 - Friends of Town Hall
 - Planning Commission
 - Heritage Preservation
 - Parks Commission
6. Present the Audit report for 2023
7. Present the proposed budget for 2025
8. Public comments and discussions
9. Announce the election results
10. Establish the time and date of the 2025 Annual Meeting
11. Adjourn meeting



Erected 1875

This newsletter is being distributed to the residents of Florence Township in order to inform and prepare them for the Annual Meeting to be held Tuesday March 12, 2024 at the Florence Township Hall. At the Annual Meeting you have the opportunity to express your views and help determine your taxes for the next year.

**The election will be held
Tuesday, March 12, 2024
at the Florence Township Hall.
The polls will be open from 4:00PM until
8:00PM. The Annual Meeting will follow.**

**In case of inclement weather,
the meeting will be held
Wednesday, March 13.**

Two Positions are up for election this year:

- Supervisor
- Secretary

Candidates that have filed:

- Supervisor: Mike Blair
- Secretary: Pam Miller

The Planning Commission and Heritage Commission are in need of new members to replace retiring members.

If you are interested in assisting with your local government it's time to get involved!

Please send a letter to the Board of Supervisors stating your desire to join a Commission. Mail to PO Box 97, Frontenac 55026

Florence Township Board of Supervisors 2023 Year In Review

As I complete my first year serving the Township I feel things are running smooth and overall in good shape. It has been a fairly uneventful year – which is good for the overall stability of the citizens. There have been several permit requests for home additions, improvements and new homes in the Township. This growth and reinvestment are a positive sign for the area. Our commissions (all with updates in this newsletter) are doing great work in their respective areas – showing strong community effort with their volunteer work. We would like to thank all those who have given their time for the overall good of the Township. We are making progress with the much-needed improvements to the Locust Lodge, moving forward with the Short-Term Rental ordinance, and now focusing on road improvements. The reconstruction of highway 61 this past summer created numerous traffic pattern changes and put pressure on Township roads. And finally, March 2024 will be Sue Eisenmenger's last meeting after year's of serving as Township Clerk. The Supervisors would like to thank Sue for her years of work and wish her well with her retirement. Onward into 2024!

Written by Ed Hruska

Building Permit Procedures

A building permit is required for all new construction and most remodeling. To determine if you need a permit, call the County Zoning and Land Use Management Office at 651-385- 3104. All building permits need to be reviewed by the Florence Township Planning Commission. They meet on the 2nd Monday of the month at 6PM. If you live in Old Frontenac you must also receive approval from the Heritage Commission. They meet on the 2nd Tuesday at 6PM. The final approval is received by calling Mike Blair at 507-251-2922 to get on the town board agenda for their approval. The town board meets on the 3rd Monday at 6:00PM. Permit applications are found on the township website.

www.florencetwp.org

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission was pleased this year to support a number of new home builds and remodels in the township. We presided over the first year of regulating Short Term Rentals (STRs). Based on feedback and new learning, we reduced the STR ordinance to focus on permitting STRs in residential zones only and expanded it to now require that STR operators also comply with State of Minnesota health department regulations as well. A new web-based complaint form is available on the township website to make it easy and seamless for residents to notify township officials of complaints associated with STRs in their neighborhoods. We welcomed two new commission members, Sven Fleischaker and Justin Staker, who join existing members Heidi Hartzell, Bill Bruce and Joel Cannon. We look forward to serving the residents of Florence Township in 2024 and beyond and stand ready to answer and address questions and issues which arise around land use and zoning.

If you would like to consider serving with the Planning Commission, please send a letter stating your background and interest to the Town Board (PO Box 97).

Joel Cannon, Planning Commission Chair

2023 was a busy year for the Park Commission!

Park Commissioners: Jane Webster-Urbach, Rev. Ted Tollefson, Steve Dietz, Jeneann Oppedahl, & Edie Sward

Parks & Public Lands that are overseen by Florence Township Park

Commission: Wakondiota Park, Valhalla Park, Florence Township Community Center, Frontenac Station Play Park, and Steamboat Landing which is 7.73 acres along Lake Pepin that consists of Frontenac Point, the Boat Launch & the Swimming Beach.

Wakondiota Park

There is a new Pollinator Garden, at the corner of County 2 Blvd and Van Blarcum, under the direction of Steve Dietz & Jeneann Oppedahl. It was prepped and planted late this fall and is ready for Winter. Many volunteers made this happen. Besides Steve & Jeneann, we had Janet Malotky, Lynne Staker, Jim Wurst, Nathan Oppedahl, Dick Herron & Kathy Herron.

The Park Commission had a Potluck Picnic on June 15th, 2023, by the playground at the shelter. All Florence Township friends & families were invited! It was a big success with 45-50 people there. Parks is going to try to make this an annual Potluck Event on the 3rd Thursday in June. June 20, 2024, at 6:00 pm, is the date this summer. All are invited and encouraged to come!



Valhalla Park

Valhalla Park Restoration includes all 22 acres of Valhalla. This is funded by DNR Conservation Partners Legacy Grants. The main removal of invasive species, both herbaceous and woody, has taken place over the last few years. The planting of trees, shrubs, native grasses, seed mixes, and forbs took place in 2020-2022. This year, 2023, was all about Integrative Plant Management practices (IPM). Native Resources Preservation (NRP) came three different times throughout 2023. Two visits were to spot mow and spot spray herbaceous invasives in the park and the final visit was to foliar spray woody invasives. NRP will continue to manage woody and herbaceous invasive species throughout 2024 and the Spring of 2025 in all of Valhalla Park. This is to reduce populations of invasive species and to promote the establishment and growth of native species.



Valhalla Enhancement Project is to complete the final goals of the McGhie & Betts Design Guideline, which are to create or maintain vistas in a manner that preserves the character of the park forest and maintain the legacy character of the park. The other two goals in the McGhie & Betts guideline, Restore the native plant communities within Valhalla Park and Provide habitat for wildlife species, have been addressed through the three Conservation Partners Legacy Grants that Florence Township has been awarded, but this enhancement project will have a big impact on those goals as well.

The enhancement project is funded by Riverlands, a nonprofit out of Red Wing, MN. They are donating funds and matching private donations for the project. In 2022 the area that was worked on in Valhalla Park was North of County 2 Blvd along Garrard Ave and down the steep slope. This year the area that was worked on was the South side of Valhalla Park. The removal of dead, dying, and hazardous trees was done, along with the trimming up of trees in view zones and general cleanup throughout the park, including removal of invasive species. The project will continue next year. Next summer there will be tagging of trees that potentially will be removed from some view zones. When trees are tagged, it will be announced at the parks regular meeting that trees have been tagged. An email will also be sent out to anyone that is on the parks email list. Then there will be discussion about the tagged trees at the following park meeting. It will be announced if that meeting will be a “walk-about” meeting.

Steamboat Landing, Frontenac Point, Swimming Beach & Boat Launch - The new dock got a lot of use this summer. The Sportsman’s Club funded and fixed the ditched-out area at the end of the boat landing in September 2023. It helps if there is NO POWER LOADING at the boat landing. Thank you!

There are two kayak/canoe racks located at Steamboat Landing. Go to the Florence Township website to get a rental contract if you want a spot or contact Edie Sward from the Park Commission and she can email you one. There is an incentive sale of \$75 per rack spot for the season until the end of April.

EAB (Emerald Ash Borer) Grant from the DNR for the Township. This grant allowed 88 dead ash trees to be removed from Wakondiota, Valhalla, Steamboat Landing, and the Beach area. The dead ash trees were all replanted with replacement trees approved by the DNR such as Red Oak, Northern Oak, Princeton Elm, St. Croix Elm, Gingko, Honey Locust, Bur Oak, American Linden, Little leaf Linden, White Oak, Crabapple, and Japanese Lilac. The most notable area with new trees is along Van Blarcum & County 2 Blvd lining Wakondiota Park.

Gratitude is extended to Dylan Hanson, who served as our Park Manager for the past few years. Dylan demonstrated exceptional dedication in maintaining the beach, boat landing area, and ensuring the cleanliness of the park lands, among other responsibilities.

Acknowledgments also go to Rick Landau, the Parks Groundskeeper, for his outstanding efforts in keeping the park lands well-maintained and aesthetically pleasing throughout the year. Moving forward, Rick will be assuming the combined role as Park Manager, where he will continue to contribute his skills. Thank you, Rick!

The Park Commission had LOTS of volunteers this year. Here are some not mentioned above: Peggy & Ron Knudson, Jane Webster-Urbach, Paul Perleberg, Millie Gagnon, Bill & Kathy Webster, Jeff & Ann Bolin, Rev. Ted Tollefson, Rob & Kris Fuglestad, Dan Staker, Joe Ellingson, Tom Gnotke, and Tom Johnson.

The Park Commission Thanks the many volunteers that help keep Florence Township Parks looking their best! All residents chipping in and paying attention to what is needed will help keep our parks and beach area looking beautiful! Here’s to 2024!

Greetings from the Frontenac Historic Preservation Committee,

The HPC has had another busy year wrapping up the work toward revising and updating the information provided to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) regarding the Old Frontenac Historic District National Registry. This past year the extensive review process that is paid for in part through a 2022-23 CLG (certified local government) Grant was mostly wrapped up. The objective of this grant is to revise and update the Old Frontenac Historic District National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination form. Florence township and the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) has hired the firm of Landscape Research LLC, principal researcher Carole Zelle, to complete a comprehensive historic resources survey. The last NRHP nomination form is from 1973. Since then, changes within and at the edges of the historic district, including new construction, demolition and alterations to existing buildings and landscapes have occurred. This project will review the existing condition of listed properties, including parks, as well as the surrounding shoreline and landscape setting. It will also update and/or revise property descriptions, historic contexts, statements of significance and other nomination sections as required by the MN State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and subsequently the National Park Service.

The final report was completed by July 2023 and sent to SHPO for final review and to hopefully be passed along to the National Register of Historic Places. The response from MN SHPO has been slower than expected and our work was not reviewed by them until December this past year. Landscape Research LLC continues to work with SHPO to wrap up the final revisions to the registry and we hope to have it completed very soon. Once the final report is approved, we plan on making it accessible to all via the Florence Township website.

The mission of the HPC continues to be to protect and preserve the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and historic features of Florence Township designated Historic Districts. We also strive to provide educational programming and community events to further share the Old Frontenac Historic District with the greater Florence Township Community and surrounding areas. This past summer our HPC Family lost former member Joyce Engstrom in a tragic accident. In honor of Joyce and her passion for service and commitment to our community, the Joyce Engstrom Memorial Community Engagement Fund has been established. Joyce was an especially big promotor of the Lilac Giveaway and the lilacs blooms that occur throughout our district every spring. Last May we adapted the Lilac Giveaway to also include a plant exchange. It was a great success and was an awesome way to gather with fellow neighbors to share stories and plants! We are forever grateful that Joyce was able to be present at this updated event. This year's Lilac Giveaway and Plant Exchange is scheduled for Saturday, May 18th from 9-11am at the Wakondiota Park shelter in Old Frontenac. We encourage you to clean out your garden beds and bring your extra plants and exchange them for new ones. Lilacs are given away on a first come, first serve basis. Our lilac giveaway only happens with generous donations to the HPC, so if you'd like to honor Joyce and her legacy please consider making a donation to the fund.

Another great way to honor Joyce would be to join the HPC. We are in need of more members to the HPC so if you would be interested in serving and helping us uphold our mission, please reach out to HPC Chair - Katy Beckman (kbeckman28971@gmail.com) ANYONE residing in Florence Township is encouraged to join.

Homeowners of the Old Frontenac Historic District should visit the Florence township website and follow the Heritage Commission link to access information regarding the design guidelines and design applications to share with their builder or architect before designing new building projects. If your property resides in the Old Frontenac Historic District you will need to present your design to the HPC before work can begin and a permit can be obtained from Goodhue County. We meet once a month, typically the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the Florence Town Hall.

We continue to post updates of our work and news about upcoming events hosted by the HPC on the Florence Township website (www.florencetwp.org) as well as our Facebook page - (**Frontenac - MN Historic Preservation Committee**)

Florence Township Sportsman's Club/Community Center

is available for all your family and friend gatherings.

Check into renting the space by contacting -
Carol Holmgren at 507-279-7333

2025 Budget

Florence Township
Proposed Budget

	<u>Actual Figures</u>			<u>Budgetary Figures</u>				
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
General Fund								
Salaries & Education	\$14,759	\$16,117	\$14,860	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$16,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
Town Hall	2,179	5,476	5,294	5,350	5,450	4,135	4,135	3,875
Parks	12,757	7,627	8,858	12,384	9,679	8,439	12,470	14,895
Park Improvements	0	25,817	13,661	14,500	5,000	5,000	15,000	15,000
Community Center (Net)	1,947	1,808	-15	1,571	2,496	1,776	1,596	2,265
Planning	9,332	12,007	0	10,000	13,275	13,275	13,275	10,200
Heritage	0	113	0	0	2,000	5,500	0	750
General Government	52,335	43,741	25,324	28,470	47,230	28,930	20,555	24,380
Subtotal	<u>93,309</u>	<u>112,706</u>	<u>67,982</u>	<u>92,275</u>	<u>105,130</u>	<u>83,055</u>	<u>83,031</u>	<u>87,365</u>
Road & Bridge Fund								
Road Grading & Repair	34,303	62,544	43,206	50,000	55,000	55,000	60,000	50,000
Snowplowing	43,612	64,207	77,655	60,000	55,000	60,000	70,000	70,000
Rock / Gravel	35,444	30,431	44,880	37,500	35,000	35,000	35,000	40,000
Blacktop	419,117	175,000	19,302	185,000	185,000	200,000	175,000	150,000
Sealcoating	0	0	0	50,000	25,000	25,000	20,000	20,000
Chloride	6,402	10,171	8,750	9,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000
Brushing	20,128	32,027	5,702	20,000	20,000	10,000	15,000	15,000
Special Projects & Reserve	10,010	9,258	3,631	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Federal Sign Reflectivity Project	3,332	527	1,016	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Road Ditch Mowing	4,545	4,808	6,318	6,500	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Street Lighting	838	967	828	1,000	1,000	850	850	850
Subtotal	<u>577,731</u>	<u>389,940</u>	<u>211,288</u>	<u>450,000</u>	<u>419,000</u>	<u>428,850</u>	<u>418,850</u>	<u>388,850</u>
Gas & Gravel Tax Revenue	(41,462)	(60,333)	(45,253)	(44,000)	(42,000)	(58,000)	(42,000)	(41,000)
Subtotal	<u>536,269</u>	<u>329,607</u>	<u>166,035</u>	<u>406,000</u>	<u>377,000</u>	<u>370,850</u>	<u>376,850</u>	<u>347,850</u>
Emergency Services Fund								
Fire Contract	29,803	31,942	34,712	38,535	36,700	35,000	30,000	27,500
Subtotal	<u>29,803</u>	<u>31,942</u>	<u>34,712</u>	<u>38,535</u>	<u>36,700</u>	<u>35,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>27,500</u>
Totals	<u>\$659,381</u>	<u>\$474,255</u>	<u>\$268,729</u>	<u>\$536,810</u>	<u>\$518,830</u>	<u>\$488,905</u>	<u>\$489,881</u>	<u>\$462,715</u>



Florence Township
PO Box 97
Frontenac, MN 55026

Address Label

Lilac Giveaway and Plant Exchange

Saturday, May 18th, 2024 @ 9:00-11:00 am

Wakondiota Park Shelter

Bring your extra plants and exchange them for new ones.

Lilacs are given away on a first come, first served basis.

Anyone residing in Florence Township is encouraged to attend.



Potluck Picnic

Wakondiota Park

June 20, 2024 @ 6:00 PM

All Florence Township friends and family are invited!

Please join us.

