

Village of Rothbury  
Special Council Meeting  
April 9, 2020

The meeting was held outside on Village hall grounds with all council members present. The meeting was opened at 6:00 PM by President Scott Beishuizen. All council members observed proper social distancing guidelines.

Also present were: Derrick Holland, representing Madison House, Rita Kolyski, from the Double JJ, Allison Scarborough, Oceana County Press, Cliff Cudney, Maryanne Canales, Barbara Thompson, Domingo Cruz, Roland and Joan Brooks, Jim Rose, attorney for Double JJ Resort, Jeremy Dehoff, Stan Larson, Julie Wiebenga, Oceana County Sheriff Craig Mast, Don McCormick, Mark and Nancy Rolf, Village Police Chief Tom Hasper, Rhonda Bolema, Doug Roesler, David Roesler, Cheryl Lohman and many more.

The meeting was called to discuss and take public comment on the application for a date change for the Electric Forest Festival from June 25-28, 2020 to September 10-13, 2020.

Village attorney Matt Mills explained the background for the request by Madison House due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Madison House representative Derrick Holland read a letter from Jeremy Stein to the council explaining the reasoning behind the request. His letter also reiterated the financial impact the festival has on the area.

Clerk Carol Witzke reported comments from various telephone calls she had taken from citizens expressing concerns about the festival being held after the school year has started. These concerns were reiterated by several audience members.

Sheriff Craig Mast expressed his support for the festival but is concerned about the possibility of having a virus outbreak in the jail. He also spoke about the difficulties with school bus schedules during festival traffic.

Jim Rose talked about the date change as a contingency plan if the State decides to lift restrictions later in the year.

Trustee Mike Harris made the point that we have no idea how things will stand in September and that the dates Madison House was asking for was 156 days in the future.

Trustees Bob Fulljames and Autumn Drake questioned whether ticket sales would be refunded because the website says they are non-refundable. Derrick Holland assured the council that the tickets could be refunded or traded for 2021 tickets.

Treasurer Deb Murphy and several citizens expressed concern that the council not risk public health for the sake of making money.

Jim Rose again told council of the effect the festival has for the Double JJ and also reminded council that no one knows what restrictions could be in place in September.

Trustee Bob Fulljames reminded council of the many times they had been told Madison House would do something that never happened. This includes meeting earlier this year to discuss the

upcoming festival. The request to change the dates of this year's festival was received one day after the regular March meeting.

Several of the public present reported unsafe and unsanitary health practices among festival goers. There was general discussion about conditions in the campgrounds and the concert sites.

There was discussion about allowing the change of date with the understanding that the State of Michigan or the health department would probably not allow the festival to happen. Many audience members felt the council should decide based on the health of the community.

Village attorney Matt Mills explained that there is no way to know what other agencies would decide. He explained that once the council approved the change of dates they would have no recourse.

Derrick Holland again stated Madison House's position that they need the change in dates to have a chance to plan and prepare in case its possible to hold the festival.

Autum Drake made a motion, seconded by Mike Harris to permit Madison House to change the dates of their 2020 Electric Forest Festival from June 23 -28, 2020 to September 10-13, 2020. Motion failed; 2 ayes-Drake and Harris, 5 nays-Beishuizen, Fekken, Cruz, Talmadge, Fulljames.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Witzke  
Rothbury Village Clerk