**Pierpont Revitalization Committee Report on 2020 June 15th**

 **Meeting to the Pierpont Township Trustees**

The Pierpont Revitalization Committee met in the Pierpont Town Hall, Monday June 15 at 6pm. All committee members were present. Due to COVID-19 the committee social distanced. The meeting was not open to public attendance but was Pierpont Facebook live streamed. However, due to technical difficulties the video recording was not able to be activated.

Four items of business were discussed.

1. Followup from March 16th meeting. The ppt from Judy Semroc, conservation naturalist consultant’s presentation of a master plan for the WWTP and Green Space Project is posted on the Pierpont Township website, click on Committees, scroll down to Revitalization Committee downloads, Pierpont Green Space Project. Once the survey and field work is completed for the WWTP footprint, the committee will revisit the master plan and timing of the development of the balance of the acreage. This Green Space Project master plan is funded by the Ashtabula County Civic Development Corporation. We encourage Pierpont residents to view the ppt and give the committee and trustees feed-back regarding the proposed green space usage.
2. Kent State University Ashtabula has invited Pierpont to partner in a USDA telemedicine/distance learning proposal to locate a Zoom Room in Pierpont. The Zoom Room would enable KSU to offer distance learning classes in the greater Pierpont area and adjacent townships ranging from College Credit Plus (CCP) courses for high school students, college classes, continuing education courses to a computer lab available for community use. The USDA grant will fund equipping the room; we are seeking additional funding to cover the cost of room rental and fiber connections over a five year period. Connecting a Pierpont distance education/computer room to fiber in downtown Pierpont for residents to use would enable us to initiate a fiber connection that could be the first node in our fiber network; and be the catalyst to expand broadband throughout the Township.  **The Revitalization Committee voted unanimously to submit a letter of support to Kent State University Ashtabula for the proposed USDA telemedicine/ distance education project; and request that the Township Trustees also send a letter of support once final details are established.** We will also be seeking letters of support from Pymatuning, Jefferson and Conneaut school districts.
3. Broadband. Jake Hudson, Revitalization Committee member is serving on the county-wide broadband committee. The County has a consultant from Stark County who is helping the Commissioners develop a county-wide assessment of broadband connectivity and reliability, preliminary to developing a county plan.

Pierpont Township has poor to non-existent broadband access and highly unreliable service. This presents problems for households and businesses to engage in daily activities that require broadband connections. The 2020 COVID-19 lock down in Ohio turned a very inconvenient situation into a critical one as residents of Pierpont attempted to work from home and students attempted to attend their classes via Internet. The committee recognizes there is an urgent need for an Internet Provider who would access our fiber lines and work with Pierpont to build a robust, affordable township-wide high speed internet system that offers access and reliability. We are exploring a number of options including creating a Township broadband cooperative, building a private-public partnership, or seeking a private telecommunication company to expand and improve our current system. All of these options will require financing. COVID-19 revealed the gaps in rural broadband services; and both federal and state governments are passing legislature to make funds available to townships and counties. We are exploring ways we can tap into these resources.

1. The Township-County Commissioner signed a sanitary sewer project MOU in March and the Township has paid the commissioners for the General Engineering Plan written by CT consultants, the County Sanitary Engineer. The County Engineer will begin survey and field work followed by engineering design and cost estimates. **The Committee asks that the Township Trustees 1) pass a resolution to request Y2 funds allocated in HB 166 biennial budget for the Pierpont Township sanitary sewer project from OEPA and 2) direct the Township fiscal officer to contact OEPA once the State of Ohio fiscal year begins July 1st for transfer of these funds to Pierpont Township.**

The next Revitalization Committee meeting will be held Monday, September 21 at 6pm at Pierpont Town Hall. This will be our organizational meeting for 2021. Two terms of office expire in 2020, Marty Holden and Kim Marcy.

**\*Trustee action items in bold.**

Submitted by

Lois Wright Morton, chair

6.16.2020