

Hartland Business Association

P. O. Box 802
Hartland, MI 48353

September 28, 2018

Dear Members of the Hartland Township Board

This is a further effort to establish a collaborative project with the Township – with the simple objective: to make Hartland a better, more friendly place for business.

BACKGROUND There is ample evidence that Hartland is a tough place for business. The confirmed results of three successive surveys of Hartland’s businesses show this; two of these surveys were conducted by the Township. In summary, those surveys demonstrate that items of importance from a regulatory perspective were graded at an unsatisfactory level.

PROPOSALS In May we proposed that a collaborative project be defined – with the clearly stated objective to improve the business climate in Hartland. In a letter to Bill Fountain and Joe Colaianne dated May 23rd we attached a proposed work plan. As you will see as you read the attached copy or our emails, we reported optimistically to our HBA members that “... *we might expect a high level of cooperation with Hartland Township*”.

RESPONSE Since that time, although follow-up phone calls requested a response – there has been none; nor has there been anything specifically responsive to a June email (attached), re-submitting our email of May 23rd.

Significantly, the Township is currently conducting a review of its regulations. To our knowledge, making them more business friendly is NOT a stated objective of that review. Simply put, if that is not part of the objective, then it should be no surprise to anyone that the resulting changes will not be more business friendly. Since we have not been invited to participate in this process, an opportunity to work together is being lost. The most likely result is that as a result of the review we will be faced with even more regulation.

WILL THE TOWNSHIP CHOOSE COLLABORATION? We believe that the Board should re-examine the evidence – and DECIDE to improve the business climate in Hartland. Unless this happens, there should be no expectation of improvement – rather the opposite, that Hartland will move further from “Friendly By Nature”; instead it will trend inevitably in the other direction.

INVISIBLE & COLLABORATIVE Let us state it again – we want to work collaboratively with the Township – if we can agree on a common statement of the objective and on a work plan that will start us on a path toward an improved regulatory climate.

The HBA has deliberately conducted itself in a manner largely invisible to the people of Hartland; this path was taken in the hope that the Township would welcome the chance to work with us. That it would be open to developing a better understanding of the meaning of “business friendly”. That it would be open to reviewing its business regulations by asking “Why?”, giving due regard to whether such regulations are necessary considering the perspective of Hartland’s entrepreneurs. And finally, asking themselves whether they would subject themselves to such regulation.

DECISION IS YOURS

We are prepared to work with the Township, collaboratively and behind the scenes - *if* the Township chooses to approach this problem positively and aggressively. While the Township’s slogan is “Friendly By Nature”, we believe that in this matter Nature needs help, by a sustained effort to unleash Nature from possibly repressive and unnecessary regulation. We suggest that, as the current administration in Washington is dramatically demonstrating, similar results might be found right here in Hartland.

THE BUSINESSES OF THE HARTLAND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Frank Crouse

From: Frank Crouse <crousefr@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, June 6, 2018 1:18 PM
To: 'Bill Fountain'; Joe Colaianne (jcolaianne@hartlandtwp.com)
Cc: Barbara Walker (BarbaraWalker@HartlandInsurance.com); Helen Micallef (dhmicallef@hotmail.com); Doug Kuhn (deepdigger@yahoo.com); Tom Parshall (tom@imcproducts.com); Dick Krueger (rck4450@Aol.com)
Subject: HBA - Status and Progress
Attachments: HBA_HARTLAND WORKPLAN - DRAFT 2018_03_17.pdf

Joe and Bill –

Here's another copy of the email I sent on May 23rd. I have an HBA meeting later this afternoon – and since I've not received a response, I wonder if either of you could provide me with a status report from your point of view. I of course will have to make a report on progress of our collaboration with the Township.

Thanks for your attention.

Frank

Gentlemen

We last met regarding the Hartland Business Association on 3/17/2018; I thank you for setting up that meeting. Doug Kuhn, Tom Parshall, and myself were encouraged after our meeting with you.

All parties seemed to think the project was worthwhile – that there were opportunities for Hartland to become more business friendly. While not getting into details, we reviewed our working definition of “business friendly”. At the end of the meeting, we provided you with what was described as a “Potential Workplan”, dated 3/17/2018. A copy is attached.

What was provided was a DRAFT proposal, which was intended to serve as a basis for further discussion. It had been my hope that you would review that plan, and that a follow-up meeting would occur to decide upon something mutually agreeable. I believed that together we could develop a collaborative approach, allowing us to quickly identify areas where changes could enable progress toward a stronger and healthier business Community in Hartland. On the basis of that meeting, I reported optimistically at our April membership meeting that the Township had formed a powerful committee and that we might expect a high level of cooperation with Hartland Township.

Unfortunately, at our May meeting I could only report that we had heard nothing further from the Township. At least some of the opportunity for collaboration may be slipping away; I say this because presumably the Planning Commission is continuing its review of Hartland's regulations – possibly without any change in guidance from the Township's Board of Trustees.

Merriam Webster defines collaboration as **“to work jointly with others or together especially in an intellectual endeavor – such as an international team of scientists collaborated on the study.”** (This of course is the positive definition of collaboration – the alternative definition involves traitorous conspiring with an enemy – certainly not applicable here). I believe we need to meet to agree on a project upon which we can collaborate! We need to define measurable objectives, and benchmarks along the way that will define progress and eventual success.

While we may or may not agree on politics, at the federal level it is being demonstrated that over-regulation and high taxes are bad for business – as measured by growth, profitability, and employment. We might even agree that it is being demonstrated that when these taxes and regulations are reduced – growth, profitability and employment can return. Is it possible that we could unleash as least some of the positive force in the Hartland business Community, by selectively reducing regulations without necessarily affecting health and safety? A reasonable study of the surveys of business condition (as evaluated by Hartland’s businesses) demonstrates that this may be possible. Perhaps we can establish goals – possibly the goals might be simple – such as those at the federal level requiring elimination of two regulations for every new one enacted (I’m told they are achieving 10 times better than that). Our task may not be as simple as that, but we won’t know unless we begin. One way or another, we need to have goals – so the results will be real and measurable. I believe we want the change to be serious, so that results will be apparent in the next round of business surveys.

Please pass this on to the other members of the Committee (Larry, Kathy, etc), and let me know about possible dates for a meeting.

Regards,

W. Frank Crouse

HARTLAND BUSINESS FRIENDLY POTENTIAL WORKPLAN 3/17/2018

- **Conduct a Workshop** to review evidence regarding current level of perceived friendliness of Hartland Township to its businesses
 - Establish a Position Statement of Hartland Township regarding becoming more “business friendly” , such as:
 - **MAKE HARTLAND A VERIFIBLY GREAT PLACE FOR BUSINESS...**

- **Link Township Website to the HBA website**, as is provided for the Hartland Chamber of Commerce

- **Create a Joint Committee of the Board** – Composed of Township and HBA members
 - Proposed: three members of the Board of Trustees including the Planning Commission board liaison person - persons selected should be open to the objective
 - Proposed: including at least 3 Members of HBA
 - Create a Mission Statement for the Committee – including agreement of a working definition of “Business Friendly”
 - Establish priorities for Change, including areas specifically identified in Township Survey of businesses:
 - Obvious problems in business community that can be easily corrected (i.e. no entrance sign to Fountain Square, no signage on Speedway canopy, etc.)
 - Regulatory Environment
 - Cooperative and Collaborative Environment
 - Township Government
 - Surveys – Initiate changes to survey process
 - Include owners of undeveloped commercial land in future business surveys – perhaps as a separate category
 - Include special survey / exit interview for businesses that
 - didn’t choose Hartland (Menards)
 - were rejected by Hartland (apartment complex)
 - chose to leave Hartland (Walmart)
 - Define and assign tasks
 - To be carried out by the Committee members, and
 - To entities such as the Planning Commission -