

A Little History on the Island Property

At the Library Board Meeting on May 13, 2021, the attorney for the Library Board reported that he had done a title search on the Island Property and discovered that the property was equally owned by the Village of Elk Rapids and Elk Rapids Township. This was apparently a surprise to the Library Board, Elk Rapids Township and the Village of Elk Rapids.

As a result of this information, I went back through all of the files that we had maintained over the past few years on the Library and the Island Property. The following is an abbreviated history of what I found.

April 19, 1948 – Katherine Dexter McCormick deeded the property to the Village of Elk Rapids. (We have the original deed.)

May, 1959 – a referendum was held, asking the question if the Village should transfer ½ ownership of the property to Elk Rapids Township. This referendum passed in both the Village and the Township. (I do not have the official results, but I have a newspaper article that reported on the results of that referendum.)

June, 1960 – it was determined that due to the transfer in ownership that the existing ordinance would need to be revised and a committee consisting of members from the Village of Elk Rapids and Elk Rapids Township was appointed to draft a new ordinance.

March, 1961 – a meeting of this ordinance committee was held and they voted on amendments to the original ordinance. The committee recommendations were approved by the committee. However, it appears that the committee recommendations were never formally adopted by the Village or the Township as we can find no record of the new ordinance being approved.

May, 1961 – a question was raised as to whether or not the transfer was legal. As a result, Katherine Dexter McCormick submitted an affidavit stating that she had no problem with the transfer of ownership between the Village and the Township, effectively putting this question to rest.

June, 1979 – a Special Election was held in Elk Rapids Township putting forth the question:
“Shall the Township of Elk Rapids terminate its obligation to pay one-half the maintenance of the Island Property by transferring back to the Village of Elk Rapids the one-half interest in the Island Property deeded by the Village to the Township in 1960?”

The recorded vote was 97-Yes and 34-No, so the proposal passed, and the property transfer back to the Village should have been recorded with the County.

It appears that this transfer back to the Village was never recorded with the County.

The Township needs to record this change with the County.