



KEBS Quarterly News

Land Planning · Engineering · Surveying
Soils Testing · Wetlands Planning

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Community Involvement in Your Project

Mixed-use developments or planned developments (PD) have become an increasingly popular concept among local agencies and developers alike. The goal of a PD is to allow a mix of different housing types with commercial and office uses. While this concept is growing in popularity, local residents impacted by such a development occasionally have contrary opinions. These opinions, if brought before the governing agencies, can sway the interests of the approving authorities. The hanging question: How can a developer discover the opinions of the community towards a new development *before* investing a significant amount of capital?



By hosting a community workshop or forum, the developer can gauge both the positive and negative opinions of the community. This method of community involvement can benefit the developer in multiple ways. First, the developer can consider the opinions of the community in making decisions about the use of land and the type of projects the citizens would support. This is a huge benefit, as the meeting would typically be held before site plan review and construction documents are prepared, saving the developer time and money. Additionally, the developer has the opportunity to create some good will with the neighbors and planning officials by allowing the community to

become involved early in the process. This would also give the developer an opportunity to tailor the project to some of the hot button issues expressed during the meeting.

KEBS is dedicated to your projects from start to finish. Please contact us to discuss your ideas for your mixed-use project! -Submitted by: Alisha Post, Marketing Director

Understanding the Land Division Act

Many of you have heard of the recent changes to the Land Division Act, which will speed up the plat approval process for developers. The time has finally arrived when developers can see these changes and how they will impact the approval process. On July 1, 2005, these changes to the Land Division Act will take effect, allowing simultaneous review of your final plat from the drain commissioner, road commissioner, local municipality, and MDOT.



While these changes are very exciting, we have to understand that this is a new process. With every new process, especially one that requires several agencies to come together, there will be a bit of a learning curve associated with implementing these changes. The feel from the Register of Deeds, who will have a new roll in the preliminary plat process, is relaxed, as they are not completely sure just how they will implement their new responsibilities.

At KEBS, we have been involved in understanding the new processes since it became public. We regularly work with both developers and governing agencies. Our role in this new legislation is to help both parties grasp this legislation and utilize it to the fullest. In essence, we want to make the flow of events as smooth as possible for you. Please contact Matt Ottinger or myself in the Haslett office to discuss this new process and how it pertains to your projects.

- Submitted by: Jeff Autenrieth, P.S., Haslett Subdivision Manager

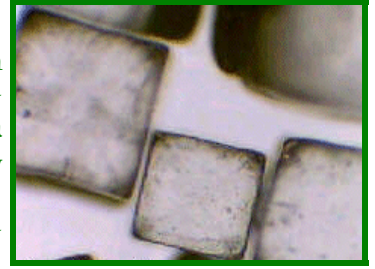
What *IS* This Stuff?

A full-service consultant can provide many benefits during the construction phase of a project. One of which includes the flexibility and resources to handle unanticipated challenges as they happen. Despite the best efforts that go into planning a project, *stuff* happens. When the unexpected arises, the ability to respond quickly makes problems more manageable.

On a recent Friday afternoon, KEBS' Soils office conducted routine field-testing, relative to the placement of a reinforced concrete slab. The following Monday, the contractor discovered crystalline residue (efflorescence) on the surface of the slab which appeared to be salt. Calcium chloride is a salt that is sometimes added to concrete to accelerate hydration and to speed the curing process. When present in concrete used to reinforce steel, calcium chloride can lead to corrosion and structural deterioration of the slab. The general contractor was duly alarmed, and placed a call to KEBS for assistance.

A sample of the crystalline residue was collected and sent for laboratory analysis to determine the chemical composition of the substance. X-ray diffraction analysis determined that no calcium chloride was present, but that the residue was composed almost entirely of arcanite (potassium sulfate). Arcanite will not promote corrosion of reinforcing steel, but it *can* lead to sulfate attack if the concrete is exposed to moisture for prolonged periods. Since the slabs tested will be located in the interior of the building, the concrete would not be exposed to these conditions. Also, early breaks of our concrete test cylinders confirmed that the design strength of the concrete would be met. The general contractor was immediately notified and the concrete supplier was contacted, solving the problem.

The rapid response to a potentially costly situation assured the contractor that his work would indeed meet his quality standards. Being able to provide this information in a timely manner is just one example of the many ways KEBS can add value to your construction project. *-Submitted by: Brian Swenson, Soils Technician*



Community Restrictions



When a builder contracts to build a home on a plat of land owned by a single developer, odds are favorable that a Declaration of Restrictions, Reservations, and Easements may be in place. A Declaration of Restrictions, Reservations, and Easements is a legal document recorded with the subdivision that specifies restrictions on every property built within that subdivision.

Often, limitations are set at the discretion of the developer. Some typical restrictions include type of home to be built on the plat, limitations on the use of the property, size of the dwelling, construction materials, location on the lot, placement of fences, hedges, swimming pools, sheds, driveways, or any number of items deemed desirable or undesirable by the developer. Additionally, the developer may specify a building review board that has the right to evaluate building plans for compliance with restrictions and guidelines. Often, the developer appoints the building review board.

To avoid running into problems during your project, ask for a current Deed or Declaration of Restrictions, Reservations, and Easements before purchasing a lot or plat. Read the restrictions thoroughly to ensure you are not giving up items that are valuable to you in a home building project.

-Submitted by: Glenn VanderMolen, Haslett Construction Manager

Engineering Team Welcomes New Member

KEBS is pleased to announce the addition of Karl Weber to our Haslett office. Karl joins KEBS as an Engineer in Training (E.I.T). Karl's past experience as a designer and inspector will benefit him greatly in his quest to become a Professional Engineer. Karl received his Bachelors in Civil Engineering from Michigan Technological University in Houghton, Michigan. Karl will work extensively with KEBS' Professional Engineers to learn the ropes of KEBS' Civil Engineering department and develop his skills. Please join us in welcoming Karl to the KEBS team!



Land Splitting Today

With the changing dynamics of the U.S. economy, it is increasingly difficult to turn a profit by farming. As the value of land continually rises, many landowners opt to sell a portion of or all their property. Additionally, when the land is part of an estate, an auction is a viable means of selling the land and quickly collecting and disbursing monies. For these reasons, KEBS has been involved in many large parcel splits.

There are several advantages to selling land via auction as opposed to a conventional listing. First, you can sell all of your property on the same day. The auction, in essence, eliminates the uncertainty of waiting around, hoping a buyer will come along. As an added bonus, the auction format allows for competitive bidding right there in the auction house. Also, the seller can share some of the cost associated with auctioning the property by setting up a buyer's premium.

Surveying on auctioned parcels can be set up in several different ways. Some sellers prefer to have the parcels surveyed prior to the auction so people can see exactly what they are bidding on. Others will place stakes along the road giving bidders an idea of the location, then will have the survey conducted after the auction. The latter of the two methods works extremely well when two or more parcels are combined into a single description.

No matter your situation or desires for land splitting, KEBS can help you determine the best method. Additionally, if you are interested in developing the land for long-term benefits, KEBS can help you determine the best use of your land. Give us a call for more information on land splitting and development.

-Submitted by: Mike Groat, P.S., Marshall Survey Manager



Photo by Mike Puttick

Strong Bases



Perhaps cliché, but vitally true, the integrity of a structure is only as reliable as the foundation. The foundation, intern, is only as stable as the ground built upon. The news headlines are scattered with stories of structural failure due to poor foundation support and the shortfalls of good design. Often overlooked is the integrity of a solid base for underground services within a site.

Typically, unstable ground will go unnoticed unless a failure occurs. Failures can result in a variety of consequences including sinkholes, structural damage, or complete failure. None of these are desirable occurrences especially when it impacts individuals in daily living.

KEBS' engineering staff is on top of your designs, as well as at the bottom, where the foundation you can build your dreams upon begins. Let KEBS' foundation specialists help you achieve your dream with confidence.

-Submitted by: Larry McCarthy, P.E., Brighton Office Manager

Bruce Porter Elected to the Eaton County Board



Bruce Porter, Engineering Technician in KEBS' Charlotte office, was recently appointed to a three-year term on the Eaton County Zoning Board of Appeals. The Zoning Board of Appeals has the authority to review administrative decisions if there is believed to be an error in fact, judgment, procedure, or interpretation by the Community Development Department. Additionally, the Zoning Board of Appeals has the authority to interpret ordinances, variances, commencement and reapplications, site plan review, community service facility, non-conformity appeals, review of enforcement decision, conditional user permit, and mobile home permit. This position was given after an application and interview process. With his extensive experience and background, Bruce decided to pursue this office to help the better processes and help individuals seeking the help of the

Board. Bruce has been a loyal KEBS employee for the past 18 years and we congratulate him on his achievement.

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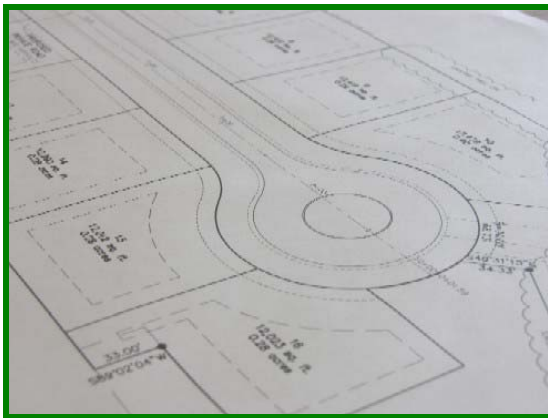


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**Knowledge
Quality
Commitment**

Freedom to Grow for Eaton County Developers



Originally designed as a faster, more efficient alternative to platting land, the site plan condo has become a popular method of developing residential developments in low-density situations in Eaton County. To expedite this process and provide clarity during the approval process, Eaton County is working on drafting a text revision to the development manual addressing site plan condos. Currently, the approval process for site condos in Eaton County defaults to the State act, and is subject to review only by the Drain Commission, Road Commission, and Health Department. According to the new provision, community development would provide municipal review, and apply the current parcel zoning standards to site plan condo developments. The new provision would *require* input from the Drain

Commissioner, Road Commissioner, and Health Department offices. A draft of the plan has been released, but the final draft is currently incomplete. Once approved, this revision will allow for better land-use plans. Additionally, the new plan would create new options for landowners and developers who are considering the split process in conjunction with private roads, and allow for higher density development in rural residential development situations.

Considering developing a condo project? Call KEBS to discuss your options and steps you must follow to realize your project! -Submitted by: Dave Bowerman, P.S., Charlotte Survey Manager