



# Whitewater Township News

**Summer 2021**

This Newsletter can be found on the Township  
Website: [whitewatertownship.org](http://whitewatertownship.org)

## Directory

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Williamsburg, MI 49690  
Phone 231-267-5141  
Fax 231-267-9020  
[www.whitewatertownship.org](http://www.whitewatertownship.org)

### SUPERVISOR

Ron Popp ext. 23  
[Supervisor@whitewatertownship.org](mailto:Supervisor@whitewatertownship.org)

### CLERK

Cheryl Goss ext. 24  
Mon thru Thur 9 am - 5 pm  
[Clerk@whitewatertownship.org](mailto:Clerk@whitewatertownship.org)

### TREASURER

Ardella Benak ext. 22  
P.O. Box 100  
Hours: M-W-F 10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
[Treasurer@whitewatertownship.org](mailto:Treasurer@whitewatertownship.org)

### TRUSTEE

Paul Hubbell  
Message 231-267-5141  
[Trustee02@whitewatertownship.org](mailto:Trustee02@whitewatertownship.org)

### TRUSTEE

Heidi Vollmuth  
Message 231-633-9468  
[heidivourtrustee@gmail.com](mailto:heidivourtrustee@gmail.com)

### ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Bob Hall ext. 21  
Thursdays 8:30 am - 4:30 pm  
[Zoning@whitewatertownship.org](mailto:Zoning@whitewatertownship.org)

### ASSESSOR

Dawn Kuhns - 231-409-1827  
By Appointment  
[assessordawn@gmail.com](mailto:assessordawn@gmail.com)

### FIRE & AMBULANCE

911 Emergency  
Fire Hall 231-267-5969  
(Non-Emergency)

### PARKS & RECREATION

Ranger Station - 231-267-5091

### PLANNING COMMISSION

Kim Mangus, Chair  
231-631-2326

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Luann Snider, Chair  
231-883-3193

### GT COUNTY RD COMM

231-922-4848

### BURN PERMITS - MDNR

866-922-2876  
[www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/](http://www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/)

## *Details, Details . . . from the Clerk/Parks & Recreation Administrator*

Greetings, one and all!

There is an election in Whitewater Township on August 3, 2021. Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Township Hall. The sole proposal on the ballot involves the issue of recreational marijuana establishments in the township. A sample ballot can be viewed at the township hall or at [www.whitewatertownship.org](http://www.whitewatertownship.org). If you wish to vote by absent voter ballot, call, write, or send an e-mail to the clerk's office to request an application. Once your completed application is returned to the clerk's office, your ballot will be issued.

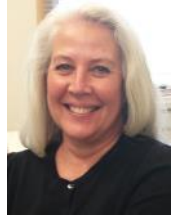
Regarding the Whitewater Township Boat Launch/Entryway Improvement Project, while the ramp especially is in dire need of repair, it has been decided to put this project out for bid this fall, with contract award and construction to be completed in 2022. Just a reminder, too, that this project is being funded strictly by user fees generated at Whitewater Township Park, as well as a \$200,000 matching grant from the DNR. Whitewater Township Park receives zero taxpayer dollars!

Did you know Whitewater Township has a batting cage for use by baseball and softball coaches and players, as well as for family events? It does! It is located at Hi Pray Park on Elk Lake Road. The rules and a short batting cage use application can be obtained from the township clerk's office. There is no cost to use the batting cage, although a \$10 per hour donation is suggested. Interest is growing in this fun activity conveniently located in the center of the township!

Wishing everyone an enjoyable and safe summer!

*Cheryl Goss*

Whitewater Township Clerk



## **Firefighters' Dedication to Their Profession and to Community**

Firefighters of Whitewater Township just completed a VFIS UTV/ATV training course administered through the Bureau of Fire Services and Michigan Firefighter Training Council. This eight-hour course teaches basic and advanced techniques of operating these specialty vehicles, as well as educates on topics of maintenance, liability, and planning operations. The completion of this class by all members shows their dedication to both the profession and to the township which they serve.



**JULY 20, 2021  
3:00 pm**

**BOARD OF  
REVIEW (JBOR)  
By  
appointment**



## ***10/02/21 Halloween Party in the Park***

Make your plans now for the Annual Halloween Campground Trick or Treating Party!



**Hosted by Whitewater  
Township Park,  
Firefighters and WESA**



## TOWNSHIP CALENDAR

### JULY 2021

7/04 Independence Day  
 7/07 Planning Commission  
 7/12 Park & Rec Committee  
 7/13 Township Board Meeting  
 7/20 July Board of Review  
 7/22 Zoning Board of Appeals

### AUGUST 2021

8/03 Election  
 8/04 Planning Commission  
 8/09 Park & Rec Committee  
 8/10 Township Board Meeting  
 8/26 Zoning Board of Appeals

### SEPTEMBER 2021

9/01 Planning Commission  
 9/06 Labor Day  
 9/13 Park & Rec Committee  
 9/14 Township Board Meeting  
 9/27 Zoning Board of Appeals

### OCTOBER 2021

10/02 Annual Halloween Party  
 10/06 Planning Commission  
 10/12 Township Board Meeting  
 10/11 Park & Rec Committee  
 10/28 Zoning Board of Appeals

### NOVEMBER 2021

11/03 Planning Commission  
 11/08 Park & Rec Committee  
 11/09 Township Board Meeting  
 11/18 Zoning Board of Appeals  
 11/25 Thanksgiving Day

### DECEMBER 2021

12/01 Planning Commission  
 12/13 Park & Rec Committee  
 12/14 Township Board Meeting  
 12/16 Zoning Board of Appeals  
 12/25 Christmas Day



### 2021 Clean-Up Day Results

June 12th was Cleanup Day in Whitewater Township. From 7:00am to 12:00pm trucks and trailers were lined up waiting their turn. The Auxiliary provided coffee & donuts for the early morning risers. Erickson Salvage hauled away 10 trailer loads of scrap metal. 1,147 tires were collected. Area Waste compacted 210 yards of waste.

Thank you to all the volunteers that helped and citizens who participated in making this a successful event. These efforts by all are what help to keep Whitewater Township clean! **Thank YOU!**

Supervisor - Ron Popp [Supervisor@whitwatertownship.org](mailto:Supervisor@whitwatertownship.org)



Happy Summer All,

Thank you to everyone who has called to provide comments on gravel roads this year. A long-time vendor to the Grand Traverse County Road Commission offering the brine service for about \$300.00 per mile did not bid this year and the lowest formal bid returned offer a 38% LiquiDow product trucked in from somewhere at more than \$1,000.00 per mile. With approximately 19 miles of gravel roads in the Township a single application of the LiquiDow would have consumed our entire annual budget for this service. Looking at several factors, the Township Board knew a single surface grade for the year would be insufficient. As a possible solution to this predicament, the Grand Traverse County Road Commission offered option #2 which used bid numbers from a different jurisdiction. Still more than double last year's cost, and still trucked in from somewhere, we did have a choice. Not perfect but, sometimes those are the cards we are dealt. Allowing two vendors to perform the work set up the patchwork of brined/unbrined roads you see between Acme, Union and Whitewater Townships.

Mobile Medical Response (MMR) recently provided a glimpse to the future of our ambulance service here in the Township. Early indicators point to sharing the service with Acme Township to make it a sustainable service. There will be more on this topic in the coming months.

Many community members are reporting bear sightings in the Township. It appears we may have 4 or more families calling the local woods and water home. Most reports locate the animals near and around streams and other water sources. I understand they like to eat from bird feeders too (and any small pets). Thank you to everyone who has sent in pictures, we appreciate knowing Mother Nature is thriving! PLEASE remember, bears are wild, always looking for food, and they are fast! For anyone in around these areas, be mindful of your surroundings and give the animals a wide berth.

In collaboration with American Waste/GFL Environmental the recycling bins located at the Township Hall will be emptied on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturday. This added collection day is in response to an increase of usage during the summer months especially on the weekends. Thank you to everyone involved in making this additional collection a reality.

Enjoy the summer!

**Ron Popp**  
 Whitewater Township Supervisor





## Treasurer's Corner - *Ardella (Della) Benak*

**Normal Office Hours at the Township Hall:** Monday, Wednesday & Friday  
from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, other days by appointment.  
Treasurer@Whitewatertownship.org - 231-267-5141 ext. 22



**Summer Deferment Applications** can be found on the Township webpage, or a copy can be obtained from the Treasurer's office. If you have had a deferment in the past, one will automatically be mailed to you the first of May.

**Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) Affidavits (Homestead Exemptions) and Request to Rescind** are due **NO later than June 1st**. They can both be found on the Treasurer and Assessing webpage tabs and can be picked up here at the township hall.

**Important:** When you receive your July 1st summer tax bill, please open your envelope even if your taxes are being paid by a mortgage company. The July newsletter will be in with your tax bill and will have important information you are going to want to see. If you receive a tax bill that is not yours, please call us so that we can make sure the correct people get their tax bill. We appreciate your help in this.



*Ardella M. Benak* - Treasurer

*Lois MacLean* - Deputy Treasurer

### **Zoning District and Tax Classifications Are Not The Same Thing**

One of the recurring misperceptions is the belief that the tax classification on your property tax bill is the same as the zoning district of the parcel. They are not the same.

The tax assessor classifies properties and takes that data to study property values in a given area. The assessor will group all of a certain type of residential property so residential values are only being compared to like residential land. This way residential will not be grouped with commercial for purposes of assessing property value.

One part of the General Property Tax Act (MCL 211.34c(2)) strictly defines each property classification. The tax assessor has many possible sub-classifications which are based on the actual use of the land. They include:

- ◆ Agricultural (includes sub-classifications 101-160 for agricultural: improved, vacant, building on leased land, and other agricultural categories)
- ◆ Commercial (includes sub-classifications 201-260 for commercial: improved, vacant, renaissance zones, condominiums, personal property, & more)
- ◆ Industrial (includes sub-classifications 301-352 for industrial: improved, vacant, renaissance zones, personal property, and more)
- ◆ Residential (includes sub-classifications 401-460 for residential: improved, vacant, condominiums, and more)
- ◆ Timber (includes sub-classifications 501-502 for timber: cutover, Commercial Forest Act, and more)
- ◆ There are other categories. Michigan provides a partial list of recommended classification codes online.
- ◆ Zoning district names have the same titles (agricultural, commercial, industrial and residential), but they have different purposes.

A local government adopts a Master Plan using a process spelled out in the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Part of the plan includes discussion on zoning and a future land use map. The plan expresses a future vision for a community and shows where different forms of growth should occur. A zoning ordinance includes a zoning map that shows zoning districts. Over time the zoning map is updated and gradually starts to look similar to the future land use map.

Those zoning districts are often given names denoting where that type of development is to occur. There is not any standardization of zoning district names in Michigan. Some communities name their zoning districts after a place or neighborhood name such as "Village District." Others just use a letter-number system such as R-1, R-2, etc. Residential R-1 might be the least dense single-family area in one community but the most dense multiple family in another.

With zoning, one does not rely on the name of the zoning district; rather, one looks at the details in the zoning ordinance to see what that district is about and what land uses and forms might be allowed. Zoning is talking about what the use and forms can and cannot be today and in the immediate future. Tax classifications, meanwhile, talk about the actual use already on the land. The tax assessor is classifying property based on what the current use of parcels are for purposes of comparing like-land in order to calculate property values and generally uses a statewide classification system with uniform names. Because of these differences, one should never base zoning decisions on what appears on a property tax bill or assessment notice.

## SPECIAL ELECTION - AUGUST 3, 2021, BALLOT PROPOSAL

### INITIATION OF ORDINANCE TO PROHIBIT ADULT-USE MARIHUANA ESTABLISHMENTS

Shall Whitewater Township adopt a proposed initiated ordinance that completely prohibits adult-use (also known as “recreational”) marihuana establishments within the boundaries of Whitewater Township?

#### FACTS RELATED TO THE BALLOT PROPOSAL

- If successful, the ballot proposal would implement an ordinance that prohibits adult-use (“recreational”) marihuana establishments within the Township, overriding the current Township ordinance that allows such establishments. The ballot proposal is available online here: <https://tinyurl.com/7pksabdv>
- Ordinance No. 60 was adopted by the Whitewater Township Board on 12/08/2020, allowing certain recreational marihuana establishments in the township. Recreational marihuana became legal in Michigan with the passage of statewide Proposal 18-1 on November 6, 2018. Ordinance No. 60 is available online here: <https://tinyurl.com/skhe5e7u>
- The Township Board also adopted Ordinance No. 59 which allows medical marihuana facilities under the same regulations as Ordinance 60. The ballot proposal does not impact Ordinance 59 or medical marihuana.
- Per Ordinance No. 60, “*Marihuana Establishment*” or “*Establishment*” is a marihuana grower, marihuana safety compliance facility, marihuana processor, marihuana microbusiness, marihuana retailer, marihuana secure transporter, designated consumption establishment, excess marihuana grower, marihuana event organizer, temporary marihuana event license, or any other type of marihuana-related business licensed by the Marijuana Regulatory Agency of the State of Michigan.
- In order for a person or entity to operate a recreational marihuana establishment in Whitewater Township, they must obtain a license from the State of Michigan. They also must obtain a permit from the township.
- With the adoption of Ordinance No. 60, Whitewater Township allowed two types of permits to be issued, marihuana grower and marihuana processor.
- The maximum number of recreational marihuana grower and processor permits allowed is:
  - ◆ a. Marihuana Grower Class A (not more than 100 plants): 50
  - ◆ b. Marihuana Grower Class B (not more than 500 plants): 50
  - ◆ c. Marihuana Grower Class C (not more than 2000 plants): 50
  - ◆ d. Marihuana processor: 5
  - ◆ e. All other types of recreational marihuana permits: Zero
- By “stacking” permits, a person or entity may apply for and receive more than one permit at a single location. For example, a person could have five Class C Growers, as well as a processor, at one location. The operator would have to pay six state licenses and six local permits, but it would only be one location in the township.
- Recreational Establishments are generally located in the agricultural and industrial zoning districts and Whitewater Township is in the process of adopting specific zoning regulations.
- Ordinance No. 60 requires that all growing and processing of recreational marihuana must take place indoors. No outside growing or processing is allowed.
- Applicants for recreational marihuana licenses must go through an extensive application process before being issued a license by the State of Michigan.
- Applicants for recreational marihuana permits must also go through an extensive application process at the township level and comply with all local ordinances and the special use permit process.
- Applicants must be re-licensed and re-permitted annually, and risk losing their license and/or permit if they are found to be in violation.