



# Whitewater Township

# News

# Spring 2023

This Newsletter can be found on the Township Website: whitewatertownship.org

# Directory

5777 Vinton Road \* P.O. Box 159 Williamsburg, MI 49690 Phone 231-267-5141 Fax 231-267-9020 www.whitewatertownship.org

# **SUPERVISOR** Ron Popp ext. 23

Supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com

### **CLERK** Cheryl Goss ext. 24

Mon thru Thur 9 am - 5 pm Clerk@whitewatertownship.org

## **TREASURER** Ardella Benak ext. 22

P.O. Box 100

Hours: W-Th 10:00 - 4:00 pm Treasurer@whitewatertownship.org

# **TRUSTEE** Don Glenn

dglenn6542@yahoo.com

## TRUSTEE Heidi Vollmuth 231-633-9468

heidivyourtrustee@gmail.com

### ZONING ADMINISTRATOR Bob Hall ext. 21

Thursdays 8:30 am - 4:30 pm Zoning@whitewatertownship.org

## PLANNING COMMISSION Rachel Steelman - Chair

rsteelmanpc@yahoo.com

### HISTORICAL SOCIETY Luann Snider, Chair

231-883-3193 historical@whitewatertownship.org

### **ASSESSOR**

Dawn Kuhns - 231-409-1827 By Appointment assessordawn@gmail.com

## FIRE & AMBULANCE

911 Emergency Fire Hall 231-267-5969 FireChief@whitewatertownship.org

#### **PARKS & RECREATION**

Ranger Station - 231-267-5091

# GT COUNTY RD COMM 231-922-4848

**BURN PERMITS - MDNR** 866-922-2876

www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/

# **PARKS & RECREATION** 2023 Spring Updates

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee has been continually working to improve our trails, parks, and natural areas. We applied for the Grand Traverse County ARPA grant funding back in November. We are very grateful to have been chosen as one of the recipients to help fund the Lossie Road Nature Trail Improvements project. Some of the trail improvements include mitigating wet areas over a portion of the trail system, replacing the old foot bridge over Battle Creek, and other improvements to make this a safe and reliable walking path. We are looking for community volunteers to help make up a subcommittee in order to move forward with this project development. Let me know if you might be interested! We are also in need of a couple alternate members on our PRAC. Please let us know if you would like to submit an application. I would be glad to answer any questions you might have as well.

Other projects on the horizon are improvements to Battle Creek Natural Area trails to create a loop, a potential Hi Pray Park walking path, and playground updates. Currently, our playground equipment is extremely limited for the younger aged children. We are looking for funding through grants, donations, etc., to purchase a toddler aged slide/climber playset for the Park playground. We are hoping to make a goal of \$8,000 by May. If you are interested or know of potential sources of funding, please let us know.

We look forward to a great spring start with the Hi Pray playground re-opening, a ton of Little League teams to start using the baseball fields, and anyone in the community to reserve/use the covered batting cage.

Melissa Melton Thank you and Happy Spring!

# WHAT'S NEW

### **BOAT LAUNCH EXPANSION**

Is moving forward!! Whitewater Township Board has signed a contract for Molon Excavating to perform this expansion. It is expected to be done in phases through the summer and to be finished by late Fall 2023.

### ONLINE CAMP RESERVATIONS

The website will be live April 3rd for online camping reservations at Whitewater Township Park. https:// whitewatertownshippark.org/

#### **PROJECTS**

A list of capital improvement projects, generated through community feedback during our 5-year Rec Planning process, can be found online at https:// www.whitewatertownship.org/ recreation-plan.html



# Drum Roll Please ....

The Whitewater Township Board unanimously chose Molon Excavating as the successful bidder on the Whitewater Township Park Improvements Project which includes the maintenance and expansion of the boat launch lanes, site preparation for the boat wash station, additional parking and entry drive

improvements at a total cost of \$524,290, \$200,000 of which is from a Waterways grant awarded to the township by the MiDNR.

Fleis & VandenBrink will continue to work with the township on the project. Work will be done throughout the summer and is expected to be completed this fall!





# Memorial Day



The Deal-Ridgeway American Legion Post #289 of Williamsburg, Michigan, will honor our fallen on May 29, 2023 with a Memorial Day Parade.

Ceremonies will be held at the Williamsburg Cemetery, Mill Creek, and Circle Hill Cemetery.

Williamsburg Cemetery

We will muster at the Fire Station on Old M-72 around 9:00 AM and "march" about 9:30 AM. Everyone must walk or drive their personal car. Bus service will not be available. Join us for a luncheon picnic following services at Circle Hill. This is a great event for our community and we welcome your attendance. Please join your friends and neighbors for this Patriotic event in OUR community.



HOPE TO SEE YOU ON MAY 29, 2023 at 9:00 AM



**Whitewater Township Fire Department Serving Our Community** 

## TOWNSHIP CALENDAR

Mill Creek

## April 2023

4/05 Planning Commission

Township Board Meeting 4/11

4/18 Parks & Rec Committee

4/27 Zoning Board of Appeals

## May 2023

5/03 Planning Commission

5/09 Township Board Meeting

5/16 Parks & Rec Committee

5/25 Zoning Board of Appeals

5/29 Memorial Day Parade

#### **JUNE 2023**

6/07 Planning Commission

Annual Cleanup Day 6/10

Township Board Meeting 6/13

6/20 Parks & Rec Committee

Zoning Board of Appeals 6/22

## **JULY 2023**

7/04 Independence Day

7/11 Township Board Meeting

7/12 Planning Commission

Parks & Rec Committee 7/18

7/18 Board of Review (3 pm)

7/27 Zoning Board of Appeals

# **Mark Your Calendars**



# G.T. Butterfly House & Bug Zoo

8840 E M-72, Williamsburg, MI **Opening May 1st** Hours: 10 am to 5 pm



# Kettlewell's Ice Cream & Farm Good



# **Operation Hours:**

SEASON OPENING:

May 1 - Labor Day (September 5th) 11 am - 9 pm Daily



Ice cream is freshly made, non GMO, no additives. Dairy is local! And, the \$1 kid's cone will be back in 2023. Proudly serving Northwoods Soda in their floats, and can flurry over 50+ flavor combinations. Hot food includes hot dogs and pretzels.

The TCHS located on 130+ acres, will return this summer, bringing equestrian competitors to Flintfields Horse Park in Williamsburg for 12 weeks of competition. Beginning June 7, and season ending with the Tournament of Champions Competition the American Gold Cup from Sept 13 - 17. TCHS has a \$120 million direct impact on the local economy and has grown into the third largest event in the country. Each week, 100% of spectator ticket sales will be donated to one local charity! You can watch TCHS on live stream, interviews, special videos and all competitions.

https://traversecityhorseshows.com/



# "Details, Details" . . . From the Clerk

# Happy Spring Greetings from the Clerk's Office to all!

Spring will be upon us by the time you receive this newsletter, and although we have had a fairly mild winter, I'm ready for leaves on the trees, early perennials blooming, and green grass! Soon!!

### Election Update for 2023/2024

- Although you may hear of voters going to the polls on May 2 in nearby jurisdictions, Whitewater Township does NOT have anything on the ballot for May.
- August and November Deadlines to get something on either of these ballots have not yet passed, so we cannot say with absolute certainty at this time that there will be no election in Whitewater for either date. Stay tuned.
- Presidential Primary 2024 The Michigan Legislature is in the process of moving the date from early March to late February, with the exact date not yet confirmed.

As many of you already know, the passage of Proposal 22-2 last November ushered in 9 days of "early voting" in Michigan, as well as other changes to the Michigan Constitution related to elections. The 9 days of early voting, for state/federal elections only, will begin two Saturdays before an election and continue for 9 straight days, with the final early voting day on the last Sunday before the election. Precincts will be required to be open a minimum of 8 hours each of those days. Thousands of additional election inspectors will be needed all across the state in order to staff the required 72 hours, and an election administrator will also have to be present for same-day voter registrations, etc. The normal 13 hours of voting on Election Day will still take place as it always has. The Michigan Legislature and Bureau of Elections are currently crafting the rules for implementation of Proposal 22-2. It is possible that some of the smaller jurisdictions, perhaps Whitewater, who are not able to staff the additional 72 hours will combine with other jurisdictions at a "voting center" where voters from multiple jurisdictions will vote in a centralized location, meaning some voters will travel outside their jurisdiction to "early vote." These and other new requirements will significantly increase the cost of elections in each jurisdiction, as well as present logistical issues for conducting elections in buildings which are already marginally adequate for those activities.

## Public Facility Needs in Whitewater Township

The township board is aware that certain facilities in the township are going to require, at a minimum, expansion of existing buildings in order to provide proper working spaces for employees to conduct their duties and serve the public, address security concerns, as well as properly house equipment and records. A contract with C2AE Architecture was entered into in November 2021 for Facility Survey, Visioning, & Concept Development of the township hall and fire station, as well as a Water System Project Evaluation & Feasibility Study to look at supplying water to the industrial district. C2AE issued their Feasibility Study report on 08/01/2022. The report was discussed briefly at the 11/17/2022 board meeting, although Project Manager Erik Cronk was unable to be present to answer questions or explain funding opportunities. Specifically, regarding the township hall, the building has been long outgrown and needs to expand or be built new. The last remodel was in 1998. Issues include not enough office space, State of Michigan voting station requirements cannot be met in the current space nor is there room for the absent voter counting board, lack of secure storage, no break room for employees, lack of a conference room/second meeting room, inadequate restrooms, inadequate parking, inefficient and costly electric heat in the ceiling, lack of central air conditioning, to name the main issues. All of this will be costly to address, for sure, but doing nothing is not an option that will serve the public for the next 20 years. Look for more on this issue in the future.

Cheryl Goss Whitewater Township Clerk

## **NEVER MISS A CHANCE TO DANCE!**

This event is a four week series every Wednesday starting 4/19/2023 at 6 pm. Total cost for the dance series is \$60 per person. Reserve your spot and pay direct via the link below:

https://square.link/u/BOlq5GtP or find it on HERTHA's site https://herthahall.com/events

Never Miss A



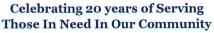
Classes are being taught by the owners Chance To Dance of "Night Moves Social Dance." Nancy and Mel Kiogima have been dancing since the 70's. Trained in ballroom. Latin, Swing and Country Two Step. Take a step into learning or refreshing your dance moves. Sign up and take date night to a whole new level.



Located: Map 8925 M 72 E Williamsburg, MI 49690 Thrift Store: (231) 938-2990

Food Pantry: (231) 267-3002 Email:

actsstorepantry@gmail.com



The food pantry provides food for people in need. The pantry is funded by the Thrift Store proceeds, individual donors, and local grants support this important service. ACTS provides food and other necessary items to all qualified persons. If help is needed, know that we are here to help and your information is always kept confidential. Call for appointment 1 hour prior to start time on the following days: Tues. 5-7pm, Wed. 1-4pm, Sat. 10 -1pm

Let me share something really cool with you that ACTS is doing

Every visit to ACTS your kiddos now get to pick out a FREE book!!

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# Spring Greetings from Whitewater Township Fire Department

As predicted, 2022 was an unusually dry year which increased our wildfire activity in the area. Whitewater Township Fire Department responded to 12 wildland fires totaling 32.8 acres with the Strombolis Cabin fire being the largest at 18 acres. Sadly, none of these fires were started naturally. With another relatively dry winter on hand, we are preparing for more wildfire activity this season and we expect it to start early.



Whitewater Township follows the Michigan DNR and EGLE regulations for open burning. Small fires for recreation and cooking are allowed without a permit in an approved container. However, general open burning requires a permit which can be found online at <a href="https://www.michigan.gov/burnpermit">www.michigan.gov/burnpermit</a>. On the Permission to Burn page, click on the "CAN I BURN TODAY?" link. This will take you to a map of Michigan; be sure to click on Grand Traverse County to see detailed information about each township. If the <a href="https://www.michigan.gov/burnpermit">Burning Permits Issued</a> column says **YES** next to Whitewater, then you may burn with the restrictions noted. If it says NO, then you may not burn. You may also obtain information by calling 866-922-BURN (2876). Please remember to use caution when burning on windy days, <a href="https://www.michigan.gov/burnpermit">never leave your fire unattended</a>, and of course burning trash and construction materials is strictly prohibited. Permission to burn status changes daily, so please check the DNR website often as conditions change very rapidly.

Please also remember to check your smoke alarms regularly. Last year in Michigan, 132 people died in 113 fires which is a 23% increase from 2021. 56% of the victims were between the ages of 40 and 79, so please check on your friends, elderly family members and neighbors for working smoke alarms. If you need help with either of these, please contact the Fire Chief at 231-267-5969.

Please visit our website for more information: <a href="https://www.whitewatertownship.org/fire.html">https://www.whitewatertownship.org/fire.html</a>

Thank you and be safe!

Brandon Flynn - Fire Chief



# SIGN UP TO BECOME A FIREFIGHTER TODAY!

Township pays for your training class & wages to attend classes.



# We're Trying Something NEW! TACO Dinner Night!!

Come out for the Whitewater Emergency Services Auxiliary (WESA) Taco Dinner Night! It's been a long winter. We have all missed seeing everyone and are really looking forward to getting together! Normally we do a Spaghetti dinner but decided to spice things up this year. Who knows, maybe we will end up hosting two events every year instead of one. Let us know what you think.



**Saturday**, **May 6**, **2023**, **4 p.m. to 7 p.m.** at the Williamsburg Methodist Church, 5750 Williamsburg Rd. Enjoy the very best taco dinner served up by the very best servers (the fire department personnel!) while visiting with the very best

friends and family in the community! Come on out and let these fine people know how much we appreciate their service and dedication to our community! The fire department will be on hand for questions, photo ops and demos!

There will be door prizes, a silent auction and NEW THIS YEAR a 50/50 drawing!!



Saturday June 10, Cleanup day assistance & refreshments
Watch for info on the Halloween Party at the Campground!!
Bring your family! Bring your friends!!





# **Planning Commission News**



Greetings from your Planning Commission Chair! I'm pleased to report the Planning Commission is comprised of a full and dedicated team with many experiences and talents.

I'd like to thank Kim Mangus for her many years of service and dedication to the Planning Commission. The foundation Kim helped shape and her knowledge is invaluable.

The Planning Commission has begun the process of updating the Whitewater Township Master Plan. A Master Plan is a document that is required by state law and helps to define a long-term vision for how a community should develop and redevelop. It forms the basis for local zoning and other development regulations. We all know that growth and change is somewhat inevitable. How growth and change occur is up to us, and the Master Plan describes what we want our community to be like in the future.

The planning process kicked off last fall and we are assembling information that helps create an up-to-date profile of our township. Additionally, because community engagement is essential to a good Master Plan, a subcommittee of Planning Commission members and interested residents are working on steps to obtain YOUR input by way of a new resident survey (the last one is nearly 15 years old) and planning for follow-up, in-person public meetings or workshops which will dig deeper into local planning issues.

Look for future opportunities to weigh in on planning issues facing Whitewater Township in the months ahead. Watch the township website and do not hesitate to reach out with questions or comments. We are here for you!

All the best,

Rackel Steelman - Planning Commission Chair

rsteelmanpc@yahoo.com







# **Master Plans**

Master Plans are community driven documents that provide leaders and residents with a vision of their future physical development. The process used to develop a Master Plan seeks to involve all segments of the local populace and to consider all relevant factors that may influence its future. These factors include the area's history, resources, economy, population, growth trends, existing land use patterns, infrastructure, environment, character, and attitudes.

In addition to evaluating existing conditions, plans and the planning process identify and evaluate community problems and opportunities. Armed with these inventories and analysis, and an understanding of how these factors may impact their future, communities develop goals and policies that guide decision makers.



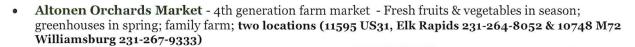
Master Plans are not ordinances or laws. Master Plans are plans for the future. They guide decisions and should be regularly evaluated as conditions within the community change. In Michigan, Master Plans are the basis for zoning ordinances (which are laws). Zoning must be based on a reasonable community plan. So while Master Plans are guides, they are also the legal foundation for local land use laws.

# Robert Hall

Zoning Administrator

### FARMERS MARKETS SPRING OPENINGS

# Spring is here and we all know what that may mean here in Northern Michigan





- Elk Rapids Area Farmer's Market, located in Rotary Park next to the Chamber of Commerce (big swan), begins Friday, June 9th and runs through October 6th. Hours are from 8am to 12pm every Friday. Vendors from 13 counties bring seasonal fruits and vegetables, baked goods, dairy products, plants, and more. Farm to table at its finest.
- Myrtle and Maude's 4th generation family owned and operated, kicks off their 2023 season on Thursday April 13th thru Sunday 16th. Join them for their 2nd Annual Pancake Breakfast Saturday morning April 15th from 10am 12pm. Adults \$8, Kids 3-12 \$5 and kids 2 and under are FREE! Located at 10937 Elk Lake Rd, Williamsburg. https://www.facebook.com/Myrtleandmaudes/
- Torch Lake Co-op, to get your local food and plants from farmers, growers, and chefs, all in one place! Multiple pickup and delivery options including Kettlewell's on M72, Williamsburg. For more information go to <a href="http://torchlakecoop.com">http://torchlakecoop.com</a> for details and to sign up for the newsletter.

# Supervisor - Ron Popp Supervisor@whitewatertownship.org

Please join me in thanking Ron Bachi who has served as the Deputy Supervisor since 2019. His service, leadership, and guidance to the office has made Whitewater Township a better place to live. Thank you, Ron!

Welcome to Mr. Tim Arends as the new Deputy Supervisor for Whitewater Township. Many of you may know Mr. Arends from his previous involvement in local government and the utility sector. Tim's vast experience in governance will assist the Township in reviewing the decades old administrative policies we use today.



Some exciting changes are being implemented at the camping park for the 2023 season. Beyond the planned expansion of the boat ramp and additional parking spaces, Trustee Don Glenn is spearheading the effort to combine all park and recreation venues in the Township under one management. A Park Manager position was created which we hope to have filled by early April. This post will focus on the camping park management in the beginning with plans to broaden the work scope to oversee daily operations of all park and recreation venues. For years the camping park had been operated as an extension of the Clerk's Office which we simply outgrew. Recent exponential growth in recreation interests required a sustainable method of management able to accommodate the Park's bright future. The ultimate goal is for the park system to operate like the Fire Department, as a separate entity, but subordinate to the Whitewater Township Board of Trustees. A business model of this type will transcend elected office terms providing a succession plan and ensuring long-term vibrance of the entire park system.

During budget talks this year Fire Chief Brandon Flynn reminded the Board again it is time to financially plan for a replacement fire engine. This is a major purchase for any local unit of government and required an increase in the Fire Special Assessment District of 0.5 mill for the foreseeable future. All Board Members were aligned on this topic which rarely happens in Whitewater Township. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to any or all Board Members.

The Planning Commission is working with North Place Planning, Randy Mielnik to update the Master Plan and will be holding several resident input sessions in the next few months. Public input crafting the Master Plan is paramount. Keep an eye open for invitations to these outreach events and try to attend at lease on session.

The Township needs folks to serve on various boards and commissions. If you have any interest in local governance, please call me at 231.267.5151 Ext. 23 or via email at supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com

Ron Popp

**Whitewater Township Supervisor** 



## HOUSEHOLD BATTERY RECYCLING

Buckets have been moved to a container by the recycle bins. DO NOT put them in the recycle bins. Please do not dispose of them with your regular trash.





Just a reminder that if the digging is essential, it is necessary to contact MISS DIG 811 to have underground utilities marked to avoid damage or injury prior to an excavation project. MISS DIG can be contacted by Calling 811 or go to www.missdig.org. A MISS DIG tip sheet on safe digging is available.

# **2023** Fees at Whitewater Township Park and Hi Pray Park



**Boat Launch Fees** 

Daily Pass - \$8

Annual Resident Pass - \$30

Annual Non-Resident Pass - \$60

Camper Boat Passes \$10-20 (depending on length of stay)

Ice, Garbage, Dump Station Fees

Ice - \$4 per bag

Garbage - \$5/bag

Dump Station - \$20 (non-campers)

Pavilion/Batting Cage Rental Fees

Whitewater Township Park Pavilion - \$100 per day

Hi Pray Park Pavilion - \$75 per day

Batting Cage - No Fee (\$10/hour donation suggested)

















May 5 and 6 - FREE Camping Weekend May 7 thru June 11 - \$39 per night June 12 thru September 3 - \$46 per night

September 4 thru Sept 30 - \$39 per night

Additional Adult Camping Unit fee - \$25 per night Reservation Fee - \$8 per reservation, non-refundable

# ARE YOU PARTICIPATING IN THE FREE CAMPING WEEKEND MAY 5-73

As a show of appreciation each campsite will be given one free dinner at the WESA TACO Dinner Night on

May 6, 4-7 pm at the Williamsburg United Methodist Church





# Treasurer's Corner - Ardella (Della) Benak

# Normal Office Hours at the Township Hall:



Wednesday & Thursday from 10:00 - 4:00, other days & times by appointment. Treasurer@Whitewatertownship.org - 231-267-5141 ext. 22

**2022 tax season has come to a close.** Settlement with the County went very well with no corrections or adjustments for our Township!

The 2023/2024 budget has been completed. The budget process is a lengthy process involving all board members. It is done once a year to plan ahead for the financial well-being and stability of the Township.

**Preparations** for the upcoming tax season are underway in the Treasurer's office. We are looking forward to a busy and productive summer and **hoping to see many of you at the Annual Cleanup Day on June 10th.** My deputy, Lois MacLean, and I will be the ones greeting you and checking ID's as always.

Ardella M. Benak-Treasurer

Lois MacLean - Deputy Treasurer

I am available by phone or through email to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

DO YOU need to know how much you paid in Property Taxes? How about what your assessed value is of your property?

**BS&A** Online (no charge): click here or type into your browser: <a href="https://bsaonline.com/?uid=297">https://bsaonline.com/?uid=297</a>

This will take you directly to the Whitewater Township, Grand Traverse County section. Type in your address and select your parcel. Here you will create an account for your own parcel with access to the BS&A property information.

**Grand Traverse County** has online property records so you can look up your property, parcel and tax information:

https://www.gtcountymi.gov/1411/Online-Records

Select or type in the web address for Online Records.

Select Parcel Data

Select Parcel Tax Data Viewer

Search by parcel number, name or address.

Select your parcel.

The County updates this information.





# GREAT BIG THANK YOU'S GO OUT TO......

**Kim Mangus** for years of dedicated service on the Planning Commission and the thankless job of being the Chairperson.

Dan Belanger and Peggy Quast for dedication to the Whitewater Township Park Campground making everyone's experience at the park more enjoyable. Your bubbly personalities and smiling faces (& cookies) will be missed by all.

**Clerk Cheryl Goss** for years of service as the Park Administrator bringing together improvements and cost saving efforts making this year's road entry, boat wash and boat launch/dock expansion possible.

**Trustee Don Glenn** for grabbing the reigns as the interim Park Administrator while the township makes the transition to a full time Park Manager.

**Treasurer Ardella Benak** for 14 years of developing and producing the township newsletter and organizing the township annual clean-up day.



# Saturday, June 10, 2023

# WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP ANNUAL CLEANUP DAY

# 8:00 am to 12:00 pm at Mill Creek Elementary School on Old M-72





PLEASE BRING HELP FOR LARGE ITEMS

# **ITEMS TO BE ACCEPTED**

Wood & Construction Debris (limit of 2 cubic yards)
Household Furniture • Metals • Plastics
Water Heaters • Large Appliances
Titled Junk Vehicles • Batteries

# **ITEMS NOT ACCEPTED**

Hazardous Waste • Household Garbage • Brush Leaves & Other Yard Waste • Concrete • Car Batteries

NO TIRES WILL BE ACCEPTED THIS YEAR!

# **Volunteers are always Appreciated**

Resident

ID is Required!



Fire & Ambulance Vehicles will be there.

Bring the kids for a tour!

Refreshments will be provided by the

Whitewater Emergency

Services Auxiliary (WESA)

