



Whitewater Township

News

Summer 2023

This Newsletter can be found on the Township

Website: whitwatertownship.org

Directory

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

SUPERVISOR

Ron Popp ext. 23
Supervisorwhitewater@gmail.com

CLERK

Cheryl Goss ext. 24
Mon thru Thur 9 am - 5 pm
Clerk@whitwatertownship.org

TREASURER

Ardella Benak ext. 22
P.O. Box 100
Hours: T-W-Th 10:00 - 4:00 pm
Treasurer@whitwatertownship.org

TRUSTEE

Don Glenn
231-267-5141
dglenn6542@yahoo.com

TRUSTEE

Heidi Vollmuth
231-633-9468
heidivourtrustee@gmail.com

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Bob Hall ext. 21
Thursdays 8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Zoning@whitwatertownship.org

ASSESSOR

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

FIRE & AMBULANCE

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

PARKS & RECREATION

Ranger Station - 231-267-5091

PLANNING COMMISSION

Rachel Steelman - Chair
rsteelmanpc@yahoo.com

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Luann Snider - Chair
231-883-3193
historical@whitwatertownship.org

GT COUNTY RD COMM

231-922-4848

BURN PERMITS - MDNR

866-922-2876
www.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/

Whitewater Township Fire Department News



Summer in Northern Michigan is in full swing, and so is the Whitewater Township Fire Department. The abnormally dry weather has kept us busy with several wildfires and high fire danger conditions will persist throughout the summer. Please help us out and refrain from open burning when burn permits are closed. To check the status of open burning, go to <https://www2.dnr.state.mi.us/burnpermits/> and click on Grand Traverse County. This will tell you if open burning is allowed for the day in our township, but be sure and check this daily before you burn. We also have a link on our webpage <https://www.whitwatertownship.org/fire.html>

I would also like to share with everyone that we have two new recruits that have recently graduated from the fire academy and are now certified firefighters ready to serve our community. This particular fire academy was completely funded by Michigan Works which has been a great partnership with Northern Michigan Fire Departments. Please welcome Joe Perkovich and Cole Kushner to the team if you see them out working.

The Whitewater Township Fire Department participates in the Michigan Bureau of Fire Services (BFS) smoke alarm program. If you live in Whitewater Township and need smoke alarms in your home, please contact Chief Flynn at 231-267-5969 or email at firechief@whitwatertownship.org. Please remember that smoke alarms need to be replaced after 10 years and Carbon Monoxide alarms are only good for 7 years. We encourage you to check your elderly neighbors and loved ones' smoke alarms often.

Brandon Flynn - Fire Chief



Wildfire Prevention Season

Map View Search Tools Share

Search Quick Zoom Details Measure

Details ?

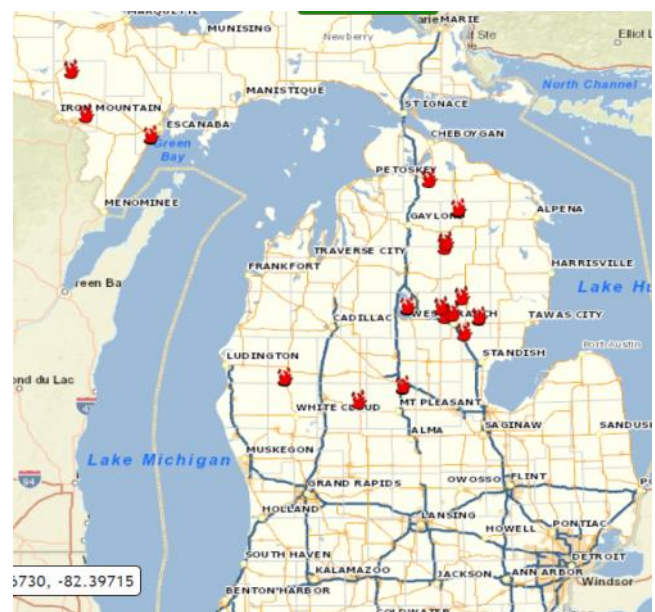
Click one of the icons on the map to get details about that item.

Incident: 2023220004

| | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Fire Name | Big Wheel |
| Date & Time | 6/4/2023 1:31:00 PM |
| Fire Acres | 14 |
| Fire Type | Fire (Reportable) |
| Fire Source | Lightning |

Area Info

| | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Lat | 46.180100 |
| Lon | -87.928800 |
| Management Unit | Crystal Falls |
| Protection Area(s) | Felch |



The Grayling wildfire started as a campfire and burned an estimated 2,400 acres. Michigan is a tinderbox. We are having a significant dry spell, no relief in sight. The Grayling fire and the Fife Lake fire that happened over Memorial Weekend were caused by campfires. For updates on current fires, there is a website where you can check locations of fires in Michigan and their status, such as what percent is contained, how many acres burned, etc.

Follow the Link: <https://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/wildfire/mcgi.html>

TOWNSHIP CALENDAR

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| JULY 2023 7/04 Independence Day 7/11 Township Board Meeting 7/12 Planning Commission 7/18 Parks & Rec Committee 7/18 July Board of Review (3pm) 7/27 Zoning Board of Appeals | AUGUST 2023 8/02 Planning Commission 8/08 Township Board Meeting 8/15 Parks & Rec Committee 8/24 Zoning Board of Appeals | SEPTEMBER 2023 9/04 Labor Day 9/06 Planning Commission 9/12 Township Board Meeting 9/19 Parks & Rec Committee 9/28 Zoning Board of Appeals 9/30 Annual Halloween Party |
| OCTOBER 2023 10/04 Planning Commission 10/10 Township Board Meeting 10/17 Parks & Rec Committee 10/26 Zoning Board of Appeals | NOVEMBER 2023 11/01 Planning Commission 11/14 Township Board Meeting 11/16 Zoning Board of Appeals 11/21 Parks & Rec Committee 11/23 Thanksgiving Day | DECEMBER 2023 12/06 Planning Commission 12/12 Township Board Meeting 12/19 Parks & Rec Committee 12/21 Zoning Board of Appeals 12/25 Christmas Day |

July 4th, Honoring the U.S. Flag and Our Countries' Independence

On June 22, 1942, Congress passed a joint resolution, later amended on December 22, 1942, that encompassed what has come to be known as the U.S. Flag Code. What we know fondly as the "Stars and Stripes" was adopted by the Continental Congress as the official American flag on June 14, 1777, in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Colonial troops fought under many different flags with various symbols - rattlesnakes and slogans - "Don't Tread on Me," "Liberty or Death," and "Conquer or Die," to name a few.

Why is the American Flag Red, White, and Blue?

In 1782, the Congress of the Articles of Confederation chose the colors for the Great Seal of the United States with these meanings: * White for purity and innocence * Red for valor and hardiness * Blue for vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

American Flag Etiquette

Did you know that there are special rules for taking care of our flag? The U.S. Flag Code is an official set of guidelines (not laws) that dictates how a flag should be flown in order to show it the respect and honor that it deserves. Learn all about American Flag Etiquette here : <https://www.almanac.com/us-flag-etiquette-rules-and-guidelines>



Northern Michigan 2023 FESTIVALS

| | | |
|--------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| JULY | | |
| 1-8 | Traverse City | National Cherry Festival |
| 7-8 | Harbor Springs | Blissfest Folk & Roots Music Festival |
| 11-15 | Gaylord | AlpenFest |
| 15-22 | Charlevoix | Charlevoix Venetian Festival |
| 20-22 | Beaver Island | Beaver Island Music Festival |
| 20-23 | Cadillac | Cadillac Festival of Arts |
| 22 | Kalkaska | Kalkaska Festival of the Arts |
| 22 | Rapid City | Heritage Festival |
| 22-29 | Grayling | AuSable River Festival |
| 27-30 | Boyne Falls | Northern Mich Antique-Flywheelers |
| 29 | Mackinaw City | Mackinaw Area Historic Festival |
| AUGUST | | |
| 2-5 | Elk Rapids | Harbor Days Festival |
| 3-6 | Boyne Falls | Boyne Falls Polish Festival |
| 5-13 | Boyne City | Boyne City PirateFest |
| 6-12 | Traverse City | Northwestern Michigan Fair |
| 11-12 | Gaylord | Michaywe Arts & Craft Fair |

| | | |
|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| AUGUST | | |
| 12 | Charlevoix | Waterfront Art Fair |
| 14-19 | Cadillac | Northern District Fair |
| 18-20 | Kingsley | Wild Blueberry Festival |
| 19-20 | Statewide | FREE ORV Weekend |
| 24-27 | Cedar | Cedar Polka Fest |
| 25-27 | Mackinac Island | Mackinac Island Fudge Festival |
| SEPTEMBER | | |
| 4 | Mackinaw City | Labor Day Bridge Walk |
| 15 | Elk Rapids | Paddle Antrim Festival |
| OCTOBER | | |
| 7 | Williamsburg | Community Halloween Party |
| 13-15 | Charlevoix | Charlevoix Apple Festival |
| Other Interesting Events | | |
| 5/6 - 10/26 Traverse City Downtown Farmers Market Sat 7:30am - 12pm and Wednesday's 8am - 12pm located at Parking Lot B Across from Clinch Park | | |
| 6/9 - 10/6 Elk Rapids, Weekly Farm Market, Fridays from 8am - 12pm | | |
| 6/28 - 8/9 Elk Rapids, Evening on River Street, Wednesday's, 6pm - 9pm | | |
| 8/4 & 8/11 Traverse City, Friday Night Live, 5pm - 9pm | | |

Hands-free Law Takes Effect
June 30 in Michigan

You can expect a statewide aggressive enforcement of the new policy. **Drivers will be fined \$100** for a first offense, **\$250** for subsequent violations, and be required to complete a driver improvement course if they are cited three or more times within a three-year period. Emergency calls, cell phone mounts and Bluetooth connected devices such as GPS, medical devices and Bluetooth music devices are exempt.



September 30th, Halloween Party in the Park

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

Hosted by Whitewater Township Park, Fire Department and WESA

JULY 18, 2023

3:00 pm

BOARD OF REVIEW (JBOR)



Ardella M. Benak
Treasurer



Treasurer's Corner

Normal Office Hours at the Township Hall:

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm, other days by appointment.

Treasurer@Whitewatertownship.org - 231-267-5141 ext. 22



Lois MacLean
Deputy Treasurer

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, your 2022 application was mailed to you in May. If you would like a deferment form, please contact the Treasurer's office and we will be happy to provide one to you.

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 with this.

Ardella M. Benak



Details, Details . . . from the Clerk

Greetings, Whitewater Township Community

I hope everyone is enjoying Summer 2023!

2023 Election Update

- Although you may hear of voters going to the polls on August 8 in nearby jurisdictions, Whitewater Township does NOT have anything on the ballot for August.
- November 7, 2023 – The deadline to get an issue on this ballot has not passed as of the date of this newsletter. We will let you know if it turns out there is an issue to be voted on.

Let's Talk Cemeteries!

Whitewater Township has two cemeteries. Both cemeteries were established in the 1800's. Here's when and how they came into existence.

In the 1860's, Charles Truman Scofield gave the land for the Cedar Rapids burying ground from his own farm land. At a meeting on September 26, 1868, "for the purpose of taking into consideration the surveying and fencing of the burying ground and the transaction of such other business as might be thought necessary in regard to fitting up the burying ground," resolutions were adopted. "Resolved that J.G. Crisp circulate a subscription paper to see what could be obtained for surveying and fencing the burying ground. Resolved that D.B. Scofield attend to the surveying of the ground."

Then on October 3, 1868, there was another meeting "for the purpose of organizing a burying ground corporation," and the following resolutions were adopted. "Resolved that the burying ground be known as the Cedar Rapids Burying Ground. Resolved that J.B. Rickard be elected president, William Crisp clerk, J.W. Arnold treasurer, and George Brown sexton. Resolved that D.B. Scofield, J.G. Crisp, and J.S. Luce be appointed a committee to draft constitution and bylaws."

The "burying ground" referred to is the present-day Williamsburg Cedar Rapids Cemetery located east of the Whitewater Township Emergency Services Building on Old M-72. Although additional space has been added to this cemetery a couple times, the main part of this cemetery is 155 years old!

On January 4, 1894, David Vinton and Ruth Vinton, husband and wife, dedicated property in Section 4 of Whitewater Township to be surveyed and platted for cemetery purposes, to be known as Circle Hill Cemetery. This property is located approximately 1 mile south of M-72 on the east side of Vinton Road. The sign for the cemetery drive is small and easy to miss. This cemetery is 129 years old!

Even though both of the township's cemeteries are very old, there are still burial spaces available in both of them. The township cemetery ordinance does provide that "cemetery lots or burial spaces shall be sold to only residents or taxpayers of the township for the purpose of the burial of such purchaser or his or her heirs at law or next of kin." There is a provision for variance from this provision in certain circumstances. If you are interested in obtaining a burial space, please contact my office anytime Monday through Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., for assistance.

Cheryl Goss

Whitewater Township Clerk



2023 Clean-Up Day - What A Success!

June 10th was Cleanup Day in Whitewater Township. From 8:00am to 12:00pm trucks and trailers were lined up waiting their turn as early as 7am. The Auxiliary provided refreshments for the early morning risers. Erickson Salvage hauled away 13 trailer loads of scrap metal. Bay Area Disposal (BAD) compacted and hauled away 13 dumpsters for a grand total 390 yards of waste! Thank you to Rod Rebant and Al Keaton from the Planning Commission, all the Fire Fighters, Chief Flynn and WESA for volunteering. Last but not least, to the citizens that participate. Your efforts help make this such a successful event and is what helps to keep Whitewater Township clean! **Thank YOU!**



Hello Everyone. My Name is Andrew Butler. I was recently hired by Whitewater Township as manager of the Parks and Recreation division. I will oversee management of all the parks and recreation areas held within the township. This includes Whitewater Township Park, Hi Pray Park, Battle Creek Natural Area, Lossie Road Nature Trail, and Petobego Natural Area.

I was born in Lansing, Michigan. After a few years my folks decided to move up north to get away from the city to raise their family. My family moved to Elk Rapids in the early 80's. I was lucky enough to grow up in such a great little village. I graduated from Elk Rapids High School in the late 90's. Shortly after High School I decided to move to Colorado. I attended college in Leadville and Gunnison, Colorado. I received my bachelor's degree in Outdoor Recreation Leadership and Environmental Science from Western State University in Gunnison, Colorado. After college in Colorado, I moved to several different states including California, New York, and Vermont. While I was living in all these great places, I had several positions that have allowed me to gain experience and training in the outdoor field. After living out of state for many years, I wanted to be closer to my family, which brought me back to Michigan.

I have been back in Michigan for many years now and have started a family of my own. I married my amazing wife Brooke in 2015. Since then, our family has grown to a family of six. We are fortunate to have four beautiful, healthy, and energetic young daughters and one great dog.



New Master Plan Well Underway



In the last six months, Whitewater Township has made significant progress toward a new Master Plan. Michigan communities rely on Master Plans to define a long-term vision for growth, preservation, and redevelopment and as a basis for local zoning. Master Plans should be updated every five years, and the most effective and useful planning efforts are those that are thoroughly grounded in citizen participation.

Some initial steps in the planning process included establishing a Resident Outreach Subcommittee (ROS). This group of Planning Commission members and volunteer residents has risen to meet the challenge of determining the best ways to reach residents for input. The first step chosen was the preparation of a new community survey. The last time the community was asked questions to help shape a new Master Plan was in 2009, so a new survey was long overdue. This survey ran until June 16, 2023, and yielded about 600 responses. This return rate is excellent, and it speaks well about our residents who care enough to take the time to complete a survey. As most responses were completed on paper, recording the responses and written comments will take time. Networks Northwest assisted Whitewater Township with hosting the electronic version of the survey, and their staff will tabulate the handwritten responses. Unopened surveys are being delivered to them, and we expect complete results around mid-July.

The completion of the survey is among the first steps in the planning process. It provides important baseline information about local attitudes and preferences. Going forward, however, residents can look forward to more opportunities to weigh in on community planning issues. Once complete survey results are provided and fully considered, the Planning Commission will gear up for one or more workshops to provide more opportunities for a deeper dive into planning issues. Survey results are great, but in-person workshops often provide the best opportunities to learn, converse, hear other points of view, and express your thoughts and ideas. This will be an exciting opportunity to join your neighbors and discuss the future of Whitewater Township. Results from the survey and workshops are foundational to what the Master Plan will say and recommend. Look for more information about events late this summer or early fall.

Also, in the last few months, work has progressed on the initial chapters of the Master Plan. Master Plans generally begin with a description of the community in terms of its history, present conditions, and trends. As of now, the first four chapters have been written for Whitewater Township that provide this information. This material is a *working document* subject to updating and editing. Comments are always welcome as we try to capture an accurate and factual picture of our community and our larger region. This document is about 50 pages and can be accessed on the Whitewater Township website. The rest of the Master Plan will unfold as we more clearly hear the voices of residents and learn more about local desires for community development, redevelopment, and preservation.

If you have questions about the Master Plan please reach out to PC Member, Rod Rebant at rrrebant@gmail.com or pc6@whitwatertownship.org. Stay tuned for more news on the Whitewater Township Master Plan.

