

Whitewater Township News Spring 2012

Questions, comments, ideas for future stories or to be added or removed from future mailings?

Contact:

Leslie at Zoning@whitewatertownship.org or
Della at Treasurer@whitewatertownship.org

Monthly Calendar

4/10	Township Board
4/17	Zoning Board of Appeals
4/24	Township Board
4/25	Historical Society
5/2	Planning Commission
5/5	Clean-up Day

Whitewater Township Directory

Supervisor - Larry Lake

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

SUPERVISOR

Larry Lake ext. 23
Supervisor@whitewatertownship.org

CLERK

Carol Hockin ext. 24
Betty Tezak - Deputy Clerk
Clerk@whitewatertownship.org

TREASURER

Ardella Benak ext. 22
Lois MacLean - Deputy Treasurer
P.O. Box 100, Williamsburg MI
Treasurer@whitewatertownship.org

TRUSTEE

Arnell Boyd - Message 231-267-5141

TRUSTEE

Paul Hubbell - Message 231-267-5141

PLANNING & ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Leslie Meyers ext. 21
Monday through Wednesday
Zoning@whitewatertownship.org

ASSESSOR

Dawn Plude - 231-409-1827
Hours: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays 9-Noon
assessordawn@gmail.com

FIRE & AMBULANCE

Fire Hall 231-267-5969
Non-Emergency

PARKS & RECREATION

Township Park - 231-267-5091

PLANNING COMMISSION

Steve Zakrajsek, Chair
231-267-9386

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Luann Snider, Chair
231-883-3193

I want to take this opportunity to announce my retirement from the office of Whitewater Township Supervisor. I have held the office since 2004 and in keeping my core belief, two terms is enough. I will not be running for reelection. I am thankful for the eight years I served in office and know there will be candidates ready to step in and carry on here in Whitewater Township. The people's work is very important and it will get done.

As I look back over the years I have spent in office, it revives memories of why I ran for this office in the first place. That memory of what I wanted to accomplish, along with my theory of what public service is all about, comes back. In short, I believe one should have good reasons to serve. Then, when the goals related to those reasons for running for public office are met, get out of the way so others can take up the duties of the office and fulfill new goals.

Obviously, I did not run for supervisor just to hold or have the office. There were projects needed here within the township as a whole, and in Williamsburg in particular. I feel fortunate to be able to say that in cooperation with the Township Board, almost every project I campaigned on has been completed. Five roads have been paved, natural gas service has been brought to the village of Williamsburg, the Battle Creek Natural Area has been secured; including one half mile of Elk Lake frontage. Water service was supplied to the Mill Creek Elementary School and portions of Old M-72. That project brings to mind a very important accomplishment that has been nurtured. Along the way the township has developed a positive attitude in regard to our relations with the Grand Traverse Band, and the generosity they have shown us as neighbors.

Sometime this year I will leave this office and a new citizen will take up the task of serving the community as Supervisor with plans of their own. Whoever that person is, we should all support and assist their efforts in making this a better place to be for all of us.

Looking forward, the Township is a great place to reside and we should go into the future with full confidence that this can always be a nice place to live with an abundance of natural resources. We also have a very advantageous location right here at the front door of Grand Traverse County.

In all sincerity, it has been a rewarding experience to serve as your Supervisor. I attended my first Township Board meeting here in 1963. Land was one hundred dollars per acre and you could buy all you wanted. A nice 100 foot lot on Elk Lake would cost you the "outrageous" price of \$5000 and you had your choice of locations. None of the back roads were plowed and a boy and his hound could wander wherever they wanted go. Ah, yes, the Township has changed a great deal over the years, and yet, in so many ways it has remained the same.

Respectfully Submitted,

Larry R. Lake



Treasurer's Corner - Ardella Benak



Spring, it's that time of year that makes us all a little more energetic and puts smiles on our faces when we see that first robin of the season. We also tend to look back over the past winter and reflect on what was accomplished and what is still in need of doing. That is what my deputy and I have been all about in the Treasurer's office. Looking forward to a busy and productive summer and hoping to see many of you at the Township clean-up day on May 5th 2012.

Due to the extensive damage that was caused by this last storm, Whitewater Township's Parks, Township Hall and Cemeteries experienced much debris and fallen trees. Many volunteers, myself and my deputy, Lois MacLean, included came out this past week doing cleanup work to open the roads in the campground and at the Township Hall. The remaining work will be done by professionals before the camping season starts. It was good to see the community coming together. Lunch was provided by the Whitewater Emergency Services Auxiliary. Head chef, Rod Kuncaitis, made sure all volunteers were well fed. Thank you all who volunteered their time and equipment.

2011 tax season is at a close, settlement with the County went very well with no corrections or adjustments for our Township. 2012 Budget workshops have been conducted for the past several months and a public hearing was held on March 27th 2012, at the Township Hall. 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 as mandated by state law.

If you haven't been to the Township's web-site in a while, please take a look. There have been many changes during the last three years. Treasurer's office has been working hard to keep useful information available to better serve our citizens. You can find the financial statements of the Township posted on the web-site in an effort to provide greater transparency. Summer deferment applications can be found on the web page, if you do not have access to the web, I will be happy to print this form for you and mail it. The summer deferment is due before taxes are due for the 2012 summer tax season, September 14th 2012. Summer deferments allow you to pay your summer taxes after the September 14th due date without interest. For more information on qualifying for the deferment contact the Treasurer's office. Principal Residence Exemptions Affidavits (Homestead Exemptions) and the request to Rescind are due no later than May 1st. They both can be found on the Treasurer and Assessing web-page tabs. All citizens can access their tax information from the Treasurer's web page under Online Access to Whitewater Township Tax Information link. This is free to all property owners. I will be happy to supply this same information to you as well

The purchase of a laptop computer for the Treasurer's office has made it possible for myself and my Deputy to work at the same time. It plays double duty as my electronic board packet reader. This reduces the amount of waste and cost of printing a paper copy twice a month. I make all notes during the meeting directly to my laptop making it easier for research at a later date. A significant cost savings could be had if all board members went to electronic board packets. This laptop also doubles as a backup of vital information and twice a week it is updated with current data and is kept in a locked fireproof filing cabinet. Should there be a system crash, the Treasurer's office will be able to continue working seamlessly with no lost data or downtime.

As always, my door is always open. I encourage you to get involved in your community, attend the Board meetings, Planning Commission meetings and now our newly formed Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee. We have a lot of important decisions to make this year and you don't want to miss out on voicing your thoughts and opinions. I look forward to meeting you and to seeing you in the audience at the next board meeting.

CODE ENFORCEMENT

Now that spring is in the air, many of us find that our yards (or our neighbor's yards) could use some attention. Last December the Township Board adopted a Code Enforcement Policy. The purpose of Whitewater Township's Code Enforcement Policy and Procedures Manual is to provide written guidelines for the prioritization of code enforcement cases; investigation of violation complaints; enforcement of Ordinances through voluntary compliance; prosecution of violators who do not comply.

The Policy Manual and Complaint Form are available on our website for your use and review.

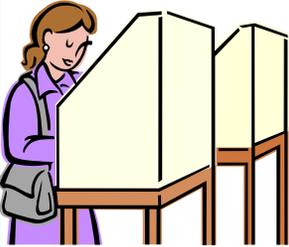
TAKE THE TIME TO UTILIZE TOWNSHIP CLEAN-UP DAY! Please note that violation letters will not be sent out until after the first clean-up day. Need assistance hauling your "stuff?" Call Leslie at 267-5141 and she will assist with making arrangements.

Clerk - Carol Hockin

After 12 years of service to Whitewater Township as your Clerk, I have made the decision to retire at the end of my term on November 20th. I have truly enjoyed working for the Township residents and know I will miss serving in the position. My future plans are to spend more time with my family, read and continue with my volunteer work at ACTS.

ELECTIONS

May 8th a Consolidated Election will be held; Elk Rapids Schools will have a bond proposal on the ballot. Watch the Township website for the ballot language or contact the clerk's office for a sample ballot.



August 7th is the State Primary Election. Candidates for Township, County, Federal, Nonpartisan Judicial offices and Precinct Delegates to the County Convention will be on the ballot. It is unknown at this time if there will be proposals on the ballot. A Primary Election is a Political Party Election and the voter must vote in only one party on the ballot in addition to the non-partisan judicial race. Candidates without a party affiliation will not appear on the ballot until the General Election.

November 6th is the General Election. Candidates selected in the August Primary, Presidential candidates selected by their party and candidates without party affiliation will appear on this ballot. There may also be proposals on the ballot however that is unknown at this time.

Things to remember

You will be asked to show a photo ID. We have to ask, even if we know you, that is the law. Absentee ballots are available in the clerk's office several weeks prior to any election. Any questions, contact the clerk's office.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee

Brandon Hubbell, William Mouser, Phil Knapp, Mary Wittbrodt and Paul Jorgenson have been appointed by the Township Board to this new committee. Dennis Leach is an alternate member of the committee.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee shall perform the following duties: Review, prepare and update the Recreation Plan for the Township; Prepare an annual report to the Township Board of the Committee's operations, status of planning and recommendations related to parks and recreation; perform other duties and responsibilities or respond as requested by any Township Board or Commission. The current Recreation Plan is out of date, 2003-2008 and a current plan is required to be on file with the State of Michigan. No grants can be obtained without a current plan. The committee will be meeting on **April 9th** for their organizational meeting and are ready to get to work on the plan. The Township Board thanks these residents for their willingness to serve on the committee.

Whitewater Township Park

Opening week-end at Whitewater Township Park will be **May 11th and 12th**. The annual cleanup week-end is scheduled for those days. Campers camp free in exchange for raking their sites and assisting with other areas. Reservations for 2012 season camping will be taken beginning **April 1st** in the clerk's office. Reservations are also being taken for the pavilion at Whitewater Township Park; this is a great place for your family reunion or company party.



"Hi" Pray Park

Are you aware of the basketball court and tennis courts at "Hi" Pray Park? There is also a covered pavilion that can be rented for a family get together or party. Renting the pavilion allows the renter to use the baseball field, tennis courts and the basketball court. One of the tennis courts is striped for pickle ball. The covered pavilion has grills and picnic tables.

Do you know of a softball/baseball league looking for a place to call home? Contact the clerk's office for details on league rentals.

Interested in Running for Township Office?

What are the qualifications to run for Township office?

To qualify for Township supervisor, clerk, treasurer or trustee, a person must be a Township elector, but property ownership is not required. An elector is defined as someone 18 years of age, who is a U.S. citizen and has lived at least 30 days in the Township.

How long is the term of office for elected Township Officials?

The term of office for all elected officials is four years. The terms commence at, noon on November 20, following the November General Election.

What is the next step if interested? Nominating Petitions, Affidavit of Identity and Campaign Finance Organization Statements for office are available at Township Hall from the Clerk. You can also obtain the information from the County Clerk's office.

When is the deadline for running? Petitions and the Affidavit of Identity are due in the Township Clerk's Office by May 15, 2012 at 4:00 p.m.



PLEASE BRING HELP FOR LARGER ITEMS

WHITEWATER TOWNSHIP CLEAN-UP DAY

Saturday May 5, 2012

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon at Mill Creek Elementary School on Old M-72

ITEMS TO BE ACCEPTED

Wood and Construction Debris (limit of 2 cubic yards) • Household Furniture • Metals • Plastics items • Water Heaters
Large Appliances • Titled Junk Vehicles
Tires (\$2 passenger, \$5 oversize, \$8 semi-truck)
Tires on rims will be accepted, no additional charge.

ITEMS NOT TO BE ACCEPTED

Hazardous Waste • Household Garbage • Brush • Leaves
Other Yard Waste • Concrete

RESIDENT ID IS REQUIRED !

NEW SERVICE FOR CLEAN-UP DAY

Free disposal of sensitive documents.

Paper/Document Shredding is being provided by
Grand Traverse Janitorial & Packaging Company

Volunteers are always appreciated



Visit us on the web at www.whitewatertownship.org
Provide us with your email address and receive Township updates!

Whitewater Township
P.O. Box 159
Williamsburg, MI 49690



Natural Gas Extension Update

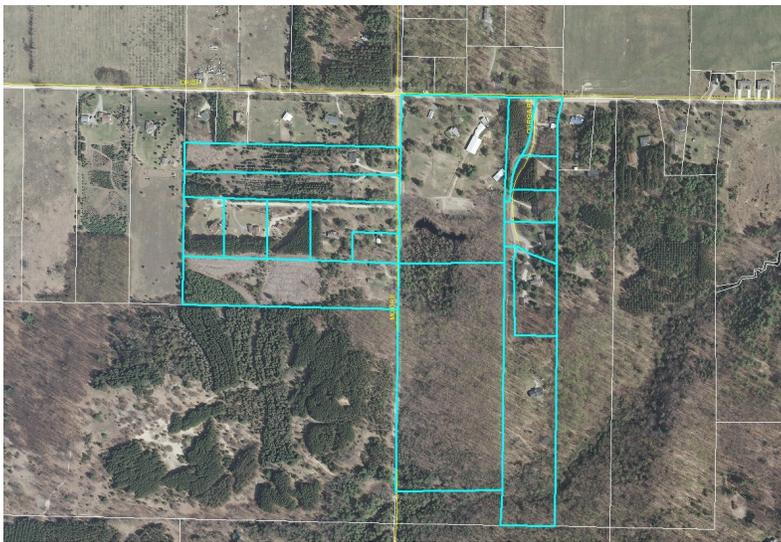
DTE is busy working on two natural gas extensions within the Township with several more areas under consideration. Applications are currently being circulated in these two areas.

The first area includes :
Moore Road south of Crisp
Durga Rd.

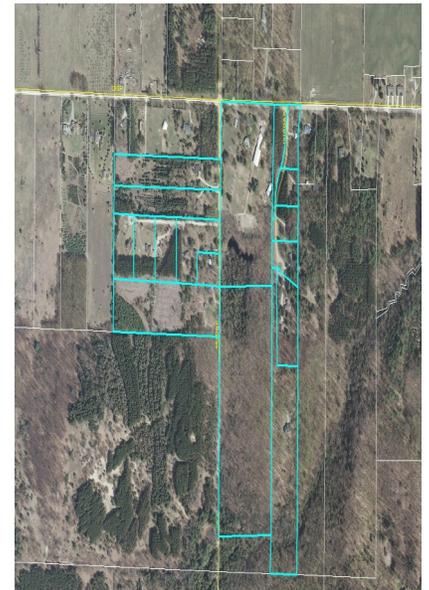
Next:
Cook Rd. south of Old M-72
Old-M-72 east of Cook Road.

DTE is considering extending the line north on Cook Road and ultimately joining the existing natural gas line that ends just north of Townline Road in Elk Rapids Township. This extension would allow for natural gas to serve Miami Beach, Ayers, North Cram, Palaestrum, parts of Elk Lake Road, Angell, Elk Lake Trail, Summertime Trail, Innis Lane, Gay, Carns, Trails End North and Topview, Hillendale and Clearview.

Neighborhood coordinators from each area have been assigned to determine if there is interest in these areas. If you live on one of the roads listed above or are within close proximity and have not yet been contacted, please contact Supervisor Lake at 267-5141 ext. 23. He will direct you to the coordinator for your area. The energy cost savings have been tremendous for those residents that hooked up in late 2009. One resident stated that “over the past 3 winters, my family has recouped the hook-up costs and next year we will see a 50% Reduction in our heating costs.”



Cook Rd and Old M-72 Extension Plan



Moore and Crisp Extension Plan

Michigan State Park system ranks best in U.S.

Michigan's state parks and recreation areas have won the 2011 National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal for the top state park system in the nation. Michigan was named one of four finalists, beating out North Carolina, Florida and Missouri for the top honor.

The Gold Medal Award honors communities throughout the United States that demonstrate excellence in long-range planning, resource management and agency recognition.

The award honored efforts such as Michigan's Recreation Passport Program, a new funding model for state parks and outdoor recreation in Michigan. The \$10 optional fee that residents pay when renewing their vehicle registration gives them access to all Michigan state parks and boating access sites, and these fees help support the state forest recreation programs. A portion of the funding also supports a grant program for local parks.

Grand Traverse Band Awards Township \$15,000 for Emergency Equipment

The Band awarded the Township \$15,000 toward the purchase of two LUCAS chest compressions systems, one for each ambulance. With LUCAS, defibrillation can occur during ongoing compressions that can prime the heart for a successful shock. The Lucas System reduces the number of EMTs or firefighters needed to assist with CPR during a cardiac emergency, provides continuous, effective compressions, maintaining good circulation in the patient while medics remain seat-belted for better safety in a mobile environment, and is simple and easy to use with minimal training. Our thanks to the Grand Traverse Band.



MASTER PLAN UPDATE

As you are aware, the Planning Commission (PC) has been working on the Master Plan for the past several years. A Master Plan document (also known as a basic plan, development plan, township plan, land use plan, or any other term) is required by State Law IF zoning is to be in place within our Township.

The process initially began in 2004. In 2008, the proposed Plan and Zoning Ordinance was presented for public hearing. At that hearing, with 200+ residents and property owners in attendance, it was made clear that Whitewater Township wanted a Master Plan that was a grassroots effort, not one written by professionals with no ties to the community. The PC listened, the old plans were discarded and a new course of action was developed. It was determined that the public should be involved as much as possible.

In order to determine where we are going, it is important to determine where we have been. What follows is a brief history of zoning within the Township:

- 12/1966 - Residents present Township Board (TB) with a petition to adopt zoning.
- 12/24/1966 - Township Board (TB) adopts resolution to zone the Township.
- 02/25/1967 - TB adopts resolution establishing a 5 member Zoning Board to create a Zoning Ordinance (ZO).
- 04/15/1969 - Township Annual Meeting. Zoning Board (ZB) requests \$1000.00 from the TB for printing, map making and publishing of the proposed ZO. Motion is approved by the residents.
- 04/26/1969 - TB passes motion for ZB to present an interim ZO.
- 06/27/1970 - The TB tentatively approved the interim ZO with citizen review before final approval is granted.
- 07/25/1970 - Whitewater Township's interim ZO is adopted by the TB.
- 12/23/1972 - Whitewater Township Zoning Ordinance—Ordinance #6 is adopted by TB.
- 06/15/1976 - Township Board establishes a PC, replacing the ZB.

History of the current Plan

- 06/2008 – The TB approves the concept of restarting the Master Plan re-write process.
- 07/2008 – PC begins discussions on utilizing a survey for a master plan.
- 11/2008 – Basic information survey included with the 12/2009 tax bills. This survey became the initial list-serve to be established.
- 2009-2010 Budget includes up to \$12,000 for a Township-wide survey.
- 03/2009 – First PC Open House for the solicitation of public comment.
- 05/2009 – PC holds second Open House.
- 07/2009 – PC establishes an RFP for consultants to work with a committee to draft a survey.
- 11/2009 – Survey results are presented to a joint meeting between the PC & TB.
- 01/2010 – Each PC member takes a topic and invites the public to subject driven meetings.
- 04/2010 – PC begins the process by sending letter of intent to plan to the proper agencies. The table of contents was established.
- 07/2010 – Draft of introduction established.
- 08/2010 – SWOT analysis begins on several topics. In order to accurately prepare the background section, census data needed.
- 09/2010 – Goals section drafted.
- 08/2011 – RC-1 History is presented.
- 10/2011 – PC directs ZA to provide a draft plan for review in early 2012.
- 01/2012 to 03/2012 – PC addresses plan.

The PC looks forward to your comments and suggestions as they continue the process. They meet on the 1st Wednesday of each month and copies of the draft are available on the web.

Home Occupations

At their December meeting, the Township Board adopted the amendments for Home Occupations. The economy and technology have changed the way business has been conducted. The new definition is as follows:

HOME OCCUPATION: An occupation or business activity located within a residential dwelling or in an accessory building which is clearly subordinate to the principal residential use. Home Occupations are further addressed in Section 37.40 of this Ordinance.

37.40 Home Occupations shall be divided into 2 classes: Minor and Major Home Occupations.

Minor Home Occupations shall be conducted entirely within a residence, must be operated by the occupants of the residence and there shall be no visible external evidence of the occupation. This type of occupation shall not require permitting from the Township.

Examples – Internet Sales, Accountants, Artists, Engineers, Medical Marijuana Caregivers, Private Teachers/Tutors, Authors, Wedding Planners and similar uses.

Major Home Occupations can be conducted within the residence and/or an accessory building located on the property. Signage shall be allowed on site and non-resident employees may be allowed. Further, this type of occupation shall require a special use permit from the Planning Commission (PC) and meet the special conditions listed in Section **25.21 (C)**. Examples – Hairdresser, Retail Shops (including antiques and gifts) and similar uses as determined by the PC.

For more information please contact Leslie or the Zoning Ordinance on our website.