

New Board Members Serve Your Township

The planning commission has completed the new master plan and we thank them for their generosity and civic pride by volunteering to work on the plan for over a year without a salary. A great deal of time and dedication was involved.

Kathy Reed, township treasurer, has been appointed to fill the commission seat that was vacated when Laura Hoffman, township clerk, resigned. Laura had sat on the commission since 1995 and said, "I have served twelve years and it is time someone else took a turn." It is mandated that one member of the planning commission be a township board member.

The resignation of Dr. Larry Schalk opened another seat on the commission which has been filled by Cindy Litwinchuck. Cindy has lived in the township for 5 years, since moving from Jenison, and had been coming to her parent's home on Pine Lake since 1956. She is looking forward to being more involved in local government.

The planning commission meets on the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00

The Board of Review also has a new member, Sue Vicari, who replaced Julie Atwood. Sue is self-employed. Her business, Manners Matter, offers etiquette classes throughout the area. She and her family have lived in the township since 1996. She sees her service on the board of review as a way to give back to her community.

We thank Laura, Julie, and Larry for their years of service to the township.



New Library Open at Last



Our beautiful new library facility is open! The dedication was held Saturday, May 19. Hundreds attended and marveled at the spaciousness of the new facility. If you have never frequented your library, we invite you to visit and see what a wonderful addition it is to the community.

Apply for a library card if you don't have one. The library offers books, videos, DVDs, CDs, magazines, a reading area, study rooms, 12 computers with internet access, children's computers, a self check out system and a large community room that is available to township non-profit organizations and for rent to residents. It is also available to non-residents at a slightly higher cost.

To read more about our library go to www.nelsontownship.org and then to the library link. All donors to the building fund are also listed on a link and we are still accepting contributions. Programs and information about the summer reading program are listed on www.kdl.org.

Free Hazardous Waste Collections

The Kent County Department of Public Works will be hosting two Saturday household hazardous waste collections at the North Kent Transfer Station in Rockford this summer and fall. The Saturday collections (August 4 and October 13) are open to all Kent County residents and there is no appointment required to participate. They will be open from 9 a.m. until noon on these dates.

For a list of items that we will accept for FREE, please see the website: www.accesskent.com/hhw. Kent County will NOT accept: latex paint, medical waste, ammunition or fireworks.



Nelson Township News

Established 1854

Volume XIV Issue 1

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From the Supervisor

Our legislature continues to debate solutions to the State of Michigan's budget deficit problem. Significant revenue sharing cuts are being suggested.

The House has introduced legislation (HBs 4780-88) that transfers services from townships to the county. This would affect all "rural" townships. Their definition of a rural township is "a township below a population of 10,000. (Nelson Township has a population of 4,569) and townships between 10,000 and 20,000 that do not provide 24-hour fire and police services and water and sewer.

The bill, if passed:

- * Shifts all tax collection, election and assessing functions from township control to county control.
- Requires townships to reimburse the county for services that have been shifted.
- Does not impact cities or villages.
- Does not impact townships with a population over 20,000
- Goes into effect on Dec. 31, 2008.

Townships are efficient, low-cost units of government that spend one-eighth of the amount cities do in providing services to residents. Our township provides many services to residents in addition to tax collection, elections and assessing. We offer fire and EMS services, planning and zoning, a library, parks and recreation, cemetery operation, a percentage of road funding, and personal service.

Shifting tax collection, assessing and elections to the county will not save the state money. Most township governmental units have part time officers with no benefits. County workers are full-time with benefits. There is no evidence to prove cost savings.

Eliminating township government by consolidating its responsibilities to the county would not only cost more, but it would also separate and distance government from the people it serves.

If you agree; write, call, or email your representative in Lansing. Go to <http://house.michigan.gov/replist.asp> for contact information for your state representative.

E-mail Us! supervisor@nelsontownship.org - clerk@nelsontownship.org - treasurer@nelsontownship.org - assessor@nelsontownship.org

NELSON TOWNSHIP

2 E. Maple Street, Sand Lake 49343
Office Hours: Monday – Thursday
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Telephone (616)636-5332 FAX (616)636-4452

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEMBERS

Supervisor: Dorothy Bishop
Clerk: Laura Hoffman
Treasurer: Kathy Reed
Trustees: Glen Armstrong, Tom Noreen
Assessor: Jason Rosenzweig
Zoning/Enforcement: Jerry Gross

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING

2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

VILLAGE OF SAND LAKE

2 E. Maple Street, Sand Lake 49343
Office Hours: Monday-Thursday 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Telephone (616)636-8854 FAX (616)636-4564

VILLAGE COUNCIL MEMBERS

President: Dave Dewey
Clerk: Beth Miller
Treasurer: Brenda Arnold
Trustees: Dave Tibbe, Billie Jo Thielke,
Tonia Parkhurst, Carol Simpson,
Joyce Haywood, Roger Towsley

VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

3rd Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m.



Ritchie Road Paving

The work in preparing Ritchie Road between Northland Drive and 22 Mile Road for paving has been delayed waiting for DEQ permit approvals. Construction is expected to resume in four to six weeks.

Fred Meijer White Pine Trail To Be Paved To North Kent County Line

The continuation of the paving of the White Pine Trail, from Russell Road to the northern village limits of Sand Lake, will be completed this summer. At the end of December 2006, the Friends of the Trail delivered a check for \$202,434.00 to the Parks and Recreation Branch of the Department of Natural Resources. That contribution along with DNR matching funds and a large donation from Henry Meijer will fund the projection.

The Friends contribution came from several municipalities, entities, and the Friends membership. Mary Nardo, of the parks and rec. department said, "The project is on track and we should see paving in June."

This section of the trail will be a special mix of asphalt to resist snowmobile stud damage. The special pavement is funded by the snowmobile funds in the Department of Natural Resources. Snowmobiles are allowed on the trail north of Russell Road.

Anyone wishing more information regarding the trail may access website at www.whitepinetrail.com. Membership in the Friends is: individual and family - \$5 or business - \$25. Membership is important to the organization. Membership numbers are very helpful to trail officials when they are negotiating with legislators or other governmental officials.

Track Legislative Action Via The Internet

One way to stay informed on lawmakers' efforts on the budget and other legislative work is through the House of Representatives' Web site, www.house.mi.gov. From this main page all information about your state government is only a click away. Links include contact information for representatives, committee meeting schedules, bill status searches, dozens of digital citizen guides and information booklets, Capitol Event schedules and even the opportunity to watch House committee and session meetings live via the Internet. Never has it been easier to be informed and involved with your state government.

representative tom pearce

Assessing Department

As a reminder, I will visit all properties that have pulled a building permit in order to accurately and fairly assess the property.

In accordance with state guidelines stating that properties be re-inspected every five years, I am planning on visiting those homes in the following neighborhoods: Cedar Woods and Beckinridge. I will also be visiting select homes in the Metes and Bounds description properties in the township. I will have identification and will provide it upon request.

If you plan on splitting your property, you must file a land division application with the assessor. Land division applications are available at the township hall or on the township website - www.nelsontownship.gov.

Other forms available on the website include: Property Transfer Affidavit, Homeowner's Principle Residence Exemption Affidavit, and Request to Rescind Homeowner's Principle Residence Exemption.

jason rosenzweig/assesor

Up In Smoke

As a resident of Nelson Township, you need to be aware that there is a burning ordinance which controls the types of materials you are allowed to burn, the permissible sizes of an open fire, and the times of day that fires are allowed within the township.

For those of you desiring to have an open fire during a gathering, it would be beneficial for you to know what is permitted without a burn permit. Failure to comply with the ordinance could result in your plans going "UP IN SMOKE" when the fire department, or a representative of the department, arrives on the scene and you are required to extinguish the fire.

Burn permits are required for any large, controlled burn. They are issued based on weather conditions, material to be burned, and the ability of the person requesting the permit to control the burn.

If you have questions about the above mentioned ordinances, please call Zoning and Enforcement on Wednesday or Thursday at 636-5332.

Clerk's Corner

Elections – If you are requesting an absentee ballot for the August 7, 2007 Grand Rapids Community College special election, your request must be in writing and submitted to the township clerk. Your request must include one of the six statutory reasons stated below and your signature. Requests to have an absentee voter ballot mailed to you must be received by your clerk no later than 2 p.m. the Saturday before the election. (Continued on Page 3)

Clerk's Corner (cont.)

- Age 60 years old or older
- Unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- Expecting to be out of town on election day
- In jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- Unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- Appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence

You may download an Absent Voter Application from the State of Michigan website at www.michigan.gov.

laura hoffman

Zoning & Enforcement

Some people's treasure.....

There is an old saying that states, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." I am frequently called with complaints that pertain to junk vehicles and parts, and trash strewn about on property. Both of these instances are violations of Nelson Township ordinances. You personally may believe that the items laying about your property are of great value, but it may not be seen that way by others.

Vehicles on your property must be licensed, insured and in operable condition. It is unlawful to accumulate trash or junk on any premises in the township. These are abridged versions of the ordinances and there are many more rules.

jerry gross

Light Bulb Buzz

You've probably heard the buzz about compact fluorescent light bulbs. They can help you:

- SAVE ENERGY!
- They use 2/3 less energy than your standard incandescent light bulbs.
- SAVE MONEY!
- They last 10 times longer than standard incandescent light bulbs.

When your new compact fluorescent bulbs finally do burn out, they should be disposed of differently than your old bulbs because they contain a small amount of mercury. But don't worry – you can take them to Kent County's household hazardous waste program where they will be disposed of properly. The mercury will be recycled and the environment will be safeguarded. It's free for Kent County residents. Just give us a call at 336-2570 or access us on the web: www.accesskent.com/hhw.

If you want more info on this energy-efficient technology, visit the Energy Star website at www.energystar.gov and enter the search words "compact fluorescent light bulb"

reprinted from the kent county detail

Treasurer's Tidbits

Treasurer's Hours:

Monday through Thursday: 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. and Friday, September 14, 2007 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. September 14th is the last day to pay summer taxes without penalty.

There is a drop box at the Township Hall's main entrance for your convenience.

You may go to the township website and get your millage rates and estimate your taxes.

The website will also give you all the information you need to pay your property taxes with your credit card. There is a convenience fee charged based on the amount of your transaction.

Deferred Payments:

For those who qualify for Deferred Payment of their 2007 Summer Taxes, applications are now available at the Nelson Township Treasurer's office. Filing of this form is voluntary. However, your tax due date will not be extended unless it is certified each year with the Township Treasurer by September 14.

WETLANDS INFORMATION

See www.michigan.gov/deq/wetlands
As required by law, this is a one-time notice to all property owners, even if your property does not have any wetlands.

A county wetland inventory has been completed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) pursuant to Part 303, Wetlands Protection, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended. The inventory map is on file with the county extension office, register of deeds, and clerk and is also available at www.michigan.gov/deq/wetlands. The inventory map provides potential and approximate locations of wetlands but cannot be used to identify wetlands for regulatory purposes. Property containing wetlands may be subject to regulation under Part 303. For more information, including how to obtain a wetland permit or a determination of whether property contains regulated wetland, please visit the MDEQ website above. Nelson Township has no additional information concerning wetlands.

kathy reed