



Homer Township

newsletter

April 2011

Supervisor

Chad Moody

supervisor@homertownship.org

The last two years the State of Michigan has put challenges before us to repair previous issues. Your current board has handled these challenges head on and has succeeded in resolving them.

As you drive around the township, take notice of some improvements. The association at the ball fields is looking at new batting cages. There will also be some road improvements. It is important to keep the township growing and to do this we need to work together to beautify the township and keep our parks clean and bring in more things for our residents to do. Spring is a great time of year to do these things so as you are thinking of your spring cleaning on the interior of your home, remember the outside is just as important.

The Township ordinances have been under review for the last year. There have been some changes and eliminations of outdated items. These changes were necessary to keep up with the times. Please look for a notice soon on a date for these changes to be presented to you.

Our Township is being looked at hard for alternative energy sources and I encourage the residents to embrace these the best that you see fit. Our future will rely on multiple sources of alternative energy.

The newly revised Township website is a great place to find important links and information that will keep you informed.

website: www.homertownship.org

I'm sure that by now you have met Sandra Turk, our new treasurer. Sandra has 40 plus years of experience in banking and she and her talent/experience provide a great addition to our Board. Welcome, Sandra!

A reminder that we are still looking for committee members for our upcoming 150 year Celebration, as well as seats on the Parks & Recreation and Cemetery committees, please contact me if you would like to be involved.

As always any constructive comments are welcome at my office anytime. Be safe in any travels this coming spring and summer. I will leave you with a quote I recently heard from Midland's Mayor Maureen Donker: "We all want to ensure the exceptional quality of life continues in Midland," she said, noting no solutions will be found without working with others. "We are better together."

Clerk

Todd Lee

clerk@homertownship.org

I hope everyone had a good winter. Our ice arena was used a lot this winter. With the cold winter, we were able to maintain good ice. Do not forget the arena is also available in the summer months using roller blades and roller skates.

On the election front, there will no longer be school elections in the spring. They will now be held in August. Because the election polls will no longer be held at the schools, everyone will now do all voting at

the Homer Township Fire Safety Facility. You will be getting new voter ID cards in the mail shortly.

Recycle bins are available. The first container is free, and each additional bin is six dollars.

If anyone has any questions please call. I am at the office most mornings from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Treasurer Sandra Turk
treasurer@homertownship.org

First I would like to thank everyone who supported me in the last election. I am very excited to be part of the township board and to serve our community. I had a lot to learn during the first tax season and I am still learning. I appreciate all the patience you have given me during this time.

As a new Board member, I invite any and all comments on any issues we are facing in our township. Since I work during the day at Chemical Bank, I will be in the township office 2-3 nights each week. Please call and leave a name and phone number and I will call you back.

Trustee Russ Varner

While attending the Michigan Township Association's annual conference in January, I stopped at the Republic Waste booth and found out that they now offer an expanded recycling program. What does this mean? First, if the Board goes with it, the recycle bins that are currently used would be replaced with a 95 gallon cart, very similar to what we use for garbage now. All recycling materials would be put into one cart. No sorting! Some of the materials would include all plastic containers (1-7), newspapers, bottles, junk-mail, paperboard,

cardboard, metal cans, etc.

The City of Midland recently started using the expanded recycling program and is doing very well. Currently your Township Board is waiting for a proposal back from Republic Waste. If anyone has thoughts or concerns, please contact a Board member.

Planning Commission

Sandra Simmons, Chair

During the year the Planning Commission met 16 times, 12 monthly meetings, 2 special meetings to continue review/revision of the zoning ordinance, and 2 public hearings. The major focus of the commission was updating the zoning ordinance which had last been done in 1996. Between 1996 and 2007 there were 12 spot amendments to the ordinance which led to some inconsistencies among areas. There were also areas that were outdated as newer trends had not been incorporated and old ones deleted. The review process is now completed, the attorney is reviewing the document, following which the Planning Commission will schedule a public hearing, hopefully sometime in April. We will put a notice of the hearing in the Midland Daily News, post it on our website, and post it at the township hall. In addition to the revised document being posted on our website, printed copies will be available at the office of the Midland County Clerk, and at the township hall once the hearing date is announced. The Planning Commission is now posting the minutes of all meetings on the Township website. Go to the 'COMMISSIONS/COMMITTEES' section of the HOME page and select 'Planning Commission'.

The Township website has been totally revised and updated. New sections have been added and much new information is available. Updates are now constantly being made. Check our new 'CURRENT NEWS' section that identifies upcoming events, position openings, special meetings and more. The Parks/Recreation section has all new 2011 schedules and information. There is a new and expanded section on permits and fees, an application for job positions is now available on line, and much more. We would appreciate your feedback on the revisions and suggestions as to what we could add/do to further improve the website.

Sandra Simmons, Website Coordinator
Anthony Dittmer, Webmaster

Assessor Dawn Gentz
989-389-0832

Summer tax bills will be in the mail soon. Please check your tax bill as soon as you receive it to be sure the Principal Residence Exemption is correct. If your Principal Residence Exemption is incorrect it can be corrected at the July Board of Review and a new tax bill will be issued. The July Board of Review meets the Tuesday following the second Monday of July. If you need a form or have questions concerning the exemption either call or email me at nmassessing@gmail.com.

Talkin' Trash.....

Republic Services appreciates the opportunity to provide solid waste recycling collection for the residents of Homer Township. We would like to offer you a few simple reminders. It is important to bag your trash before placing it in the cart.

By bagging the trash, the possibility is eliminated that trash might blow around. Republic encourages recycling so if any resident needs a copy of what can be recycled please either contact the Township or Republic Services at 1-800-438-0966. Please be sure both your trash and recycling is placed at the curb no later than 7 a.m. on your collection day. We value your opinion. Please feel free to contact Customer Service at 1-800-438-0966 and let us know how we are doing.

Gary Hicks

General Open Burning

Michigan air quality and solid waste regulations prohibit open burning that creates smoke or odor nuisances. You may burn trash from a family dwelling in an approved container located on your own property, as long as you do not violate any other air pollution rules (like smoke and smells). An approved container is one constructed of metal or masonry with a metal covering device with openings no larger than 3/4 inch. Forest fire prevention regulations require you to obtain a permit when the ground is not snow-covered. Burning permits do not allow burning prohibited by other regulations. Burning permits may be obtained using the DNR webpage at www.michigan.gov/burnpermit, or by calling toll free at 866-922-2876 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. daily.

John Hanson
Fire Chief

FREE Smoke Detectors for Low Income Families

Interested Midland County residents should contact the American Red Cross at 989-631-3262, Ext 0. Residents will be asked questions during an intake process, including annual household income. Residents may receive between 2 and 5 free smoke detectors based on home size, number of stories and number of bedrooms. The smoke detectors will either be delivered by the local fire department or can be picked up at the Red Cross Office in Midland.

Providing Emergency Information and Instructions:

That is the purpose of **1-888-TELL-MORE**. If a tornado, flood, chemical accident or some other extraordinary event occurs, emergency responders will provide information to you about the event and its potential effect on the community through this emergency information hotline. Call this number for information and instructions when you become aware of an emergency or disaster in Midland County. You may also tune to **WMPX AM 1490 or WMRX FM 97.7** to receive emergency information.

NIXLE – A New Way to Reach You with Important Information

Providing information to the public during emergencies and disasters has always been an important part of emergency management. In the early stages of an event, alerts and emergency instructions are distributed as quickly as possible. As activities change from emergency response to recovery operations other messages are shared with the public about such things as shelter, damage assessment and disaster assistance. In Midland County we attempt to use as many

methods of communication as possible. Messages are distributed to television and radio stations. Regular programming on Midland Government Television (MGTV-96) is interrupted to display information. Messages are recorded on the Midland County Emergency Information Hotline 1-888-835-5667. These methods along with warning systems like outdoor warning sirens and NOAA Weather Radio alert residents of emergencies and provide information.

The most effective way of providing information is to reach citizens right where they are. For many, that means contact through a computer or mobile device via an email or text message. The capability to make contacts like these has been available but the cost of implementing the process was prohibitive. Now that has changed.

In 2009 we were introduced to an Internet-based service called Nixle. It's a service not unlike that provided by Twitter, only Nixle is for public safety not social networking. Local agencies including the Midland Police Department, Midland Fire Department, and Midland County Office of Emergency Management have registered as user agencies on Nixle, which means we can distribute text messages and email via the Nixle service to residents who have registered to receive them. Messages can range from general information to alerts with emergency instructions. In order to receive messages through Nixle you first must register on the system. **Here's how:**

- Go to www.nixle.com
- Click "Register Now"
- Create an account choosing a User Name and Password
- Enter the email address/cell phone number to receive messages
- Enter address or nearby intersection
- Click "Sign Me Up"

To customize your account you can click on “Locations” and then “Add New” to add addresses. For example, if you want to receive messages where you work in addition to where you live you would add the address of your workplace. By clicking on “Settings” you can receive messages from each agency and set message priorities. This is important because you must “opt-in” to receive local messages. If you need assistance in signing up you may contact Nixle at support@nixle.com. Please note that the standard fees charged by your wireless network provider for text messaging will apply to messages received from Nixle.

Keep in mind that we will continue to use all the methods of community warning and notification that you are already familiar with. Nixle is just an addition. And at least for now Nixle messages will not be the first sent. As we get experience using Nixle and as our own capabilities change and grow the use of Nixle will likely expand. But before anything happens at all you must sign up. So please follow the instructions provided and register to receive messages through Nixle.

John Hanson, Fire Chief

BUILDING CODE INFORMATION

How do I know if I need a permit? If your project is a deck or utility barn under 200 sq. ft., a building permit isn't necessary. But be sure to check on any zoning setbacks. **Everything else needs a building permit**, even if you are doing a demolition of any kind to a structure, pool, pond or lean-to. Also, if the work falls under a “No Charge” category, you still need to pursue a permit. So call me! The call is cheap compared to the double fee and a citation charge of

construction fraud filed against you for proceeding without a permit.

Worksheets, checklists and permit applications for your next project or new home can be obtained by contacting me, or by going online to the township website, then click “Documents”, and print off both the application and requirements. Before completing the paperwork, please call me for any updates to the building code (always changing) or the new Energy code. Consider also any electrical, plumbing or heating questions because calling the inspector to inquire may save you a lot in the end.

Kevin Varner, Building Inspector

Grace A. Dow Memorial Library

This summer a trip to the library will take you around the world with the Summer Reading Program theme, World Cultures. All ages are invited to read for prizes June 6th through August 13th, and enjoy the programs/activities planned for the summer.

The “One World, Many Stories” program is for infants thru students entering 5th grade. Children pick up their reading logs at the library and receive prizes for reading. Come and create crafts featuring different cultures on Thursdays, June 16th through August 11th, 9:30 am to 8:00 pm. “Magic Around the World” will be presented on Tuesday, June 21st at 6:30 pm and at 7:30 pm. Multicultural music will be highlighted at the program, “Marimbamania,” on Tuesday, July 12th at 7:00 pm. A “Musical Adventure” on Tuesday, July 26th at 6:30 pm is a musical trip with stories, puppets, and singing.

Special events for children include: “Drop-In Science” on Wednesdays, July 13th, 20th and 27th, 10:00 am to noon, the Harry Potter Hoopla on Thursday, July 14th, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and Touch-a-Truck

Day on Thursday, July 28th, 9:30 – 11:30 am. Check out the library's website for the schedule of summer movies.

Teens, grade 6 through 12, will "Get Around: Read" on their reading trip this summer to earn prizes. A yoga program is offered for teens on Thursday, June 16th, 2:00 pm. Teens are also invited to the Harry Potter Hoopla on July 14th. ACT Practice Test sessions will be offered in August with date and time to be announced,

This year's Summer Reading Program for adults is "Novel Destinations." Displays of books and movie showings will highlight various people and places from around the world. A reading contest is planned and prizes will be awarded weekly.

Flyers are available at the library or you can visit our website at www.midland-mi.org/gracedowlibrary. The "Library Connection" newsletter is online and will keep you up-to-date on library news, programs and events year round.

Melissa Barnard

West Midland Family Center

Senior citizens can take part in exercise classes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 10:00 a.m. Have fun with our experienced exercise instructor, Silvana, and Susan, our crazy senior services lady.

WMFC also plays host to the Greendale Happy Diners program provided by Senior Services of Midland County. A variety of events for seniors occur each week. Activities such as euchre and other games, walking and exercise, music, dancing with special holiday events throughout the year, crafts, health clinics, education and more. A healthful meal is served every weekday between 12:00 and 12:30 p.m. Seniors who

are age 60 and older are asked to make a contribution. Those under 60 are asked to pay the full cost of the meal. Reservations are needed by 9:00 a.m. on the day you will be attending and can be made by calling 832-8683. Senior lunches contain many of the important vitamins and minerals needed for good health. A registered dietician has reviewed the nutritional content of all of the meals to be sure that nutritional needs are met for most seniors. For those following special diets, there is specific information available for each meal to assist you in making choices

West Midland Family Center is always in search of volunteers. All you need is the desire to serve. Please contact Gail Crosby Director of our CONNECT & SERVE PROGRAM at 832-3256 to become involved. Gail is a real pro at fitting the special skills inherent in each individual with the unique needs present at the Center. CONNECT & SERVE members partner and assist WMFC staff members. We value this contribution and hope to offer each CONNECT & SERVE member a satisfying, productive and rewarding experience. So do not hesitate to call, whether you have two hours or 40 hours a week there is a place for you

West Midland Family Center is the home of a Kinder Kare childcare center. Currently Kinder Kare has openings for children ages 0-12. If you have questions please contact Molina VanConnant at 832-3256.

WMFC has something for everyone....for all kinds of information visit our website at www.wmfc.org or chat with us on Facebook!

Susan Love

**Chippewa Nature Center:
From Forest to Furnishings
Woods Used in the Recent Renovation**

As you enter the new Preschool and remodeled Visitor Center, you will notice the large amount of lumber that was used during the process. The majority of it was harvested from Chippewa Nature Center's (CNC) 1,200 acres. This lumber is considered a renewable resource. A total of 11 species of trees were used in the renovation including: ash, hickory, red and white oak, Norway spruce, red and white pine, sassafras, elm, walnut and butternut.

The trees used were carefully selected based on several criteria, such as invasive exotic species like Norway spruce. Eradicating these trees allowed others like white pine (a native species and Michigan's state tree) to receive more sunlight to live and grow at a faster rate. Diseased trees such as ash infected with emerald ash disease and trees dying of old age like the large oaks just east of the Wood Duck Pond were also harvested. Between harvesting the ash and oak in this area, several small oaks and a large number of hickory saplings were also given more space to grow. A fallen butternut was also a perfect candidate for renovation lumber.

CNC staff did all of the cutting for the project themselves. Trees were carefully felled to prevent damage to ones that had been flagged as important trees to keep, and in such a way that their unused tops created brush piles for wildlife cover and hosts for fungus. A portable band mill cut the logs into rough sawn lumber. Each board was then stickered – carefully piled in 3 foot widths with stakes in-between to provide adequate air flow – and left to dry for 1-2 years. Lumber to be used for boardwalks did not need to be dried as it would remain in the elements.

Lumber that was to be used in the interior parts of the building was sorted and sent to a kiln dryer, equivalent to putting the lumber in an oven for 4-6 weeks. Decreasing the moisture content helps prevent the lumber from moving/warping as much once it is assembled.

The ash used for exterior siding underwent a different drying process called thermal kiln drying. The temperature of the wood is raised rapidly using heat and steam to a level of about 291°F, and is increased steadily up to 366° F and in some cases, as high as 400° F. Steam is used to prevent the wood from cracking and burning. In the process, the cells of the wood collapse, making it harder for moisture to move into or through the wood. This helps keep the wood from shrinking and swelling, and helps preserve the wood without using chemicals. The wood smells baked and turns brown, making it look stained. After sun exposure, the color turns to grey.

Lumber used in the interiors of the buildings was sent through a table saw and a planer. Some of the lumber was molded into tongue and groove paneling and lap side siding. Both the heartwood and sapwood (inner and outer portions of the log) of the walnut trees were kept, which is why the walnut in the remodeled Visitor Center has light wood mixed in with the dark wood. Wood harvested at CNC was also used to create cabinet casing and doors and the wood counter tops.

To learn more about where each of these species was used, please visit the Chippewa Nature Center. The Visitor Center is open Monday-Friday, 8 am-5 pm, Saturday, 9 am-5 pm and Sunday, 1-5 pm. Visit us online at www.chippewanaturecenter.org or look on www.facebook.com/cncmidland.

Written by Tom Lenon, Director of Land /Facilities
Submitted by Jamie Hockstra



Homer Township

SUPERVISOR	Chad Moody 832-7882	Fire Chief	John Hanson 832-8034
TREASURER	Sandra Turk 631-4399	Building Inspector	Kevin Varner 839-9181
CLERK	Todd Lee 832-0964	Electrical Inspector	Mike Gravis 631-3336
TRUSTEES	Charlie Glynn 835-1207 John Pruiett 631-2775 John Stern 835-4203 Russ Varner 835-6845	Plumbing Inspector	Ted Van Wert 631-9645
		Township Hall Rental	Pam Varner 832-9618
		Newsletter	Carolann Maxwell 631-7488

Homer Township Hall
522 North Homer Road
Midland, MI 48640