



MIDLAND, MICHIGAN
TWP. 157 1862

Homer Township

newsletter

April 2012

website: www.homertownship.org

Supervisor

Chad Moody

supervisor@homertownship.org

Homer Township is celebrating its 150 year anniversary this summer. We have a Celebration Committee that is looking for volunteers and sponsorships. Please consider calls for help and donations that may come your way. I ask that you help them provide a great day of celebrating Homer Township's History on Saturday, August 25th. It will be fun for all ages.

It is hard to believe that I have been your supervisor for almost 4 years now. For your consideration, I would like to reflect on the hurdles and accomplishments of coming into the office with some old and unresolved issues. The first and probably the most important was the re-assessment of the entire township to prevent a take-over from the state. We hired a new assessor and they have worked hard to bring us back in line with State of Michigan guidelines. The loss of our former treasurer, Al Tew, was very difficult. Much research went into figuring out certain issues because a lot of his knowledge was in memory and not on paper. We were very fortunate to have voted in our new treasurer who stepped up to the challenge and found many resolutions. From this came two more hurdles. One was receiving lease income from the departments who use the Homer Township Fire Hall. For several years, there were entities that were using the facility without paying for it. The other was a prediction error that caused Water District 1

to be short of funds. After several years without any action, it became clear it needed to be resolved quickly to prevent more costs to the residents and to prevent future deficits.

Something that is still a work in progress is finding funds for a new fire truck. Our fire truck is 26 years old. Even though it is still in good condition, thanks to the firemen who keep it in good repair, it is still one of the oldest fire trucks in operation in the county. You the residents, along with the volunteer firemen who operate it, deserve the reliability of a new fire truck.

I feel very confident that the township is finally in a better financial position. We are being very responsible with township money. We are working hard at preparing the township to stand strong in the future

At any time you are welcome to call me if you have questions or concerns.

**Happy Birthday
Homer Township**



for being established 150 years ago

Read later in the newsletter for more details about the celebration and how you can get involved.

Homer Township Newsletter

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Clerk

Todd Lee
clerk@homertownship.org

By now, everyone should have received the new recycle bins. I want to let you know that they have been a success, our recycle tonnage has gone way up and our landfill tonnage has gone way down. If for any reason you did not receive a bin, please contact me and we will get one delivered to you.

With the presidential election coming up later this year, I would like to encourage all of you to get out and vote. If you cannot get there in person, contact me about an absentee ballot. They are usually available about a month before the election.

If you need to contact me, you can call or email me. I try to be in the office every morning, Monday thru Friday, from 8 to 9 a.m. and various evenings throughout the week.

Trustee

Russ Varner

In December, 2011, Midland County Commissioners put in place the following rules for off-road vehicles (ORVs):

1.) Midland County is now open to allow off-road vehicles (ORVs) on all county roads.

2.) ORVs are not allowed on "M" roads or state highways. This means that, in Homer Township, M-20 and M-30 (Meridian Rd) are closed, but can be crossed.

Townships can "opt out" of the plan, which would mean that all roads in their township would be banned from ORV use. Township Boards can also choose to ban only certain roads and/or set hours of operation of ORVs.

Our Board will be addressing this in the coming months. We would certainly appreciate your input; so please let us know any comments/concerns you have.



There are additional State rules that are also in effect, some of which include:

- 1.) 25 mph speed limit on roads
- 2.) Quad runners must have working headlights and tail lights
- 3.) Helmets are required
- 4.) Special trespassing laws (i.e. written permission is to be carried with you when riding)
- 5.) Children under 16 years of age:
 - Require an ORV safety class and
 - Must be under adult supervision when operating an ORV.

Please be aware of all laws before you ride. In addition, as drivers, especially in the spring and when warm temperatures arrive, be aware of ORVs that may be riding along the roads!

Assessor

Dawn Gentz
989-389-0832
nmassessing@gmail.com

If you own and occupy your home as a primary residence prior to May 1, 2011, you may be entitled to an exempt from local school operating taxes. If you no longer own and occupy the property as your primary residence and are currently receiving the exemption, it should be rescinded. The Principal Residence Exemption appears on your summer tax bill which will be in the mail by July 1st. Please check your tax bill as soon as you receive it to be sure the Principal Residence Exemption is correct. If your PRE

is incorrect it can be corrected at the July Board of Review and a new tax bill can be issued. I can be reached at (989)389-0832 or nmassessing@gmail.com for questions concerning assessments and principle residence eligibility requirements.

Planning Commission

Sandra Simmons, Chair

The planning commission had a very busy and productive 2011, holding 12 regular meetings and 2 public hearings. Every regular meeting focused on continuing the review, revision, and updating of the zoning ordinance. The updating included adding sections on wind and solar energy systems as well as trying to be proactive in some areas that may (but have not yet) impact our township. The revised zoning ordinance was adopted by the township board in January and became effective 2/9/12. Check it out on the website.

The other major area of focus was to update the township zoning map which is the official map identifying zoning districts in the township. The last revision of the map was 2002. This process has proven to be quite complex and we are still working on it.

We respond to resident requests that identify issues in their neighborhoods and work with the enforcement officer to address these issues. The latest area we are addressing is that of vicious dogs. The planning commission is discussing the need for a vicious dog ordinance due to the number of complaints we are receiving about dogs chasing walkers & bikers, running loose in the area, and appearing to threaten residents. Our current ordinances state that when dogs are outside they are to

be confined in an enclosed area and when taken off of the property they are to be leashed or under the control of the owner who is to be accompanying them. While the revised zoning ordinance does address the area of household pets, we have been asked to consider added restrictions. We would welcome your input on this subject as we continue to study the issue and options

This year the planning commission will explore the need and process of updating the township master plan which was last done in 1997. We welcome your input on any other areas you would like us to explore.

Trustee

John Pruiett

The weather was bad for making ice this winter in the skating rink. This did not allow for much time to play there. However, this meant less snow to shovel for all of us.

For those of you who may have noticed the activity just east of the skate rink: The concrete pad and poles for the Westown Girls Softball new batting cage are in place. They will be working around it to finish it up this spring before their season starts. The old batting cage will be coming down sometime in the future. NOTE: PLEASE OBSERVE THE TRAFFIC SIGNS directing traffic flow in the park. They are there to safeguard the children in our community.

We are still looking for township residents to help guide development of plans for the parks future. We would like to develop the park to meet future needs for activities residents would like to see there. Part of that would be to plan for traffic flow and parking to maximize safety for everybody. If you are interested, please submit the volunteer form via the hyper link on the bottom of the committee page of the web site, or call Chad Moody, Supervisor of Homer Township.

WEBSITE UPDATE

We have made great strides this year in updating the website and making it more useful to residents. The website now contains a complete listing of and the complete texts of all of the current township ordinances including the newly revised zoning ordinance. To help you find the item you want more quickly in the zoning ordinance there is an index at the end of the document. Also on the website are all new documents to assist you in submitting requests for site plans, special use permits, rezoning and more. This includes the revised land use application and the guidelines for completion of each request.



We try to keep the current news section updated as we receive information that may impact the township/residents. Please give me your feedback on how the website could be more useful and what other information/areas you would like to see added.

Sandra Simmons
Website Coordinator

Talkin' Trash

Once again, Republic Services appreciates the opportunity to provide solid waste and recycling collection for the residents of Homer Township. In 2011 Republic and Homer Township made some big changes in the way we collect your recycling with the addition of a new 95 gallon cart. Based on the increase in recycling volumes collected; the new program has been a good change for both Homer Township and the environment. Thank you for a successful 2011.

Just a couple simple reminders for 2012: 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 make sure both your trash and recycling is placed at the curb no later than 7am 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
Republic Waste Management

What's Happening at the Fire Station?

If you happen to be driving by the fire station and you see cars and trucks in the parking lot, and wonder what is happening, stop in and talk with us. We would to talk with you, and even show you around. We especially like it when children and kids, kids are the older children (parents) that are present. Presently Homer Township has four new firefighters going through the Midland County Fire Academy. These firefighters will have completed almost 200 hours of classroom and hands on training in fire fighting. Several of the new firefighters have previous medical training also, ranging from Paramedics to Medical First Responders.

John Hanson, Fire Chief



Kevin Varner, Building Inspector

Spring is here and there are still a few things to do before you can grab that fishing pole or golf club. I hope you are properly planning your next project or new home. If you need a worksheet, checklist and permit application to guide you through this simple process, please, contact me so you can proceed without getting into untimely delays. They are also available online at homertownship.org. Click on "Documents", and print off both the **requirements and application** and fill them out and call me.

New requirements for dwellings and additions have been installed this new code cycle (2009 edition and the latest version of the Energy Code) so please contact me or your design professional for these updates and verifications. As I have stated before, permits are very important for your building progress in Homer Twp. If your project is a deck or utility barn under 200 sq ft., you will not need a building permit- but please be sure to check on the zoning setbacks. **Anything and everything else** needs a building permit. Demolition of any kind to a structure, pools, ponds and lean-to's may fall under the **No Charge** category, but you still need to pursue one. **OR-** How do you know if you need a permit? Contact me please, and I will return your call, fax and / or message as soon as I can. Electrical and plumbing/heating questions also? At least call the inspector to inquire. The call is cheap compared to the double fee and a citation charge of construction fraud filed against you for proceeding without a permit.

We (all the inspectors) are on your side so that the project will proceed smoothly without delays and problems. The office is still on the corner of E. Olson Rd and N. Homer Rd.

Thank you and we are looking forward to assisting you.

Mark Your Calendars!



Join us on **August 25th** as we celebrate **Homer Township's Sesquicentennial birthday** at the Homer Township Park and Public Safety Building.

Events will include: old-fashioned games, live entertainment, antique tractors and cars, a birthday cake, and an outdoor movie under the stars! All events are free of charge. Be sure to keep watching the township website for more information. Events begin at 11am and continue throughout the day and evening.

If you have any historical photographs or documents that could be displayed, please contact Rollie Yeakle at 631-0371.

Volunteers and sponsors are needed. If you are interested, please contact Darcie Johnson at: 832-4123.

Consider attending a Board Meeting sometime during the spring or summer.

Township Board Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of every month.

Please call Pam Varner at 832-9618 if you would like to rent the township hall for birthday parties, graduation parties or bridal/baby showers.

Slots fill up quickly, so call early to confirm your date!

Guide for Reducing Trash Burning

Disposal of household garbage by burning continues to be common practice in rural communities. This practice goes by many names, including backyard burning, burn barrels, and household garbage burning. But whatever name is used, the reality is that this practice is harmful to humans and our environment.

Smoke from burning waste contains many pollutants that can impact the health of people exposed to it, including hydrogen cyanide, sulfur dioxide, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, benzene, lead, mercury, dioxin and many others. These pollutants may damage the lungs, nervous system, kidneys and liver. Even healthy people may experience symptoms of burning eyes, headaches, nausea, fatigue or dizziness. Toxic chemicals from trash burning deposit into aquatic or terrestrial environment and contribute to pollution in the region's rivers and lakes.

Backyard burning also triggers numerous wildfires and can be a nuisance to neighbors. This prevalence of garbage burning may affect states' and municipalities' ability to meet air quality standards.

If you would like more information, please contact Erin Newman of U.S. EPA Region 5 at www.newman.erin@epa.gov. Additional information about backyard burning in the Great Lakes Region is available online at www.openburning.org.

REMEMBER – BURN PERMITS ARE REQUIRED ANY TIME YOU BURN GRASS, BRUSH, YARD RACKINGS OR STUMPS.
Call 1-866-922-2876.

John Hanson, Fire Chief

Here's What's Coming up Next at Chippewa Nature Center!

Have you *Ventured Out* to CNC lately? There is truly something for everyone, whether it's a hike on one of our 15+ miles of trails, a stop in the newly renovated Visitor Center or to participate in one of our many programs! Visit CNC online for dates and times for these FREE recurring events AND MANY MORE now through September: Full Moon Stroll, Birds & Bagels Hikes, Nature for Youth, Wee Stroll, Preschool Story Hour, Fishing Fun for Kids, Homestead Sundays and Summer Exploration Days!

SAVE THE DATE for these exciting events at CNC this spring and summer! You can find a complete listing at www.chippewanaturecenter.org, and be sure to 'Like' us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/cncmidland!

APRIL – Nature's Eggs Extravaganza (egg hunt), Nature Day Camp registration begins, Nature Preschool Open House, Movie: Green Fire!, Towhees & Tombstones, Singing the Stories of the Saginaw Valley.

MAY – Voyageur Canoe Trip, Ephraim Williams: Pioneer Fur Trader, Michigan's Wild Pathways Series: Ludington State Park, Birding Ohio: Crane Creek Region, Adventures for Women: Kayaking the Chippewa River, Practical Outdoor Skills, Teen Trex: Ride the River in a Kayak, Native Plant Sale, Local Kayak Trip.

JUNE – Exploring Sand Point Nature Preserve, Kayaking the Deadstream Swamp, Local Kayak Trips, Nayanquing at Night, Adventures for Women: Kayak Trip, Summer Solstice Hike, Upside-Down and Swamped: What to do When Paddling Turns to Swimming.

JULY – Butterfly Hikes, Butterfly Count, Local Kayak Trip, Rattlesnakes and Horse Tails, Adventures for Women: Kayaking the Chippewa River, Dipping at the Wetlands, Michigan’s Wild Pathways Series: Northern Midland County Trails.

AUGUST – Insect Safari, Making Hand Made Toys, Adventures for Women: Local Kayak Trip, Local Family Kayak Trip, Voyageur Canoeing at Grand Island and Pictured Rocks, Youth Fly Fishing Workshop, Picking at the Pavilion: Nature Song Sing-Along, Exploring Little Forks Conservancy’s Riverview Property, Exotic Plant Species Control Workshop, Frog Frolic, Summer at the Wigwam.

SEPTEMBER – Fungi Hike, Fungi: World Rulers, Local Kayak Trip, Michigan’s Wild Pathways, Series: Pigeon River Country, Mushroom Hunt, BioBlitz, Adventures for Women: Local Sunset Kayak Trip, Fungi Hike, Fungi Workshop, Cider Sunday at the Homestead.

Jamie Hockstra

It’s Happening at the Library

Libraries are continually changing to meet the needs of our community. The Grace A. Dow Memorial Library is no exception. We have two exciting new services.

The library now offers popular eBooks compatible with the Kindle, Nook, iPad and other eReader devices. The eBooks can be downloaded to your device for a 14 or 21 day check out. There is no charge for this service and staff is available to answer your questions on how to get started or use our online help guides.

On Wednesday, May 9th at 4:30 p.m. the new Early Literacy Activity Center, “Beyond Books,” will open with a ribbon cutting ceremony. The center features hands-on activities for children ages 0-5 to develop language and math skills that will prepare them for school. The center is open all library hours and there is no charge.

Children, teens and adults are invited to join the Summer Reading Program and read to earn prizes beginning June 4th through August 11th. Along with reading, special events highlight summer at the library.

In keeping with the summer reading theme of “Dream Big READ,” the Starlab Planetarium will be at the library Wednesday, June 27th, 2-5 pm, for ages preschool to high school. Registration is required. The Baffling Bill Magic Show is Tuesday, June 19th, 6:30 and 7:30 pm, and the Bubbleman is coming Thursday, July 19th at 6:30 and 7:30 pm. Touch-a-Truck is scheduled for Thursday, July 26th, 9:30-11:30 am.

Teens are invited to Zumba on Wednesday, June 20th, 2:00 pm. The library offers volunteer opportunities for teens during the summer. Call Youth Services at 837-3466 for more information.

Throughout the summer, there will be story times, book discussions, movies, Crafty Thursdays, and Move & Groove for various age levels. The library’s website, www.midland-mi.org/gracedowlibrary, has details of dates and times.

The *library will be closed on Sundays from May 27th through September 2nd*, opening Sunday, September 9th, 1-5 pm. Watch for the September/October Library Connection newsletter at the library or online for fall story times, the Halloween Party and other special programs.

Melissa Barnard



MIDLAND, MICHIGAN
WF 181-1862

Homer Township

www.homertownship.org

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