



MIDLAND, MICHIGAN  
TWP. 15T 1862

# Homer Township

newsletter

**April 2013**

*website: [www.homertownship.org](http://www.homertownship.org)*

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**Supervisor**

Russ Varner

*[supervisor@homertownship.org](mailto:supervisor@homertownship.org)*

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**Clerk**

Todd Lee

*[clerk@homertownship.org](mailto:clerk@homertownship.org)*

It has been a busy late fall and winter in Homer Township!

Regarding the Fire Department, last fall the north side of the fire barn parking lot was reconstructed and looks great! Currently, the Township Board is working with the Fire Department to purchase a new fire truck.

Refinancing was completed for the bonds for some of the water districts, reducing the interest rates.

Spicer Group was recently hired to update our Master Plan. The Master Plan sets a course for land use policies for the future. They will be requesting input from the residents through email surveys and public hearings. Your input is valuable for future direction for the Township.

The Board is still looking for people to serve on the Park Committee. We would like to develop a plan to improve and enhance our Homer Township Park. Please contact me if interested.

The State imposed a 2.4% increase in taxable value for all land owners. We just completed the 2013 Board of Review where residents had the opportunity to appeal their assessments. Thanks to the Board of Review Committee for their hard work this week.

For more information on any of these topics, check for updates on the Homer Township website. If you have any questions or concerns about the Township, please contact me. Have a nice Spring.

I hope everyone had a good winter. Our ice arena was used a lot this winter again, as with the cold winter, we were able to maintain good ice. Do not forget the arena is also available to use in the summer months for roller blading and roller skates.

If you have not already, please register to vote. Also, all elections now will take place at the fire safety facility. You will no longer vote at the schools.

Recycle bins are available. The first 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. You can either call or email me. Both are listed in the newsletter.

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**Treasurer**

Sandra Turk

*[treasurer@homertownship.org](mailto:treasurer@homertownship.org)*

I am happy to report the successful refinancing of the water bonds in Water Districts 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7. This has resulted in the lowering of your interest rate that you are paying on your remaining unpaid balance. You will see the difference on your water installment included on your 2013 winter tax bill.

Since each district is different, if you are interested in your districts new rate or have any other questions on your water assessment, you may call me at the township hall.

Also, please note that I have placed a listing of recycle dates in this newsletter. Please clip it out and keep for reference. It is so easy to lose track of which week recycle is to be taken out. Since I have received a few phone calls on this subject, I hope this helps.

Have a great summer!

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**Assessor**

Dawn Gentz  
989-389-0832  
[nmassessing@gmail.com](mailto:nmassessing@gmail.com)

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**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 can be issued. The July Board of Review meets Tues. following the second Mon. in July. If you need a form or have questions concerning the exemption, please call or email me.

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Spring is here and there are still a few things to do before you can grab that fishing pole or golf clubs I hope you are properly planning your next project or new home. If you are going to be building a new home----- Thank you for choosing Homer Township- We warmly welcome you to our community. If you need a worksheet, checklist and permit application to guide you through this simple process, please, please, contact me so you can proceed without getting into untimely delays. They are also available on our website. Click on *fees and applications*, print off both the *requirements and application*, 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 leantoo's..... It may fall under the *No Charge* category, but you still need to pursue one. OR- How do you know if you need a permit? Call 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. Please, believe me when I say 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.

Kevin Varner, Building Inspector

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### **Township Website**

Website fun facts: Website visits peaked twice in the last quarter of 2012 with over 1100 hits each of the last two weeks in Oct. and the weeks from Dec. 2-15. The search engine most used was google.com (87%), most used operating system was Windows (89%), and the most used browsers were Mozilla (41%), Internet Explorer (28%). and Firefox (14%). The most frequently accessed pages were: index 27%, meeting minutes 6%, contact list 4%. Other accessed pages township board, assessments, current news, hall rental, for sale, ordinances, fire dept.,

committees/commissions, permits, links, cemetery, and the newsletter. We also received hits from a number of other states and foreign countries.

We hope to see the website use increase significantly as we proceed with the master plan update as this will be the main source for information/updates/meetings. We welcome any input you have on how we can improve our website

Sandra Simmons, Coordinator  
Anthony Dittmer, Webmaster

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**PLANNING COMMISSION NOTES**

In 2012 the Planning Commission held 12 regular monthly meetings and 1 public hearing. The major items addressed were: 1-completed updating the zoning map to reflect past years board approved changes; 2-recommended township participation in the expanded GIS mapping available to townships; 3-approved greater flexibility in the principle & accessory uses allowed in business districts; 4-began updating of the township master plan last done in 1997.

The updating of the master plan will continue throughout 2013 and possibly into early 2014 due to legislative guidelines that require long waiting periods throughout to allow for input. Through a competitive process we selected the Spicer Group to assist us in the updating process. There will be various means and opportunities for all township residents to have input into updating the plan. The plan is the focal point for identifying land uses for the coming 5+ years. In this process we must review census trends, what other surrounding townships are

proposing, state/national trends, as well as township financial, cultural, educational, recreational, business and residential opportunities to ensure long term growth. The plan will propose future land use designations based on all of these areas. While the major focus will be on our main highway corridors, all areas of the township will be reviewed. This is everyone's opportunity to have input in what the future of Homer Township could look like. The new plan will serve as the base for updating the zoning map and all decisions made by the planning commission. Watch the township website for updates and the Spicer website to view ongoing activity regarding the master plan!

Sandra Simmons, Chairperson

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Baby Shower?      Bridal Shower?  
Graduation Party?      Birthday Party?

*What to do???*

If you would like to rent the **TOWNSHIP HALL** or the **PARK SHELTER** for your special occasion, you need to call and make a reservation.

Please call **Pam Varner at 832-9618** to confirm your date!

Slots fill up quickly, so call early!!!

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

*Venture Out* to Chippewa Nature Center to take a hike on 15+ miles of trails, enjoy the Visitor Center with free admission seven days a week or to participate in one of CNC's many programs, including Nature Day Camp! Please call 989.631.0830 for availability. Some additional highlights include (\* denotes free program):

**MAY** – Voyageur Canoe Trip 5/7 (sign-up 5/1), Teen Trex: Ride the River in a Kayak 5/18 (sign-up by 5/11), Local Kayak Trip 5/23 (sign-up by 5/17), Native Plant Sale 5/24-25, Homestead Sundays\* 5/26-9/1, Exploring CNC Trails Series: Wetlands Area\* 5/29

**JUNE** – Evening at the Wigwam\* 6/4, Adventures for Women Kayak Trip 6/12 (sign-up by 6/7), Full Moon Stroll\* 6/23, Summer Exploration Days\* 6/26-8/12 (except Tuesdays), Butterfly Hike\* 6/27

**JULY** – Local Kayak Trips 7/2 (sign-up by 7/2), Insect Safari Walk\* 7/7, Butterfly Count\* 7/13, Full Moon Stroll\* 7/22, Birds & Bagels Hike\* 7/24, Butterfly Hike\* 7/28

**AUGUST** – Tickets go on sale 8/1 for Tapas, Toasts & Tunes on 9/21, Voyageur Canoeing on the Tittabawassee River 8/7 (sign-up by 8/2), Voyageur Canoeing at Grand Island and Pictured Rocks 8/15-8/18 (sign-up by 7/26), Exploring Little Forks Conservancy's Riverview Property\* 8/28, Backpacking at Isle Royale National Park 8/30-9/7 (sign-up by 7/27)



**SEPTEMBER** – Northern Michigan Family Camping Weekend 9/15-18 (sign-up by 9/4), Touring Elk Country by Path and Paddle 9/13-14 (sign-up by 9/4), History Tour by Golf Cart (for those w/limited mobility) 9/17 (sign-up by 9/13), Stroll through Little Forks Conservancy's Averill Property\* 9/18, Fall Color Hike at the Ridge Property\* 9/21, Adventures for Women: Color by Kayak 9/26 (sign-up by 9/20)

Visit [www.chippewanaturecenter.org](http://www.chippewanaturecenter.org) for a complete 2013 calendar, including free hikes and youth programs such as Preschool Story Hour and Wee Stroll – year-round!

'Like' CNC on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/cncmidland](http://www.facebook.com/cncmidland) and sign up to receive CNC's weekly e-news to stay up-to-date with CNC programs and hear about recent sightings!

Jamie Hockstra



## 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 official 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.

### Who Need a Burn Permit, Who Does Not??

#### Burn Permits are issued only for:

- \*Limbs
- \*Brush
- \*Stumps
- \*Evergreen needles
- \*Leaves
- \*Grass
- \*Ongoing burns for construction and land clearing, roadway maintenance, and uncertified party's performing prescribed burns without a written plan require a burn permit issued by the local DNR Fire Manager.

#### Burn permits are NOT required:

- \*Cooking or recreational campfires
- \*Anytime there is a continuous snow cover adjacent to your fire
- \*Household paper materials that does not contain plastic, rubber, foam, or textiles that is burned in a container constructed of metal or masonry, with a covering device having openings no larger than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch



#### Items that can never be burned due to air quality regulations:

- \*Demolition debris
- \*Construction materials
- \*Automotive parts
- \*Household trash that contains plastic, rubber, foam, chemically treated wood, textiles, electronics, chemicals or hazardous materials.

Burning permits may be obtained using the Michigan DNR webpage at [www.michigan.gov/burnpermit](http://www.michigan.gov/burnpermit), or toll free telephone line 866-922-2876 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM daily.

### New Fire Engine

At this time, the firefighters are working with the township board in getting proposals for replacing one of the aging fire trucks. The truck that is proposed to be replaced is 27 years old. This replacement project is a lengthy process, and we are well on our way. Thank you for all your support to the firefighters, we are very appreciative.

John Hanson, Fire Chief



### **ELECTRONIC UPDATES FROM TOWNSHIP ARE AVAILABLE**

Effective in May 2013, the township will be able to inform residents of township issues through an e-mail alert service. This e-mail will provide a subject message and a direct link to connect you to the details. While timely messages are now posted on our website residents have no way of knowing when and where these are posted.

This new service will enable you to keep current on issues of general importance such as: master plan revision updates, board actions, elections issues, special meetings, public hearings, new/revised ordinances and much more. You will also receive a notice that the township newsletter is posted on the website and will not receive a mailed copy. Those not signed up for the e-mail alerts will continue to receive the mailed copy for now.

We will be the only regional public entity that is using this means of keeping township residents up to date on current issues affecting them. This distribution system is secure and will contain no ads/spam. This alert system is available to all township residents/property owners. To sign up go to— [www.homertownship.org](http://www.homertownship.org) -- click on-- township update--and complete the 3 question registration form and confirmation. Please join in setting the new standard for municipal governments providing timely information to residents! Questions may be directed to – [webmaster@homertownship.org](mailto:webmaster@homertownship.org).

Sandra Simmons, Web Coordinator

### **Books and More at the Library**

The Grace A. Dow Memorial Library's downloadable eBook collection is growing with a wide variety of titles for youth and adults. Reference Librarians are available to help if you need assistance in setting up your Kindle, Nook, iPad or other eReader devices. You can call 837-3449 or drop by the library. There is no charge for this service, just click on Overdrive eBooks on the library's webpage.

The Discovery Depot in the children's area will be open from May 1<sup>st</sup> through May 31<sup>st</sup>. The Depot has many fun learning activities for children up to five years old that will build literacy skills. Beyond Books, the early literacy activity center, provides learning opportunities year round.

The Library's Eating for Health series presents: Growing Your Own Food on Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, Healthy Eating for Children on Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>, and Food Preservation and Canning on Wednesday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. These free programs are at 7:00 p.m. in the Library Lounge.



Children, teens and adults are invited to join the Summer Reading Program and read to earn prizes beginning June 10<sup>th</sup> through August 10<sup>th</sup>. Along with reading, special events highlight summer at the library.

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With a children's summer reading theme of "Dig into Reading," the Worm Motel will be here at various times on Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. Archeologist Paleo Joe will share his discoveries on Tuesday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 p.m. in the Library Auditorium.

Teens can participate in the "Beneath the Surface" reading program. The library offers volunteer opportunities for teens during the summer through the Volunteering program. 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](http://www.midland-mi.org/gracedowlibrary), has details of dates and times for all of the programs.

The library will be closed on Sundays from May 26<sup>th</sup> through September 1<sup>st</sup>, opening Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, 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

## RECYCLE DATES FOR 2013

### Recycle Dates North of M-20

April 9 and 23	August 13 and 27
May 7 and 21	September 10 and 24
June 4 and 18	October 8 and 22
July 2, 16 and 30	November 5 and 19
	December 3, 17 and 31

### Recycle Dates South of M-20

April 2, 16 and 30	August 6 and 20
May 14 and 28	September 3 and 17
June 11 and 25	October 1, 15 and 29
July 9 and 23	November 12 and 26
	December 10 and 24

For your convenience, we have included these dates so you can either record them on your calendar or cut them out and keep them handy.



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

Township Board Meetings are held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month.



# Homer Township

[www.homertownship.org](http://www.homertownship.org)

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<b>SUPERVISOR</b>	Russ Varner 832-7882	<b>Fire Chief</b>	John Hanson 832-8034
<b>TREASURER</b>	Sandra Turk 631-4399	<b>Building Inspector</b>	Kevin Varner 839-9181
<b>CLERK</b>	Todd Lee 832-0964	<b>Electrical Inspector</b>	Mike Gravis 631-3336
<b>TRUSTEES</b>	Keith Johnson 832-4123 Craig Norton 636-7695 John Pruiett 631-2775 John Stern 835-4203	<b>Plumbing Inspector</b>	Ted Van Wert 631-9645
		<b>Rentals - Hall and Park Shelter</b>	Pam Varner 832-9618
		<b>Newsletter</b>	Carolann Maxwell 631-7488