



# Homer Township

newsletter

Spring 2014

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

**SUPERVISOR, Russ Varner**  
[supervisor@homertownship.org](mailto:supervisor@homertownship.org) 989-832-7882

Is winter ever going to end this year? First, I would like to thank everyone for their patience last fall when we had to close the cemetery temporarily due to the storm damage. There were many trees and branches that fell down. Luckily there was very minimal damage to the cemetery and headstones. There is still a lot of clean up to be done this spring. We are looking to **hire a couple of part-time people** to help with this; if you are interested, contact me at the Hall.

The Planning Commission has been working very hard on the **Master Plan** and is getting close to presenting it to the Township Board. Your input has been very much appreciated. There will be an opportunity for the public to learn more about this in the near future.

Your Board has been busy with choosing the **2014 Road projects** and preparing for the **2014-2015 budget workshops**. Also, we are changing the phone system for the Hall around the beginning of May. There will be one number to reach the Hall and you will be connected to an automated directory. Having one number will reduce the phone costs significantly.

I would encourage everyone to sign up for **email updates**. This is a great source of information for township news.

## Seeking Creative People

We are still looking for people to serve on several committees, especially the Park Committee. We want to get a **Township Recreation Plan** done so we can start developing the park by the Fire Safety Center.



I hope spring gets here soon so we can all get out and enjoy some warm weather.

**CLERK, Todd Lee**  
[clerk@homertownship.org](mailto:clerk@homertownship.org) 989-832-0964

We just concluded the ESA Millage election and all went well. I hope everyone came out and voted. I wanted to let everyone know that **in the future all elections will be taking place at the Fire Safety Facility**. You will no longer be going to the schools to vote.

Hopefully spring is around the corner. With that comes spring cleaning. Homer Township does not have leaf and refuse pickup, however Homer residents are allowed to bring one pickup load of stuff to the city landfill per month.

I try to be in the office Monday thru Friday from 8 am to 8:45 am. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me.

**ASSESSOR, Dawn Gentz**  
*nmassessing@gmail.com 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 can be issued. The **July Board of Review meets Tuesday following the second Monday in July.** If you need a form or have questions concerning the exemption, please contact me.

**SAVE THIS  
INFORMATION!**

**New Township Office Phone Number  
(989-631-4399)**

**Effective May 1, 2014** there will a change in the township office phone system. You will use only one phone number to reach the Township Supervisor, Clerk or Treasurer.

989-631-4399 will be answered by an automated system and connect your call to the Supervisor, Clerk, or Treasurer as you request.

- For cemetery lot information request Todd Lee, Township Clerk when calling the new township office phone number.
- The Township Office Fax Number will remain the same (989-832-5709)
- Hall Rental & Park Pavilion reservations number is the same (989-832-9618).

**TREASURER, Sandra Turk**  
*treasurer@homertownship.org 989-631-4399*

Winter is finally gone and spring is in the air! As I look at the last tax season I see a couple issues that may be helpful if I clarify them. First is the online bill payment of your tax bills. Be sure to have your bank send out your check at least **5 business days prior to the due date.** The account number you should use for your online bill payment check is the **parcel number which always starts with “040”.** We need to also remember that postmarks are not accepted.



I collect taxes at the Township office through February 28<sup>th</sup> and on March 1<sup>st</sup> by 8am I am required to have my tax roll turned over to the Midland County Treasurer. Also, since this last tax season had a number of errors when residents have filled out their checks, it would be helpful if you could **include your phone number** on your check or on your tax bill. Many of you have disconnected your land lines and only use cell phones and it is very hard to find those numbers. If you have any questions on your taxes, be sure to give me a call at the Township office.

I have received a number of calls asking about the **recycle dates** for the township. We have now placed those dates on the Homer Township website for your convenience.

I encourage you to attend our Township meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Come and see how your local government works and be informed on the issues that come before the board.

Enjoy your summer and **watch for your 2014 summer tax bill – to be mailed by July 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**BUILDING INSPECTOR, Kevin P. Varner**  
*homertownship.org*                      **989-839-9181**

We are looking forward to a great Spring and Summer in Homer Township. Do you have plans for a small building project or for building a new home in the next few months? Please take a few minutes to review the Township worksheet, checklist and permit application to guide you through this simple process and contact me so you can proceed without getting into untimely delays. The forms are also available online, click on *Fees and Applications*, print off both the *Requirements and the Application*, fill them out and then contact me.

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, including demolition of any structure, pool, pond. or lean-to. It may fall under the **No Charge** category, but you still need to pursue one.

**How do you know if you need a permit?** Contact me please, I will return your call, fax or e-mail as soon as I can. For electrical, plumbing or heating questions, call the appropriate inspector to clarify your specific issues. The call is cheap compared to the double fee and a citation charge of construction fraud filed



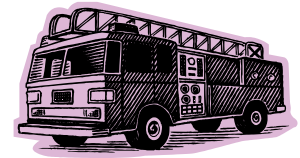
against you for proceeding without a permit. Please, believe me when I say we (all the inspectors) are on your side so that the project will proceed smoothly without delays.

Our office is located in the Township Hall on the corner of E. Olson Road and N. Homer Road. Thank you, we look forward to assisting you!

**FIRE CHIEF, John Hanson 989-832-8034**

**New Fire Engine**

After a cold and snowy winter, it is time to start thinking about spring.



With spring comes warmer weather, beautiful flowers, longer days, and the arrival of our new fire engine.

**On May 21<sup>st</sup>, the township board will be having their monthly board meeting at the fire station, where you will be able to see and touch (with clean hands) the new fire engine.**

**>The board meeting will start at 7:00 PM,**  
**>The fire station open house is at 6:00 PM.** Several firefighters will be on hand to talk with and show you around. Please make a point to come and see YOUR fire department, and sit in on a township board meeting.

**Burn permits**

Once the snow goes away, you need to call to find out if open burning is being allowed in Midland County. You can only burn brush, sticks, leaves and stumps. No household waste or any type of building materials. **You MUST call before you burn! 1-866-922-2876.**

**Meridian Road Bridge repairs**

The Meridian Road Bridge over the Pine River is being repaired, requiring a detour - right through the heart of Homer Township. Large trucks are being routed down South Homer Rd. to Pine River Rd. to 4 ¾ Mile Road and then to Dopp Road. Please be aware of these large vehicles, and give them the room they need to operate.

Once again, THANK-YOU to the residents of Homer Township for your continued support of your fire department!

**PLANNING COMMISSION,  
Sandra Simmons, Chairperson [homertownship.org](http://homertownship.org)**

The total focus of the Planning Commission since the October, 2013 newsletter has been the update of the **Township Master Plan**. We have completed several reviews and updates that address community needs for the coming 15 years as well as updating our future land use map to support the changes suggested. This is an extremely slow process and one that requires much discussion involving both the Board and Planning Commission. It involves looking not only at Homer Township, but surrounding townships as well as state and national trends. Our goal is to be relevant with changing demographics and trends such as: aging populations, housing trends and community services, while retaining the community characteristics that residents now value and wish to continue.

At our March and April planning meetings we will be reviewing the draft implementation plan that will enable us to achieve the future goals we have identified. Hopefully in the May-June time period we will schedule an open house at which time you will all be invited to come and review the proposed future plan for the Township and provide your input. Following that meeting we will again consider all of the input and make changes to the future plan that incorporate your input. The plan will then be sent to the city, county, and all surrounding townships for their review and comments following which our board will be able to adopt the new master plan. If all goes smoothly that new plan should be adopted in the early fall.

**View the Planning Commission Minutes on the Township Website following each meeting.**



NOTICE OF THE  
PUBLIC REVIEW AND INPUT DATE/TIME/LOCATION  
WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE MDN, ON THE TOWNSHIP WEBSITE  
AND NOTICE SENT ON THE TOWNSHIP ALERT SYSTEM.

PLEASE PLAN TO PARTICPATE.

*We said a fond farewell to long time  
Planning member, Roland Yeakle  
and welcomed new member, Joel Marshall.*



**RESERVATIONS: TOWNSHIP HALL  
OR PARK PAVILION,  
Pam Varner 989-832-9618**

This year is off to a good start. The Township Hall is rented every weekend up until July! The Hall holds about 75 people; perfect for showers, birthday parties, and other small events. You must be a Homer Township resident to rent the hall. There is a \$20 deposit at the time you reserve your date and an additional \$40 fee when you pick up the key for the Hall. If everything is in proper order after the rental date, the deposit is returned by mail.

The Pavilions located across from the Public Safety Center are also available to reserve. There is no charge for the Pavilions but you still need to call for a reservation date to hold one. Anyone interested in either of the facilities can contact me. Have a great 2014!

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*Open  
House*



**May 21, 2014**

**Homer Township Safety Building**

**6:00 PM - Fire Station**

★ **See Our New Fire Truck!**

*and*

**7:00 pm -**

★ **Township Board Meeting**

**For All Township Residents**

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**GRACE A. DOW MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
Come And See Our New Look**

The renovation project is nearing completion and has transformed the library into a colorful and welcoming gathering place for all ages. See our new look at the **Open House on Sunday, April 13, 2-5 pm.**

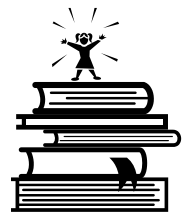
Plans for the **Summer Reading Program** are underway with a kick-off event on Thursday, June 12. Using a science theme, children read and earn prizes in the “**Fizz Boom Read**” program and teens will be going “**Beneath the Surface.**” Adults are invited to join “**Literary Elements**” - read to enter drawings for prizes.

**Check out:**

- ✓ **Story Times and Movies**
- ✓ a **Magic Program** for children, Tuesday, June 17 at 6:30 and 7:30 pm
- ✓ **Musical Program**, Tuesday, July 8 at 7 pm.
- ✓ Children can make a different **Craft** each Thursday from June 19 to August 7.
- ✓ City vehicles will be at our **Touch-a-Truck program**, Thursday, July 24 (rain date, Friday, July 25).
- ✓ **Fab Friday** for teens, June 13 and August 1 from 6-8 pm.
- ✓ Don't miss the book bargains at the **Friends of the Library Used Book Sale.** June 6, 7 and 8. \$6 bag sale on Sunday
- ✓ This fall, a series of **programs on the human brain** will be offered for adults.
- ✓ **Story times** will begin in September.

There is so much happening at the library, please visit the website for the most up-to-date information on upcoming programs and events,

[www.midland-mi.org/gracedowlibrary](http://www.midland-mi.org/gracedowlibrary)



**WEBSITE NEWS, Sandra Simmons,  
Website Coordinator *homertownship.org***

The township website is being used a bit more, but still not as much as it could be. The latest updates include a revision of the 'Permits/Applications/Fees' section and the addition of a new section on 'Recycling'.

The main ways we have of getting current information to residents is the 'Current News' section of the website and the 'Township Alert' system. I encourage you to check the Current News section frequently and **sign up for the ALERT**. This is the most timely means of notifying residents of immediate/pending issues and we are the only township that has this system available, so please take advantage of it. Let me know of other ways the website can help you.



**To Sign Up For  
Township Updates:**

1. **Go to the Township Website.**
2. **Select "Register for Township Update Service".**

**Quick and Easy!**

By signing up for the **Township Alert**, you will be notified of important meetings, election issues, and notifications of when the electronic newsletter is available!

**HOMER TOWNSHIP  
BOARD MEETINGS  
are held on the  
3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday  
of every month.**

**Effective 3/11/14 Republic Waste Services revised the geographic pickup area/schedule for some residents on the south side of M-20.**

We have requested a description of the revised geographic area so we can post it on the Township Website. The current list does not reflect these changes. It is our understanding that Republic has notified people affected by the change by mail.



**If you have any questions or comments regarding items being addressed by the Homer Township Board, please contact us and/or come to the next Board Meeting.**



## Spring & Summer Happenings At CHIPPEWA NATURE CENTER

CNC's Visitor Center is open 8am-5pm Monday-Saturday and 12-5pm Sunday with free admission, the 15 miles of trails are open dawn-to-dark daily. For more information and a full calendar of events including hikes, paddling trips, workshops and more, visit our \*new\* website at [www.chippewanaturecenter.org](http://www.chippewanaturecenter.org), and 'Like' us on Facebook.

### Experience Earth Day

Sat, April 26 • 10-3pm • Free!

Plant a young tree or bush. Learn about invasive exotic plants and how to control them. Help pull invasive Garlic Mustard or Buckthorn. Tour our Gold LEED™ certified Nature Preschool building. Plant some native wildflower seeds to take home. Learn ways your family can live a green lifestyle.



### Homestead Sunday

Every Sunday, May 25 - August 31 • 1-5pm • Free!

Staff and volunteers will be at our log cabin and one-room schoolhouse to answer questions, give tours and teach lessons from long ago. Kids of all ages can help with chores, play traditional games and visit the farm animals.

### Native Plant Sale

*Member Preview – Thurs, May 29, 2014 • 12-7pm*

*Public Welcome – Fri, May 30 • 12-7pm & Sat, May 31 • 12-4pm*

Michigan-native ferns, trees, shrubs, vines and wildflowers add color and interest to gardens; new or existing. Experts will be available to help visitors design and plan their gardens or natural areas.

### Summer Exploration Days

*Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm • Sat, 9am-5pm*

*• Sun, 1-5pm • Free!*

This self-guided indoor program includes a variety of hands-on exploration stations. Enjoy experiments, fun facts, crafts scavenger hunts and more! The activities change bi-weekly.

### BioBlitz

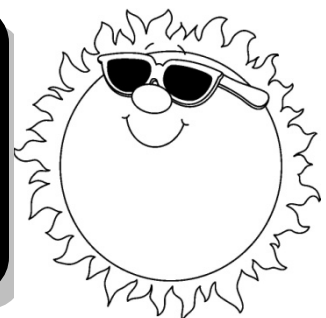
*Fri, Sept 19 • 6-10pm & Sat, Sept 20, 2014*

*• 6am-8pm • Free!*

BioBlitz is a 24-hour race against the clock to find and identify as many species as possible on CNC's 1,200 acres. Work with local scientists and naturalists in bird and bat mist netting and electrofishing, and enjoy live animal programs on bats, other mammals and birds of prey and a special program by keynote speaker Joel Greenberg about the extinct Passenger Pigeon.



*Have a wonderful  
Spring and Summer!*





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**NOTE: Some phone numbers will change: May 1, 2014 (see article)**

**Supervisor:** Russ Varner  
832-7882

**Treasurer:** Sandra Turk  
631-4399

**Clerk:** Todd Lee  
832-0964

**Trustees:** Keith Johnson  
832-4123  
Craig Norton  
636-7695  
John Pruiett  
631-2775  
John Stern  
835-4203

**Fire Chief:** John Hanson  
832-8034

**Building Inspector:** Kevin Varner  
839-9181

**Electrical Inspector:** Mike Gravis  
486-3743

**Plumbing Inspector:** Ted Van Wert  
831-9645  
**Water Inspector**

**Rentals: -** Pam Varner  
Hall and Pavilions 832-961

**Newsletter:** Garlene Glanz  
832-3145