

TALK OF THE TOWNSHIP

News You Can Use from Port Huron Township

Spring/Summer 2015

www.PortHuronTownship.org

Volume 17 Issue 1



TOWNSHIP OFFICE

3800 Lapeer Road
Port Huron, MI 48060
(810) 987-6600
Fax: 987-6712
Office Hours:
Monday-Friday
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

BOARD MEETINGS

Public Welcome

Township Board
1st & 3rd Monday 7:00 p.m.

Park Commission
1st Wednesday 7:00 p.m.

Planning Commission
1st Thursday 7:00 p.m.

TOWNSHIP OFFICERS

Robert G. Lewandowski, Jr.
Supervisor

Benita E. Davis
Clerk

Nancy G. Collins
Treasurer

Trustees
Donald Dudas

William E. Livingston

Steve Riehl

Peter Shonka

CONGRATULATIONS BENITA DAVIS!

Please join the Charter Township of Port Huron Board of Trustees in congratulating our own Benita Davis, who has met the program criteria and attained the prestigious Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk (CMMC) certification. Benita's commitment to education and desire to serve the residents of Port Huron Township at the most professional level possible clearly defines her dedication to the office of Township Clerk. We applaud and commend her for this esteemed accomplishment.

SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE

I hope everyone made it through the winter ok. Spring is finally here and we can get out and enjoy the warmer weather. As you know, MDOT continues to work on the I-94 and I-69 corridor project in the Township. It is expected to be completed around mid October. It will be wonderful to finally get Michigan Road open.

In other road news, the Township received funding assistance through the St. Clair County Road Commission to resurface Michigan Road between West Water and Lapeer. This road is expected to be a detour route when Water Street between I-94 and West Water is closed for construction. The timeline as of now for Water Street is June-August, with a duration of 6 weeks for a total closure for the box culvert replacement over Stocks Creek.

Since the last newsletter, we have started the sewer pump station rehab on Strawberry Lane. It is moving ahead of schedule and at this time they are working on the restoration of yards, then they will restore driveways.

It was too bad to see Super K-Mart close. We are working with the company that is trying to lease out the property. If you have any ideas of what you may like to see there, or any other place in the Township, send me your ideas. As you can see, there are a lot of things going on, especially with roads. Please be patient when traveling in the Township.

I hope everyone has an enjoyable summer, and please feel free to contact me by email at rlewandowski@porthurontownship.org or by phone at 810-987-6600, ext. 18 with any comments, concerns or ideas. Thanks again for letting me serve you.

Robert G. Lewandowski, Jr.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT DEVELOPMENT

Last year the issuance of building permits began to pick up, as well as the submittal of additional commercial permits. This year already we have issued permits for 2 new single family residential homes and received a site plan for a new 30,000 sq. ft. combination 2 story office/warehouse. With the increase in new activity, the building department is attempting to provide as much information as possible to the public, and this has led to better use of our Township website, www.porthurontownship.org.

With that in mind, if you have a project that you are preparing to start at your residence or business, we have a substantial amount of information posted online to assist you. If you open our website and click on "Building", it will take you to the Building/Planning and Zoning Department. General information is listed on this page, and specific topics, including a link to a complete copy of our township ordinances, can be accessed via the drop down menus on the left-hand side of the page. Please feel free to call us if you need further information.

CLERK'S CORNER

CMMC

Ensuring Civic Relevance

This past March I attained my Certified Michigan Municipal Clerk designation. The designation is awarded by the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks. This affirms my commitment to my professional development. The investment in education and training that I have received serves to enhance the quality of service to the residents and to Port Huron Charter Township. This designation is valid for three years and requires recertification through continual education as recognized by the MAMC Board.

This organization is crucial to keep Township Clerks abreast of changes in legislation, up-to-date on emerging trends in municipal government, as well as to provide networking with fellow clerks. I am very grateful for the support of the Board and the office staff. Their daily support and encouragement has made it possible for me to obtain this certification. As your Township Clerk please know that I am committed to maintaining my certification and continuing my education so that I may serve you with the utmost integrity and knowledge.

Benita Davis, CMMC

WOODLAND CEMETERY NEWS

If you are someone who is interested in genealogy or would be interested in working on small projects within the cemetery please let me know. Vicky can always use help with clean-up, and there are also some projects that could be started if we had the right people with interest.

If you frequent the Woodland Cemetery then please take notice of the rules that have been posted. There have been a few instances of items appearing within the cemetery that are not allowed. We have posted a brief outline of the rules, but before you plant anything new or bring in any items you should check with our office to make sure it is allowed.

Please don't assume that because you saw it on another site it is allowable.

FOIA UPDATE

Legislation was recently passed that amended the Freedom of Information Act charging requirements and penalty provisions. These new rules take effect on July 1, 2015. Our *Public Summary of FOIA Procedures and Guidelines* and the *FOIA Request Detail Cost Itemization* can be found on our website at www.porthurontownship.org in the Links Box on the home page. If you have any questions or want additional information you may also contact me.

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

The Port Huron Township Fire Department is looking for Paid On Call Firefighters. If you have ever considered serving your community or taking on a great challenge, come and visit us at the station, 3848 Lapeer Rd., and we can answer your questions.

Welcome to our newest full time member of the Port Huron Township Fire Department. Lieutenant Rob May joined the ranks as a Paid On Call Firefighter 8 years ago. In December of last year, Rob was selected for an available full time position. At the completion of his probation in June, Rob will be promoted to the rank of Captain. He will join Captain Ronda McLeod and Captain Jason Bocek in leading the department when he is on shift. Rob replaces Captain Eric Trexler who left the department in 2014. We wish Eric all the best for the future and thank him for his many years of service.

Congratulations to Jackie Martin who was named the 2015 Henry Stroh Award winner for Firefighter of the Year. Jackie has been with the department for several years and in the last year has completed her EMT training, joined the Part time Equipment Operator program, and led the firefighters as president of their Safety Club. In her spare time, Jackie is also active with the March of Dimes, works full time, and is a member of the Port Huron Township Recreation Board.

Our newest Paid On Call Firefighter, Jason Genaw, has completed the St. Clair County Fire Academy. Jason has spent over 300 hours in training for being a firefighter. Well done to both Jackie and Jason.

This is a reminder to all residents that you must have a valid burning permit for the year in order to burn. Permits are available at the fire station from 8am until 6pm every day. With the new permits, you no longer need to call in for approval to burn, however, you are responsible for your fire. For more information, call 982-3543.



WATER/DPW OFFICE

2014 DRINKING WATER QUALITY REPORT AVAILABLE

Your annual report on the source and quality of your drinking water is available on the Web at: <http://www.porthurontownship.org/2014WaterQualityReport.aspx>. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you, contact Port Huron Township at (810) 987-6600 x 21 or via email at cmaxbauer@porthurontownship.org.

YARD WASTE

It is that time of year when residents begin cleaning up their yards. Waste Management began collecting yard waste April 1st. The yard waste pickup runs thru November 30th on your scheduled trash collection day. Keep in mind that yard waste must be in compostable paper bags; in 35 gallon cans (no lids) with a Yard Waste sticker facing the street (50 lb weight limit) or marked with an "X". Branches must be tied and bundled with string, no longer than 4 feet in length, no larger than 4 inches in diameter. Bundles must weigh less than 50 lbs and be no larger than 18 inches around. Yard waste mixed with rubbish cannot be collected.

Prohibited materials: branches over 4 feet in length and 4 inches in diameter, stumps, shrubs with root balls and dirt, large quantities of dirt, sand, gravel, pet waste, plastic bags with yard waste, etc..

SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM



2015 Summer Recreation Program will be held again at the Beach Road Park. Proposed Playground dates are June 22nd – August 14th from 9am-2pm. This program offers games, crafts, sport activities, and

fun for children kindergarten age – 14. Children must bring a lunch each day.

Registration will be held June 18th and 19th at the park from 10:00 – 2:00. The cost is \$40.00 per child, which includes a summer rec t-shirt. Field trips are also planned and may require additional fees. Please watch our website as well as fliers that may come home with your children from school. You may also call (810) 987-6600 for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that connection of your roof downspouts, foundation drains (sump pumps), areaway drains or other sources of surface runoff or groundwater to the sanitary sewer system (directly or indirectly) are prohibited in the Township? Water from your downspouts and sump pump should discharge into your yard, an appropriate drainage structure or storm sewer (where permitted).

Every downspout and sump pump that is incorrectly connected to the sanitary sewer system causes extra water to flow into the system. Downspouts connected to the sewer system are open drains. Leaves and dirt can easily get into the sewers and clog them. The extra water flow and clogs can cause the sewer system to back up into basements and streets. These problems cause sewer rates to increase, costing you more money.

If you aren't sure if your downspouts or sump pump are connected to the sanitary sewer system, contact the Township at (810) 987-6600 x 21.

PROTECT OUR WORKERS

Please keep in mind when you are traveling to use caution when you see flashing lights up ahead. Flashing lights indicate the presence of law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, public works personnel, tow truck drivers and/or maintenance workers. Protect our workers ---- slow down, move over and pay attention.

FREE FISHING CLINIC

Port Huron Township Recreation Board will hold its Annual Free Fishing Clinic on Saturday, June 13th at the Wm P. Thompson Pond (40th Street) from 11:00 – 3:00. Participants must register. This event includes: free hotdog lunch, fishing poles for use, instruction on knot tying, fish identification, casting contest, and more. **New this year:** Blue Water Social Club will demonstrate kayak boating safety, and also the Joe Fiedler Memorial Fishing Gear

Raffle. Joe Fiedler was an avid fisherman and he loved children. Unfortunately, in September, 2014, at only 33 years of age, Joe lost his battle with cancer. Joe's family, whose motto is "Catchem 4 Cancer", is sponsoring the free fishing gear raffle and will be helping out with our event as well.



TAKING OUT THE TRASH



Please take special care when placing your trash at the curb weekly. When bags are out for a number of days, they are more susceptible to critters and weather conditions.

You are responsible for containing the trash you place at the curb. If bags are ripped and items are strewn or blown into the surrounding area, it may qualify as a blight ordinance violation. Blight ordinance violations are subject to ticketing. Please take the steps necessary to insure that those traveling in our neighborhoods aren't exposed to this unsightly situation.



TREASURERS OFFICE

CHECKS WILL BE RETURNED



We continue to have problems with checks sent from banks and credit unions with the incorrect account number on them. Please make sure you are putting the correct account number on your checks. Taxes, utility bills, cost recovery and special assessments all have different account numbers. **WE WILL RETURN ALL CHECKS WITH INCORRECT ACCOUNT NUMBERS.** You will be responsible for any late fees if we return your check to you.

Nancy Collins

ATTENTION ALL DOG OWNERS

With warmer weather we see more and more people out walking their dogs. Remember when walking your dog, it is your responsibility to clean up any feces your dog leaves. This includes the pavement, shoulder, right of way or ditches. You cannot allow your dog to do his/her business without cleaning it up. Port Huron Township Animal Control Ordinance #224 requires that you remove and dispose of any feces left by a dog on any private or public property not owned by the dog walker. It further requires all dog walkers to have a means of disposal with them when walking their dog(s).

With the warmer weather, and open windows, barking dogs are a nuisance to many neighbors. Animal Control Ordinance #224 also states "it shall be unlawful for any owner, custodian and/or keeper of a dog to permit or allow such dog to create a nuisance and/or disturb the peace through unreasonable or objectionable noise caused by frequently and habitual barking, howling or creating other noise".

Always have plenty of fresh water, food and shade if your dog stays outside. No dog may be confined so as to be forced to stand, sit or lie in its own excrement, the person(s) responsible for the animal(s) shall regularly and as often as necessary to prevent odor or health and sanitation problems, clean all animal areas or areas of animal contact.

We wish all our two and four legged residents a safe, happy and fun summer

TAX

EXEMPTIONS & DEFERMENTS

Port Huron Township offers hardship exemptions, disabled veteran exemptions and summer tax deferments to qualifying residents. Call Kim or Penny for information regarding the hardship and disabled veterans exemptions. Call Nancy or Jennifer for information regarding the summer tax deferments. Call 810-987-6600 for information on these programs.

ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

REMINDER! TOWNSHIP WIDE RE-APPRAISAL:

St. Clair County Equalization Department has been contracted by Port Huron Township to perform assessing functions. To comply with recommendations from the State that 20% of township parcels be physically inspected annually, Equalization staff are visiting properties throughout the spring and summer months to update information. Staff may visit your home to measure structures and take pictures to update the assessing files. If you have questions about the assessing functions that are being performed, please feel free to contact the Port Huron Township Assessor's Office at 810-987-6600.

DO YOU OWN A SMALL BUSINESS? DID YOU FILE FOR THE PERSONAL PROPERTY EXEMPTION FROM TAXES?

The Michigan legislature has passed the law exempting eligible small business personal property from taxation beginning for the 2014 tax year. In order to claim the exemption, the owner of the eligible personal property must **annually timely file** an affidavit, (Form 5076), with the local tax collecting unit where the property is located not later than February 10th each tax year that the exemption is claimed.

LATE AFFIDAVITS ARE NOT CONSIDERED TO BE FILED ON TIME. The State Tax Commission has determined that annually filed by February 10, means postmarked by February 10. If you missed filing for the 2015 taxing year, mark your calendar for 2016. The Assessor's Office includes the exemption form with the Personal Property Statements that are mailed out annually.

Please refer to the qualifications shown on the Affidavit of Owner of Eligible Personal Property Form 5076 located on the State Tax Commissions website at: http://michigan.gov/documents/treasury/5076_439273_7.pdf

BE SAFE, BE PREPARED, BE INFORMED



Port Huron Township has taken several steps to **increase communication** methods with its residents. You can find Port Huron Township on Facebook (www.facebook.com/phtwp) or Twitter (www.twitter.com/phtwp). Both of these formats provide casual, fun, and informative messages with our residents. You can also communicate with us quickly and conveniently. Head on over today and give us a "like". Make sure to hashtag any photos or posts about the Township with #phtwp so we can see your photos and enjoyment of Port Huron Township.

WINS (Warning Information Notification System) WINS is a public service alert system that includes over 150 categories of weather, emergency and non emergency alerts. WINS notifications are sent to your home phone, smartphone, TTY, email or text messages by county departments, townships, villages and cities within St. Clair County. It is a powerful and invaluable tool to our residents. WINS will be used at the County level to warn residents (regardless of "signing up" or not) if there is a Tornado Warning/Amber Alert/Life threatening situation. Any situation where someone's life or safety is in imminent danger will be an automatic alert. At the Township level, you have to sign up or "subscribe". You pick what type of messages you receive and how you receive them (e-mail only, text only, phone call only, or all of the above). You can also set "do not disturb" hours for weather alerts so you aren't bothered in the middle of the night. We only send out important notifications to our subscribers – information that will assist in our residents being safer or more informed, and information that will also help our first responders by communicating with you. We do not use WINS for simple updates, but to let you know when you will be affected by a situation for a period of time (water main break, power outage due to fire, hazard, etc.) Please sign up right away at www.bereadystclaircounty.org

Ready Neighborhoods are a new initiative by St. Clair County Emergency Management. This program opens up lines of communication between the County, Port Huron Township, and your specific neighborhood. It allows us to hear safety concerns and provide resources to help your neighborhood become a safer, more prepared neighborhood. Time commitment is light (requires a one hour presentation and two short meetings a year). The County will then designate your neighborhood as a "Ready Neighborhood". This program operates similar to a "Neighborhood Watch" program, but focuses more on general preparedness and safety. Call Anthony at (810) 987-6000 for information on your neighborhood becoming a "Ready Neighborhood".

DDA NEWS

The sun is shining and good for us. It certainly has been a long and cold winter for sure. We are continuing to look at back filling the K-Mart/Sears Holding properties with a larger commercial retail center.

We are also working on a railroad project to develop and relocate a new Amtrak station to Port Huron Township. We have a groundswell of support for this new station which will serve Port Huron and the greater St. Clair County area. Group consensus is to build an intermodal station on existing CN property which is for sale within the DDA District in Port Huron Township. The site is part of a 115 acre tract that is zoned industrial. The site has access to I-69 and plenty of space available for well lit parking and security.

Amtrak has an interest in relocating the current station which is not ADA compliant, is landlocked and has poor lighting and very few parking spaces. The Blue Water Area Transportation Commission is a core partner in this project and has committed to working with the DDA for improvement of all aspects of this project. They have applied for a Federal grant to complete a "Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study" which is a necessary first step in the development.

It won't happen overnight – it is estimated that it will take anywhere from 3 to 5 years for completion. But the regional impact for jobs and tourism will be a huge economic driver for the entire County. The potential for future growth in the vicinity is great as well, with property that is close by for further development. It's truly an exciting time and I'm so glad to be a part of it!

Paul G. Maxwell, DDA Director

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Baker's Field cleanup will be held on Saturday, June 6th from 9am to 2pm. Volunteers are needed. A free light lunch will be provided for those attending. This is a great way to spend a few hours on a Saturday and get involved with your community. Please call 987-6600 for more information or check out our website at www.porthurontownship.org



RIVER DAY

Show the Water Some Love!

River Day returns on Saturday, June 13 with a full day of free activities on land and on water. River Day corresponds with the DNR's Free Fishing Weekend giving residents the chance to drop a line without a fishing license. Port Huron Township will be hosting a free fishing clinic at Wm. P. Thompson (40th Street) Pond with experts on hand to help families with fishing activities. Free fishing equipment is available for check-out at most St. Clair County library branches. Since 2004, the St. Clair County Health Department has been organizing recreational activities in early June that allow families to enjoy a day together in the great outdoors which creates environmental stewards to last a lifetime.

Complete event details are available at www.RiverDayFun.com

RIVER DAY EVENTS INCLUDE:

Kids Free Fishing Clinic, Wm. P. Thompson (40th Street) Pond, Port Huron Township
Vantage Point Fishing Clinic, Maritime Center, Port Huron
Kid's Fishing Derby, Pine Shores Golf Club, St. Clair
Paddle the Pine River, St. Clair Boat Harbor, St. Clair
Blueways Paddle on the Belle River, E. China Twp Park, Marine City