

TALK OF THE TOWNSHIP

News You Can Use from Port Huron Township

Spring/Summer 2013

www.PortHuronTownship.org

Volume 14 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

SUPERVISOR'S MESSAGE

Well, I hope everyone got through the winter ok; hopefully by the time you are reading this, we are enjoying some warmer weather. I didn't think it was ever going to get here!

With all of the rain we received this spring, we didn't have too much trouble with flooding. There were some areas that had trouble with ditches and we are going to try to get those issues resolved between the Road Commission and the Township the best way we can. On that note, it would be a big help if residents could keep their driveway culverts clear of debris such as leaves and trash.

The Michigan Road overpass over the train tracks is supposed to be completed this fall. Along with that, Michigan Rd. south of the train tracks is currently under construction to be rebuilt so that both projects should be completed at the same time. Another major road project we have going is 32nd Street between Dove and Ravenswood. This is also scheduled to be completed by fall. There are also many road projects involving general maintenance and ditching. Water Street from I-94/69 to West Water and Strawberry Lane juncture is still on schedule for a rebuild next year. The Township just sent in an application for grant money to help put in a bicycle and walking path along that route as well.

The Township Board approved the first phase of sewer station rehabilitation projects. We are starting with our most problematic stations this year and hope to complete most of the projects by the end of next year. Some of the stations were built in the mid 1970's and are in desperate need of refurbishing.

Our new addition to the Township, Menards, is expected to be open on July 16th. I think they will be a great addition to our Township.

As you can see, we have some big projects going on in the Township, all of which will help serve our residents better. I hope everyone has a great and safe summer, and please feel free to contact me by email at rl Lewandowski@porthurontownship.org or by phone at 810-987-6600, extension 18 if you have any comments or concerns. Thanks again for letting me serve you.

MASTER PLAN UPDATES

Last year, the St Clair County Metropolitan Planning Commission assisted the Township Planning Commission with updates to Port Huron Township's Master Plan. We held several public hearings to get as much input as possible from the residents of the Township. The completed document is in the final process of approval and available to view at the Township for anyone who is interested. The main emphasis of the new plan is expanding access to the recreational areas of the Township. There has been significant economic growth in the Township in the form of new businesses and it appears that it may continue. Hopefully this new Master Plan will help the Township accommodate this growth and provide the necessary direction for the future. Please feel free to stop in and take a look or watch for it to be posted on the Township website as soon as possible.

FROM THE TREASURER

IF YOU WALK YOUR DOGS ON PUBLIC STREETS

As the weather warms up, more and more people are out walking their dogs. Not only is this great for the dog, but it's also a wonderful activity for people.

Port Huron Township does have an Animal Ordinance that requires owners to clean up after their dog(s) if they are in a public area. Dogs must be leashed or confined to a fenced yard at all times. Gone are the days when you simply opened the door and let the dog out to run the neighborhood. Not only is it not fair to your neighbors, it's not fair to your dog. A loose dog is more apt to get hit by a car, to be injured or killed by another animal or to be picked up and taken to the dog pound as a stray. If your dog does get out and goes to the neighbor's yard to do his "business", please clean it up. Consider how you'd feel if it happened in your yard day after day.

If you walk your dog, please put some baggies in your pocket to clean up after a "business" stop. Nobody wants to step in a mess left on the pavement or in the front yard by the dog of an inconsiderate owner. Failure to comply with this ordinance could result in a ticket to the owner.

IF YOU HAVE A SPECIAL EVENT

If you have a special event coming up (neighborhood yard sale, church event, mom to mom etc) or an announcement or person you'd like to recognize for a special reason, please let us know. Space permitting and on a first come basis, we may be able to feature your announcement on our Township webpage under community connections. Send the announcement to ncollins@porthurontownship.org for possible publication.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP TIRE CLEAN UP

Port Huron Township will be offering two Saturdays to bring in your old tires for disposal. On Saturday June 15th and Saturday July 13th, we will be accepting old tires from township residents ONLY at the DPW building at 4134 West Water St from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. The cost per tire is \$2.00 and will help cover the disposal cost. Proof of residency is required. No businesses please.

This is a great time to get rid of those old tires you never knew what to do with!

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP'S RECREATION BOARD BRINGS BACK THE FISHING CLINIC

The ever popular fishing clinic will be held on Saturday, June 8th from 10:00 - 2:00 at the WPT (40th St) Pond. If you've never attended this event, it provides fun for the whole family. Bring your fishing pole or use one of ours. We have worms, educational information, games, hot dogs for lunch & more!



SUMMER RECREATION PROGRAM

Plans are underway for the 2013 program which will again be held at the Township's Beach Road park. Jennifer Freeman has been hired as the Director for this year's program. Jennifer and her family reside in the Township and her education and experience are in the education field, specifically with elementary-ages. Proposed program dates are: June 24 - August 2 from 9:00 - 2:00 Monday - Friday. Registration will be held June 20th & 21st (10:00 - 2:00 @ Beach Rd Park) Program offers games, crafts, sport activities, and fun for children kindergarten age - 14. Children must bring their lunch each day. Registration fee is \$30.00 per child, which includes a summer rec t-shirt. Field trips are also planned and may require additional fees. If you have any questions please call (810) 987-6600.

Port Huron Township has many opportunities for anyone wishing to volunteer. We have seasonal outdoor projects in our parks and cemetery. If you have some time and you'd like to give back to your community, please let us know. We are also always looking for individuals who would like to train and commit to working on election days. For more info please contact Benita Davis 987-6600.



Volunteer Services

WATER OFFICE

2012 DRINKING WATER QUALITY REPORT AVAILABLE

Your annual report on the source and quality of your drinking water is available on the Web at: <http://porthurontownship.org/Portals/11/2012wqr.pdf>. 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 will begin collecting yard waste weekly from April 2nd thru November 29th 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, weigh less than 50 lbs and are 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..

DPW

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.

PLANTING REMINDER

As a reminder, fire hydrants and manholes need to be visible and accessible to township staff and emergency personnel. Please do not to plant shrubs, trees, or other vegetation that will impede their access.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Menards' new center is coming along nicely and is expected to open near the end of June or first week in July. If you haven't noticed what's happening, please drive by. This will be a destination for lots of people in the entire county. Menards is driving more development opportunities for the rest of Port Huron Township.

Jimmy Johns is opening a new location, complete with drive-thru, on the corner of 24th street and Howard Street. They are expected to open in July.

The Township has very wisely decided to market some extremely valuable property along the I-94/I-69 corridor. This has caused plenty of new opportunities to come our way. Your Downtown Development Authority (DDA) has joined the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). This organization offers us the resources to understand the dynamic international retail industry and achieve community development goals. We can network with retailers, developers and investors. We can learn how to incorporate retail into economic development strategy. And we can use ICSC meetings to make important contacts, market our community and create retail success. Retailers are broadening their gaze, too. They are on the hunt for properties that are close to international border crossings. Partnering with the Economic Development Authority (EDA) has provided great resources to show our Canadian friends - who shop with us daily - what a wonderful community we have in Port Huron Township. And this could lead to a new round of record-setting deals for our local retailers. What's our motto for the months ahead? Prove the old adage that records are meant to be broken.

Paul G. Maxwell, DDA Director

OFFICE OF THE ASSESSOR

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 through the summer months to update information. Staff may visit your home to measure structures and take pictures to update the assessing files. If you have any 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.

NEW DEADLINE FOR PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION (PRE) ELIGIBILITY:

June 1st is now the deadline to own and occupy a home and claim it as your Principal Residence. This exemption entitles the property to an 18 mil reduction in summer property tax liability. The Principal Residence Exemption Affidavit must be completed and submitted to our office. Forms can be obtained by following the link on our website or by contacting the Assessor's Office. Not sure if you are already claiming the exemption? You can find that information on your tax bill, on your assessment change notice, by reviewing your property information at www.porthurontownship.org or by calling the office.

FREQUENTLY ASKED ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

In each newsletter, the Assessor will answer at least one question frequently asked about Assessing. Here is this edition's question: **Are foreclosures sales considered in my assessment?** The State Tax Commission allows the use of foreclosure sales to value your property; however, they must meet a set of standards. Foreclosure properties can experience very short exposure to the market, vandalism, neglect, and many other factors what would make them a bad comparison for market value. If the property was in marketable/presentable condition, similar to your property, and exposed to the real estate market for the appropriate amount of time (sometimes the average time on market can be well over one year), the sale can be used as a comparable property. If you have a question you would like to see addressed in the newsletter, please contact the Assessor's Office by phone, mail or email at psimpson@porthurontownship.org

CLEAN UP AFTER YOUR DOG AND DON'T FEED THE GEESE AND DUCKS

Cleaning up after your dog is one of the "Seven Simple Steps to Clean Water" launched through St. Clair County by the Southeast Michigan Partners for Clean Water as part of the Our Water Our Future Ours to Protect public education campaign aimed at improving water quality. Did you know that pet, duck, and goose waste has bacteria that can make St. Clair County's rivers and lakes unsafe for swimming, boating and fishing? When pet (duck and goose) waste left in yards, on sidewalks and in parking lots gets washed into storm drains and/or roadside ditches that lead directly to our rivers and lakes the rivers and lakes become polluted and unsafe. St. Clair County is home to approximately 26,000 dogs. What can individuals do? St. Clair County pet owners and those that enjoy feeding geese and ducks can help keep rivers and lakes clean by following these tips:

- Prompt and proper disposal. Whether in your yard or on a walk, promptly dispose of your pet's waste in the trash or down the toilet where it will be properly treated. When pet waste is left behind, it washes into storm drains and ditches. From there, it heads straight to local lakes and rivers taking harmful bacteria with it.
- Watch instead of feeding. Watch and enjoy the ducks and geese, but avoid feeding them. Feeding ducks and geese may seem harmless, but, in fact, can be harmful to waterways. Feeding waterfowl causes them to become more dependent on humans, which in turn, creates unnaturally high populations and more animal waste. This waste contains bacteria that pollute parks and waterways.
- Spread the word. Tell others how they can help protect our lakes and rivers. Also, work cooperatively with your local government to install signs, bag dispensers, and trash cans in convenient public places to remind visitors to clean up after their pets.

The Our Water Our Future Ours to Protect campaign focuses on Seven Simple Steps to Clean Water – things that St. Clair County residents can do to help improve water quality. The Seven Simple Steps to Clean Water are:

1. Help keep pollution out of storm drains.
2. Fertilize sparingly and carefully.
3. Carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals and oil.
4. Clean up after your pet(s).
5. Practice good car care.
6. Choose earth friendly landscaping.
7. Save water.

Additional information, as well as posters and tip cards, can be found on the "Our Water Our Future Ours to Protect" website, accessible from SEMCOG's home page at www.semco.org.

2013 ROAD BRIDGE REPORT

As has been reported in the news media, there has been discussion in Lansing regarding road funding. The St. Clair County Road Commission encourages residents to participate in this discussion, and offers the following information:

The St. Clair County Road Commission uses PASER Ratings (a nationally recognized format for road rating) to evaluate every road under its jurisdiction. This allows the Road Commission to determine the best and most cost-effective method for each road's condition. PASER Ratings run from Grade 1 (Failed) to Grade 10 (Excellent). Using 2012 PASER ratings, the following investment would be required to bring the 611.61 miles of paved roads in St. Clair County to Excellent (Grade 9-10) condition:

1.93 miles of road at Grade 1 (Failed) – complete reconstruction	\$ 1,933,031
24.50 miles at Grade 2 – complete reconstruction	\$18,373,283
93.64 miles at Grade 3 – complete reconstruction	\$70,233,633
126.37 miles at Grade 4 – mill & resurface	\$18,954,900
52.69 miles at Grade 5 – mill & resurface	\$ 7,903,613
95.99 miles at Grade 6 – crack seal and chipseal	\$ 3,839,429
106.94 miles at Grade 7 – crack seal and chipseal	\$ 4,277,558
61.10 miles at Grade 8 – crack seal	\$ 305,510
<u>Total cost to complete repairs</u>	<u>\$125,820,958</u>

(As these numbers show, it is much less expensive to maintain the condition of a road that is already in fair to good condition than it is to completely reconstruct a road that has deteriorated.)

Of St. Clair County's 226 bridges, currently 24 local bridges and 13 primary bridges are posted with weight limits. To replace or repair all 37 currently posted bridges within St. Clair County would cost \$31 million. (The average cost for a bridge on the local system is \$704,125; on the primary system, \$1,089,077.)

The St. Clair County Road Commission has developed a report on the status of the roads and bridges throughout the county. This report is limited to work that would be bid by private contractors and performed to federal and state required specifications. It does not include such things as routine maintenance, snow removal or equipment replacement costs for the Road Commission. We encourage you to visit the Road Commission's web-site at: www.sccrc-roads.org/PDFminutes/RdBridgeRpt.pdf to view the full report and then contact your legislators to voice your opinion on road & bridge funding.

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Spring and summer mean getting outdoors to spruce up the yard, enjoy the warmer weather and celebrate with friends. This can mean two things that you should be aware of:

Outdoor burning and fireworks!

Any outdoor burning, yard waste, camp fire, or bon fire requires a burning permit in Port Huron Township. Once you have visited the fire station to fill out the paperwork, just call the station between 8am and 8pm to activate your permit. Burning is authorized based on weather and fire safety conditions. No burning of yard waste is allowed within 1400 feet of the City of Port Huron or the City of Marysville by state law.

Fireworks, now legal in Michigan, are regulated by state law. You may purchase and shoot off fireworks within the township. Fireworks are the responsibility of the shooter. You must be at least 18 to buy fireworks and anyone shooting them off must not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. You must have the permission from the property owner to shoot off fireworks. And also remember, what goes up on your property must come down on authorized property. Last year we had several fires caused by fireworks. The shooter is responsible for where it lands and what damage it does both legally and financially.

Remember to be a good neighbor! Fireworks are great but not when people are trying to sleep! Fireworks are limited under the township noise ordinance. To make a complaint about fireworks after hours, call St. Clair County Central Dispatch at 985-8115. Noise and disturbance complaints are handled by the Sheriff's office.

MUSEUM NEWS

The Heritage Museum will be holding an open house on June 2nd from 1-4 pm. If all goes well, and pending attendance numbers, we are looking at holding regular hours every two weeks this summer, beginning June 16th. As always, Museum volunteers are in short supply! If you're interested in participating in this worthwhile activity, please contact Jim at 810-300-3750.

DOOR TO DOOR SOLICITATION

Spring is here...and so are the solicitors. Remember that Port Huron Township has an ordinance to cover that activity. Solicitors must have a permit to knock on your door (non profits are exempt). They should have a license from the Township and it must be visible. This license from the Township means that the person has had some type of screening done. The solicitor must meet standards before he/she can solicit door to door in your community. Those who do not get a license may have been denied or would not have passed the screening process.

We encourage citizens to call the Sherriff's Office if non-licensed solicitors are in your neighborhood. The non-emergency number is 810-985-8115.

SPRING / SUMMER STORM SAFETY

On the first Monday of every month, between 12:30 – 1:00 p.m., we conduct a test of our severe weather alert siren. When severe weather is eminent, the siren emits one long, continuous blast. Should you hear that siren, you need to take shelter immediately. Be sure that your emergency kit is in order and contains a portable radio with fresh batteries. Tune in to local radio to await further instructions. Follow the tornado safety tips below:

Tornadoes have often been said to sound like a thousand locomotives or planes. If a tornado threatens, follow these safety rules:

In homes and small buildings, go to the inner-most part of the lowest level.

Stay away from windows and outside walls. Interior closets, halls, and bathrooms are good places to go.

If you do not have time to get to the lowest level, get under something sturdy like a bed.

In school? Get under your desk.

Abandon mobile homes, cars, and trucks. Get into firmly built shelter. If none is available, lie flat in a low spot, ravine, or culvert with your hands protecting your head.

Finally, avoid using bridges and overpasses for shelter. Stopping under bridges and overpasses only leads to traffic jams and the possibility of a greater number of injuries than what would have otherwise occurred.

Dispelling some common tornado myths:

Decreasing the air pressure in a house by opening a window does nothing to decrease the DAMAGE. Even the strongest tornadoes (EF5 of the Enhanced Fujita scale) do not reduce the air pressure low enough to cause a house to "explode". Leave the windows alone. The tornado will open them for you.

The southwest corner of a basement is not the safest place to be in a tornado. Actually, the worst place to be is on the side from which the tornado is approaching...usually the south or southwest.

You are safer outside of your automobile than inside. The high wind of a tornado can blow your car around much like you can a wad of paper.

Bridges and overpasses are not safe places to be in a tornado. You are higher above the ground, in the stronger wind, and are in the path where most flying debris occurs.

DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A WATCH AND A WARNING?

The St. Clair County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management reminds residents of the differences between "Watches" and "Warnings" when it comes to storms in the spring, summer, and fall:

A **watch** is used when the risk of a hazardous weather or flooding event has increased significantly, but its occurrence, location or timing is still uncertain. It is intended to provide enough lead time so those who need to set their plans in motion can do so. A watch means that hazardous weather is possible. People should have a plan of action in case a storm threatens and they should listen for later information and possible warnings especially when planning travel or outdoor activities.

A **warning** is issued when a hazardous weather or hydrologic event is occurring, imminent or likely. A warning means weather conditions pose a threat to life or property. People in the path of the storm need to take protective action.