

TALK OF THE TOWNSHIP

News You Can Use from Port Huron Township

Spring/Summer 2014

www.PortHuronTownship.org

Volume 16 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

I hope everyone is thawed out from our record winter. I didn't think the snow and cold was ever going to end! With all of the snow and ice, we were fortunate that we had a slow thaw so there weren't any real flooding issues – especially along the river.

As far as roads go, the good news is that the St. Clair County Road Commission received some state dollars for resurfacing Lapeer from 24th to 32nd and for rebuilding Lapeer from Alger Road in our Township to Wadhams. The bad news is that they pushed the Water Street from West Water to I-94 project back. Now they plan on doing the bridge over Stocks Creek this fall and the road next summer. When the road is rebuilt we will also be installing a bike path on the river side of the road with grant money that we were awarded to assist with the project.

As most of you already know, along with the roads, MDOT is working on rebuilding the I-94 / I-69 corridor, which consists of many bridges. This work is going to be noisy at times, but please be patient. I have been working with MDOT to try to ensure that most of the noisy work is done during the day, but some of it will have to be done at night. Construction on the new Welcome Center has begun with an anticipated completion in Spring, 2015.

As I told you last year, we are rehabbing our sewer pump stations. Most of the engineering is complete and the physical work on these stations will start soon, with the major one being the Strawberry Lane pump station.

Another project we are working on with DTE Energy is converting most of our overhead streetlights to LED lighting. This will help save money on our streetlight bills.

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 rlwandowski@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.

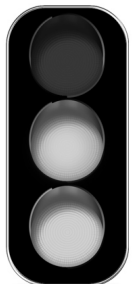
Robert G. Lewandowski, Jr.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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 maintenance workers. Protect our workers ---- slow down, move over and pay attention.





CLERK'S OFFICE

UPCOMING ELECTIONS

July 7, 2014

August 5, 2014

Oct. 6, 2014

Nov. 4, 2014

Last Day to Register for August Primary

AUGUST PRIMARY ELECTION

Last day to register to vote for November General Election

NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION

Please get out and "Make Your Voice Heard" this election cycle!

Port Huron Township has only one local proposal on the August ballot. This proposal is the renewal of 1.5 mills for Fire Department protection. The language you will see on the ballot is as follows: Shall the Charter Township of Port Huron renew the previously authorized millage in an amount not to exceed 1.5 mills (\$1.50 per \$1,000 of state taxable value) on all real and personal property in the Township, not exempt by law, for a period of 4 years, commencing in 2014 through 2017 inclusive, for the purpose of continued 24 hour, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year Fire Department protection for the Township, thereby raising in the first year the millage is authorized and levied an estimated \$350,715.00. Shall the proposition be approved?

RECREATION

Saturday, June 7th is **River Day**, and there are many free events planned throughout the Blue Water Area on land and on the water to get families outdoors and involved in the community. The St. Clair County Health Department sponsors **River Day** with many activities planned throughout the county so check out their website www.riverdayfun.com for a list of the activities. Fishing licenses are not required on June 7th or 8th and fishing equipment is available at most St. Clair County library branches.

The Port Huron Township Recreation Board will sponsor the "**Free Fishing Clinic**" at the WPT (40th St.) Pond. The event will be held on Saturday, June 7th from 10:00 – 2:00. This event is fun for the whole family. Bring a fishing pole or use one of ours. We have the worms, educational information, interactive stations, games, hot dogs for lunch and more!

The **2014 Summer Recreation Program** will be held at the Beach Road Park with Director Jennifer Freeman providing a fun, active, and safe environment for your children again this year. We have had many requests to extend the program to 8 weeks so this year we've implemented that change. Proposed program dates are June 23, 2014 – August 15, 2014 from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Monday – Friday. Registration will be held on June 20th from 9:00 – 2:00 or you can register the first day of the program. Cost of the program is \$40 per child with additional fees for some field trips. This provides an opportunity for your child to make new friends, enjoy games, crafts, and sport activities all in a supervised, safe environment.

TAX INFORMATION

All 2013 property taxes are now delinquent. Real property taxes must be paid to the St. Clair County Treasurer. Real property taxes are based on land and buildings. Call 810-989-6915 before mailing your payment for the correct amount.

2013 Personal property taxes, based on equipment used to run a business, are delinquent and are paid to Port Huron Township. Call 810-987-6600 ext 22 or 23 before mailing for the correct amount. Personal property is subject to seizure if not paid, and does not require further notice on our part.

Port Huron Township offers summer tax deferments to qualifying residents. Call Nancy or Jennifer for more information.

MASTER RECREATION PLAN UPDATES

This spring, the Port Huron Township Park Commission and the Recreation Board are working on updating our Master Recreation Plan. This update is required every few years under State Law and is necessary if we desire to apply for and receive State and Federal Grants. Items like building new bike paths to reach our existing parks, or other new projects we would like to see completed can be paid for in part by these grants.

We would like to get input from our residents so that we know what you consider to be the most important issues we need to address. I will be coordinating the revision of the plan and in order to make sure they receive as much input as possible, we are enclosing a self-addressed sheet of paper that can be filled out, folded and taped, and mailed back into the Township.

Please make sure that you respond so we know what is important to you. We will hold a public hearing later this year to review the work we complete on the new Recreation Plan. Look for updates on the website www.PortHuronTownship.org.

Kirk Lavigne, Building Official, Planning/Zoning Administrator

WATER OFFICE**2013 DRINKING WATER QUALITY REPORT AVAILABLE**

Your annual report on the source and quality of your drinking water is available at: <http://www.porthurontownship.org/Portals/11/pdf/2013>. If you would like to have a copy mailed to you, contact us at (810) 987-6600 x 21 or 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 28th 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..

HOMEOWNER WATER SERVICE LINE RESPONSIBILITY

Recently our residents have begun receiving flyers from various companies offering them protection for their water service line. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain the water service line from the Township's water box up to and under their home. Many of these companies offer a program they claim will pay **up to** \$5,000 in repair costs, yet it only costs \$5 a month to enroll (some are more). Sounds great right? This is a case of buyer beware. What these companies fail to tell you in their brochure is that they basically do not cover anything except damage caused by "normal wear and usage". They do not cover any interior pipes beyond the main shutoff valve; nor do they cover any damage caused by you, third parties, natural disasters, clogs or blockages...and the list goes on. So before you enroll in any program such as this, visit the company website and carefully read the Terms and Conditions (not included with your brochure) so you can make an informed decision.

FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS - NEW BURNING ORDINANCE

Residents of Port Huron Township will have a new burning ordinance in May. The new ordinance comes from updates to the existing code which went into effect back in 2004. Since then the township has grown and many of the changes reflect Michigan Department of Environmental Quality regulations that will bring the township in to compliance.

As far as having fires, a lot will not change. Fires for personal enjoyment or Bon Fires will now be known as camp fires. They can be done at any address in the township in compliance with the new ordinance. Burning of yard waste is still possible but limited to the areas that are not within 1400 feet from the Cities of Port Huron and Marysville. This remains a state law. Also no burning on clean air action days or Ozone action days. Burning is also restricted within 1000 feet of a school while it is in session.

The new ordinance will require the resident to stop by the Port Huron Township Fire Station and purchase your permit. It will cost \$15.00 and will be good until March 1st the following year. The permit will have key burning rules printed on it but we urge all residents to visit our website for a full copy of the ordinance. The fire department will no longer require you to "call in" on the telephone in order to burn. Each resident is responsible for their fire. The Fire Department, Township Code Enforcement Officer, and Sheriff can issue tickets with costs ranging from \$50.00 up to \$500.00. Violators may also be responsible to pay for the cost of fire department services if a violation is found or if a fire gets out of control.

Stop by the fire station, 3848 Lapeer Rd. next to the township offices between 8:00 AM and 6:00PM any day of the week to sign up for your permit. For more information, please visit us at www.porthurontownship.org or call 982-3543.

PORT HURON TOWNSHIP DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

It's a good time to live in Port Huron Township. After a very long and tough winter, great things are starting to happen. People are taking their hands out of their pockets and spending money! They are refurbishing buildings and buying properties that have long been sitting idle. Major brand name companies are looking seriously at our Township for future development. They are learning that, as our logo says, "We make a Difference." Growth is very good. Yes, MDOT improvements are causing a little inconvenience for all of us. However, the end result will be very good for all of us, too. St. Clair County Road Commission is planning some great improvements this summer to Lapeer Road and our Business district. Traffic count is improving business opportunities for the DDA District. All of this change is for the better plus, it's creating jobs for our community. Thanks for your patience during these changing times.

Paul 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 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.

PA 161 OF 2013 – DISABLED VETERANS EXEMPTION:

Are you an honorably discharged disabled veteran who meets one of the following criteria?

- 1. You have been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to be permanently and totally disabled as a result of military service and entitled to veteran's benefits at the 100% rate.
2. You have a certificate from the United States Veterans' Administration, or its successors, certifying that due to disability, you are receiving or have received pecuniary assistance for specially adapted housing.
3. You have been rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as individually unemployable.

If you meet one of the criteria, or you are the un-remarried surviving spouse of a veteran who met one the criteria, and you claim a homestead on property located within the Township, please contact the Assessor's Office to determine whether or not you qualify for the Disabled Veterans Exemption. Appropriate documentation is required by law. For further information, please contact Penny at 810-987-6600, ext. 20.

FREQUENTLY ASKED ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS:

What is "Tax Day", and what does it mean to me?

Tax Day is December 31st annually. The condition of your property on this date determines the property's assessed value for the following year. So, the condition of your property on December 31, 2013 determined the 2014 assessed value.

What does this mean to you? More often than not, the December 31st date makes no difference to the value of your property. However, there are some specific instances when it can become very important. If, for example, you had a pole barn on your property on December 31, 2013 and then, sadly, it burned down on January 1, 2014, by law, your 2014 assessed value must reflect the value of the pole barn. Conversely, permitted structures that are still under construction Dec. 31st will not be assessed at full value in the following taxing year. If you have questions regarding Tax Day, please call the Assessor's Office.

CODE ENFORCEMENT CONCERNS

With the onset of warmer weather, please be aware that Township ordinances do require the following housekeeping areas be addressed:

- Recreational vehicles are to be stored in the rear yard. The term recreational vehicle includes boats, recreational trailers, motorhomes, snowmobiles (and the trailers). Storage of this equipment in the front yard or driveway constitutes an ordinance violation.
• In addition, trash cans are to be stored out of public view, either behind a fence, in the rear yard, or inside the garage. Storage of trash receptacles or items such as lawn equipment, yard toys, etcetera, should not be in the front yards.
• Inoperable or unlicensed vehicles are to be stored inside an enclosed building. Any vehicle that is not "road-ready" is considered inoperable.

A little attention to these areas will keep the Township a clean community. I am certain all Township residents will be willing to "do their part" in keeping the Township clean and show community spirit. Any citizen with concerns should contact the Code Enforcement Officer at 810-987-6600, extension 13 during office hours.

TIRE CLEAN-UP DAY!



Back by popular demand! Port Huron Township will host Tire Clean-Up Day on Saturday, July 19, 2014 from 11 am – 3 pm at the DPW Building, 4134 West Water Street. This year, we have invited Kimball Township to participate as well. Tires will be accepted from both Kimball and Port Huron Township residents. Proof of residency is required. Costs are as follows:

PRICE IS FOR EACH TIRE

- Passenger tires: \$2.00
Semi Truck tires: \$5.00
Tractor tires: \$15.00

2014 PORT HURON TOWNSHIP PARKS & RECREATION SURVEY

Port Huron Township is in the process of updating its Master Recreation Plan. By completing the survey below, your thoughts and opinions will be taken into consideration prior to any changes taking place.

Please complete the survey **by May 30, 2014** and return it in person, or by folding and taping this self-addressed form, placing a stamp on it, and mailing it back to us. ***Thank you so much for your input!***

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE or (YES)	UNSURE OR DO NOT KNOW	DISAGREE or NO)	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I am satisfied with the recreational opportunities available to the Township residents.					
Parks are important to the overall quality of life in the township and region.					
I would like to see further improvements to our existing parks.					
Port Huron Township should develop more non-motorized trails in the community.					
The township should seek out new recreational opportunities along the Black River.					
Port Huron Township should create a single Parks and Recreation Board.					
The township should develop other township parks at appropriate locations.					
I would like to see more recreational programming in the township (i.e. sports leagues, children's activities, senior activities, crafts, instruction, etc.)					
Port Huron Township should seek to partner with other adjacent communities to provide additional recreational activities for our residents.					

1. **What do you feel are the best features of Port Huron Townships current Parks and Recreation?**

2. **What do you feel should be the township's top priority for improving parks and recreation?**

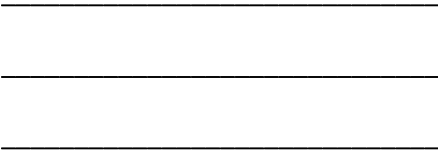
3. **What, (if any) recreational amenities/opportunities would you like to see in the township?**

4. **Are there any changes that you feel could be made to make parks and recreation operate more effectively?**

5. **Have there been any hot button issues pertaining to parks & recreation in the township over the past few years?**

6. **Please note any additional comments, questions, or issues you have regarding parks and recreation in Port Huron Township:**

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Please place
postage here.
Postal Service will
not deliver
without postage

Charter Township of Port Huron
Attn: Kirk Lavigne
3800 Lapeer Road
Port Huron, MI 48060

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secure with tape