



charter township

# oshtemo NEWSLETTER

est. 1839

September 2016

### How to contact your Oshtemo Township Officials

**Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell** 216-5220 [libbyhc@oshtemo.org](mailto:libbyhc@oshtemo.org)

**Clerk Deb Everett** 216-5224 [deverett@oshtemo.org](mailto:deverett@oshtemo.org)

**Treasurer Nancy Culp** 216-5221 [ncoshtwp@oshtemo.org](mailto:ncoshtwp@oshtemo.org)

**Trustee Nancy Carr** 353-7141 [nancycarr@bhhsmi.com](mailto:nancycarr@bhhsmi.com)

**Trustee Dusty Farmer** 251-5832 [dfarmer@oshtemo.org](mailto:dfarmer@oshtemo.org)

**Trustee Zak Ford** 271-5513 [zak.r.ford@gmail.com](mailto:zak.r.ford@gmail.com)

**Trustee Grant Taylor** 773-456-8777 [granttaylor20@gmail.com](mailto:granttaylor20@gmail.com)

**Assessor Kristine Biddle** 216-5225 [kbiddle@oshtemo.org](mailto:kbiddle@oshtemo.org)

**Planning Director Julie Johnston** 216-5223 [jjohnston@oshtemo.org](mailto:jjohnston@oshtemo.org)

**Parks Director Karen High** 216-5223 [khigh@oshtemo.org](mailto:khigh@oshtemo.org)

**Ordinance Enf Rick Suwarsky** 216-5227 [rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org](mailto:rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org)

**Fire Chief Mark Barnes** 375-0487 [mbarnes@oshtemo.org](mailto:mbarnes@oshtemo.org)

*Don't know who to call....General Information 375-4260*

### Township Office Hours

Monday thru Thursday 8 am to 5 pm

Friday 8 am to 1 pm

(1st Thurs each month open at 9 am)

**We will be CLOSED**

**September 5—Labor Day**

**November 11—Veterans Day**

**November 24/25—Thanksgiving**

### REMINDER—SUMMER TAXES DUE SEPT 14TH

Mailed payments must be postmarked Sept 14th & received by the 19th to be considered on time.



### 2016 Dump Day Schedule

Township Hall Parking Lot

7275 West Main Street

9 am—3pm

Proof of residency required

**Sept 24**

**Oct 29**

**Nov 19**

Yard waste, kitchen garbage, dead animals, hazardous materials, or large quantities of building materials cannot be accepted.

**Fall Leaf Drop Off Days—Nov 5 & Nov 19**

*Hauler cannot accept plastic bags, paper bags can be placed in the truck.*



### Borgess Flu Clinic

Wednesday, October 5, 2016

10am—1pm

Oshtemo Township Hall

7275 W. Main

For the most up-to-date clinic information, call 382.6735 or visit [flushot.borgess.com](http://flushot.borgess.com)

### \*\*MARK YOUR CALENDAR\*\*

### SHREDDING DAY

**October 15th - 10am - noon**

**Free to Township residents**

Township Hall Parking Lot

7275 West Main Street

Proof of residency required

Maximum - 10 banker boxes



### BLOOD DRIVE NEWS

**Wednesday, October 26th**

**Wednesday, December 28th**

**11 am—6 pm**

*Lunch/dinner fare & door prizes!*

**June's winner was Rick Crepas**

Bi-Monthly Blood Drives at the Township Hall  
Appointments can be made with Michigan Blood  
by phone 1-866-MIBLOOD or e-mail [miblood.org](http://miblood.org).

*"Serving Michigan hospitals since 1955"*



### SALVATION ARMY COAT DRIVE

October 3 thru October 28

*Help make winter a little warmer....*

The Township Office lobby will be a drop off point for your gently used coats and jackets.

## Southwest Michigan Building Authority

Oshtemo Township is responsible for provision of building inspection services, to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of the community. Building inspectors review the structural strength of roof trusses, for example, so that in severe storms, the building is better able to withstand the strong forces, protecting the people inside.

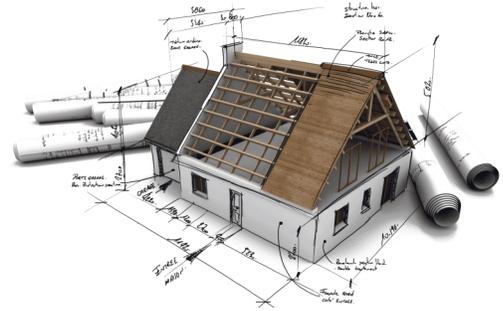
Oshtemo provided these services through an internal building department historically. In 2012, Oshtemo joined with other units to form an authority which would provide building inspection services on behalf of the Township responsibility. In 2016, the Township Board is moving to shift this model to form a joint authority with Cooper Township, and to employ an experienced Building Official, Jerry Reitenour.

The vision for the new Southwest Michigan Building Authority is as follows:

- Provide joint inspection services with lesser permit fees,
- Shift the authority's board membership, so that the member units have two representatives instead of one,
- Require the at-large authority board member to reside within the member jurisdictions since the person is making decisions impacting staffing and budgeting funds that derive from the member communities,
- Ensure seamless building permit and inspection services through the transition, and
- Be flexible in organization design, in the event of future growth in unit membership.

KABA will continue to manage building inspections for Oshtemo through October 5<sup>th</sup>. On October 6<sup>th</sup> the Southwest Michigan Building Authority will assume responsibilities for both Oshtemo & Cooper Township.

If you have questions for projects occurring after October 5<sup>th</sup>, Jerry Reitenour can be reached at [jroshtwp@oshtemo.org](mailto:jroshtwp@oshtemo.org) or 216-5244. Starting October 6<sup>th</sup> Jerry and the new authority can be reached [info@swmiba.org](mailto:info@swmiba.org)



## ELECTION—2016

**November 8th General Election—last day to register is October 11th**

### Absentee Ballots

Any voter meeting one of the required criteria below can request an absentee ballot:

- age 60 years old or older—you can request to be placed on our permanent absent voter list and automatically receive an application for each election
- unable to vote without assistance at the polls
- expecting to be out of town on election day
- in jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence



An absent voter application can be requested by phone; the application is also available on our website under the "Applications" link. A ballot can be requested by mail by providing your name, registered address, the address where the ballot should be mailed, date of birth, the reason for needing to vote by absentee ballot, and your signature.

- If you are returning your absentee ballot by mail, please allow 3-4 days; if returning it in person, we have secure drop boxes at the Township Office, one in the lobby and one in the parking lot.

Voter and election information is also available from the Michigan Voter Information Center at [www.michigan.gov/vote](http://www.michigan.gov/vote)

- View your sample ballot for the upcoming election
- Track your absentee ballot
- Verify your voter registration
- Find your polling place—reminder—every Michigan voter who offers to vote at the polls must show picture identification or sign an affidavit attesting that he or she is not in possession of picture identification. Polling locations are open on Election Day from 7am to 8pm.

The Clerk's Office will be open Friday, November 4th until 5 pm and Saturday, November 5th from 8am to 2pm. Please call us at 216.5224 with any questions regarding voter registration, polling locations or absentee ballots.



## Master Plan Update to Begin

The Planning Department is getting ready to begin an update to the Township Master Plan. The master plan is an important tool used to identify needs and set a direction for future growth and development. The Michigan Planning Enabling Act, which grants authority to the Township to prepare plans for its future, requires the Master Plan be updated every five years. The current Master Plan, which has been functioning very well for the Township, was last updated in 2012.

Generally, the development of a new master plan is warranted when significant development or socio-economic changes have occurred in a community. Due to the recession which began in 2007/2008, much of Oshtemo remains consistent with the existing Master Plan. Therefore, the intent of this master plan update is to focus primarily on those issues currently most important to the development of the Township.

The process will begin with a *Planning Drivers Narrative*, which will review changes in population, lifestyle preferences, household characteristics, economics, and housing. This report will help to understand the key trends influencing planning within the Township. Next, two main efforts will be undertaken, which are a *Rural Character Preservation Strategy* and a critical review and update of the *Village Theme Development Plan*, which was adopted in 2006.

The *Rural Character Preservation Strategy* will include analysis of key sites/elements of community importance such as scenic views, rural roads, natural features, etc, and defining "rural character." In addition, it will offer strategies for preserving rural character that can be incorporated into the policies and regulatory requirements of the Township. The review and update of the *Village Theme Development Plan*, which focuses on the old historic village area (Stadium Drive/9<sup>th</sup> Street) will allow the Township to assess the development potential of the Village.

A crucial component of the planning process is community input. For the *Rural Character Preservation Strategy*, we will be hosting a website that will have a comment based mapping system to allow community members an opportunity to identify those key sites/elements which should be preserved in our Township. In addition, the Township will be hosting community events to allow for direct conversations regarding the preservation of rural character. Focus groups and community events are also planned for the update to the *Village Theme Development Plan*.

We expect the Master Plan Update to begin mid-September. As the Update proceeds, more information will be made available regarding the mapping website, community events, and opportunities for you to get involved. Please check the Township website at [www.oshtemo.org](http://www.oshtemo.org) over the coming months for more information. We look forward to working with the community to continue to protect and improve Oshtemo Township!

## Staff Profile — Planning Department

The Oshtemo Township Planning Department plays a critical role in the growth and development of the Township. This responsibility begins with the goals and objectives of the Township's Master Plan, which guides the decision making of the Planning Commission and Township Board. Supporting the Master Plan, the Planning Department also administers the regulatory requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, which determines how development will occur. Working with these two critical documents, the Department assists the Township with the challenges of growth and change. The Planning Department has two staff members, Julie Johnston, Planning Director and Ben Clark, Zoning Administrator/GIS Coordinator.

Julie's responsibilities are to both manage the long range vision of the Township, while ensuring current regulations support the vision. She is also responsible for any special projects that are requested by the boards and committees she supports. Julie provides direct support to the Township Board, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Downtown Development Authority and the South Drake Road Corridor Improvement Authority. She has almost 20 years of experience in the planning field and has worked with all types of municipal government from small rural communities to large metropolitan cities.

As Zoning Administrator, Ben is involved in almost every aspect of new development within the Township from site plan reviews through building permits. He is the primary point of contact for the public and development community related to zoning matters. Ben also supports the Township's Code Enforcement Officer with zoning issues and the Planning Director with the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals. Ben has an additional role with the Township as the GIS Coordinator. GIS (Graphic Information Systems) is the mapping program used by the Township to maintain or create data that can be geographically referenced and mapped. Contact Julie or Ben at 216.5223.

## Parks Fall Events

Have you caught a glimpse of the historic brick farmhouse visible from Drake Road and Croyden Avenue and wondered who lived there? Or perhaps you questioned why the brush and undergrowth was removed at that corner? Attend the **Drake Farmstead Open House on Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>** from **2:00 – 4:00 p.m.** to find out! Tour the historic house and discover exciting plans for the 26-acre property at this free event. The Farmstead is located at 927 North Drake Road, just north of Gordon Food Service. This event is sponsored by the Oshtemo Historical Society, visit [oshtemohistoricalsociety.org](http://oshtemohistoricalsociety.org) for more details.



*Historic Drake Farmstead*

## Facility Rentals



We love our Oshtemo parks! Township Park and Flesher Field have long been favorite places to climb on the playground, take a walk, or play outdoor games. Our parks are now becoming increasingly popular for groups hosting family reunions, birthday parties, and church picnics. With the opening of the new gazebo at Flesher Field, our parks can even host outdoor weddings and concerts! Park visitors often compliment us on our clean and well-maintained parks and the many recent improvements. To reserve a pavilion or gazebo for your next gathering, visit [www.oshtemo.org/parks-and-recreation-facilities/](http://www.oshtemo.org/parks-and-recreation-facilities/) Calendars for each park show availability. Rental fees are outlined on the Rental Agreement. Questions? Contact the Oshtemo Township office at (269) 216-5233.



*Oshtemo*  
Friends of the Parks

Do you have ideas for programs or activities for our Oshtemo parks? If so, **Oshtemo Friends of the Parks (OFP)** would like to hear from you! This summer OFP hosted outdoor concerts at Flesher Field and outdoor movies at Township Park. Tennis lessons were offered at Township Park, and a drawing class was provided at the Drake Farmstead. Other past activities have included guided bird walks, moonlit snowshoe/cross country ski hikes, and volunteer projects. **Share your ideas with us through the Contact Page of our website, [www.oshtemofriends.org/contact](http://www.oshtemofriends.org/contact)** or send an email to Parks Director Karen High at [khigh@oshtemo.org](mailto:khigh@oshtemo.org). Also, don't forget to Like our Facebook page to stay current on all of our upcoming parks events and activities at – Oshtemo Friends of the Parks!

## Oshtemo Parks Endowment Fund

If you appreciate the recent improvements to Oshtemo's parks and recreation facilities and want our parks to remain a priority, please consider a donation to the Oshtemo Township Parks and Recreation Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation! Below are step-by-step instructions to make it easy to donate.

- 1) Access the Kalamazoo Community Foundation website at <http://www.kalfound.org>
- 2) Select the Give Now button
- 3) Enter the Amount
- 4) Under Designation Select "Another Foundation Fund (Enter name of the fund in the "Other" box that will appear below.)" from the drop down list.
- 5) In the box that appears enter: Oshtemo Township Parks & Recreation Fund
- 6) Enter billing and credit card payment information.
- 7) Give yourself a pat on the back for helping to ensure the future of our parks!

## Updates from the Supervisor—

### Sanitary Sewer

The Township Board is working to lower the cost of building sanitary sewer in the Township. Fleis & Vandenbrink engineers are evaluating the Township's eligibility for Rural Development low interest loans and grants. The results of the work will guide the Board in scheduling and financing sanitary sewer construction in the many neighborhoods that need sewer.



### Public Water

The KL Group will extend public water on North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, from M43 to West J Ave. The lines will also extend from North 2<sup>nd</sup> to Wickford on West J, and into the Maple Estates neighborhood off North 2<sup>nd</sup>. The public water is being extended as a result of the KL Group's regular landfill groundwater monitoring. The extension design provides a back-up loop and improved municipal water quality for the area. The project will be constructed during 2017.

Water will also be extended on South 11<sup>th</sup> Street, from south of Parkview Avenue, and into Texas Township. This is a City of Kalamazoo capital project for water quality and backup purposes.

### Bus Service

The Oshtemo Township Board and the Central County Transit Authority are working to preserve and extend bus service along West Main. The Township remains committed to not only maintaining, but extending bus service in the Township.

### Audit

The independent audit for fiscal year 2015 has been completed and Township finances remain sound. The 2015 audit is truly independent because it was undertaken by a different auditing firm than the Township accounting consultant firm.



### Recreation at the Grange (North 3<sup>rd</sup> and H Avenue)

The Oshtemo Township Grange is a little-known gem available for rental by residents. Outside there is a playground and picnic area. Inside there are two floors, including a kitchen. Many activities occur there, including Contra and other folk and square dancing, township events and family get-togethers. I invite others to join me at the twice monthly Saturday Contra dances, featuring beginner lessons and live music.

The Grange Hall was built in 1937, following a fire which destroyed the original Grange Hall. The Grange organization and hall served as the social gathering place for the rural farming community. The Oshtemo Grange, one of few remaining grange organizations, continues to meet there. The Township plans to renovate the building in 2017, making the hall barrier free and then it can also be used as a polling precinct.

**Opportunities to Serve**—If you are looking to be more involved in the community, please consider applying for a position on the Board of Review, Capital Improvements Committee, Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Parks Committee, or Friends of the Parks. Applications can be found under the Applications & Permits link on the home page of our web site [www.oshtemo.org](http://www.oshtemo.org) or contact the Supervisor's Office at 512.5220.



**Election Inspectors Needed**—the application can be found under the Applications & Permits link on the home page of our web site [www.oshtemo.org](http://www.oshtemo.org) or contact the Clerks's Office at 216.5224.



Drake Homestead

## OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

The following programs will be offered this fall and are open to the public. They are held at the Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 W. Main, unless otherwise specified, and begin at 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, "Oshtemo's Extraordinary Inventor, Jay B. Rhodes"** an exciting story of a local entrepreneur, presented by Cynthia Jeffrey.

**Sunday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, Autumn Open House at the Drake Farmstead**, 927 N. Drake Road. Hours 2 to 4. Come and see the changes, inside and out. Fun activities for the whole family. No charge, public welcomed.

**Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, "Memories to Memoirs", Denise McCaffrey**, Personal Historian and Certified Legacy Planner, will present how to preserve and share your personal stories.

For more information about the Oshtemo Historical Society, please visit our website at [www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org](http://www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org)

7275 West Main Street  
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<http://www.oshtemo.org>

