



charter township

oshtemo NEWSLETTER

est. 1839

December 2016

How to contact your Oshtemo Township Officials

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell 216-5220 libbyhc@oshtemo.org
Clerk Dusty Farmer 216-5224 dfarmer@oshtemo.org
Treasurer Nancy Culp 216-5221 ncoshtwp@oshtemo.org
Trustee Dave Bushouse 370-4307 dboshtwp@oshtemo.org
Trustee Deb Everett 375-4260 deverett@oshtemo.org
Trustee Zak Ford 271-5513 zak.r.ford@gmail.com
Trustee Ken Hudok 517-512-9464 khudok@oshtemo.org
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Planning Director Julie Johnston 216-5223 jjohnston@oshtemo.org
Parks Director Karen High 216-5223 khigh@oshtemo.org
Ordinance Enf Rick Suwarsky 216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org
Fire Chief Mark Barnes 375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

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



We wish you a safe and happy holiday season!



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

December 23-26 — Christmas
January 2 — New Year's Day
January 16 — Martin Luther King Day
February 20 — President's Day

REMINDER—WINTER TAXES DUE FEB 14TH

Mailed payments must be postmarked February 14th or before & received by Feb 19th to be considered on time.

Notice from the Assessor

2016 December Board of Review Meeting

Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.
 Oshtemo Township Hall

The Board will address clerical errors and mutual mistakes of fact related to real and personal property assessments. The Board may also consider 2013 through 2016 principal residence exemption requests where no previous affidavit was filed and denied. Any poverty applications and veteran exemptions will also be considered at this time.



Red Med Drop Off Day

Wednesday, December 21st
 8am—3pm
 Township Hall Meeting Room

Safely Dispose of Unused or Expired Medications

The Red Med Box WILL accept:

- ◇ Expired & unused medications
- ◇ Over-the-counter medications
- ◇ Medication samples
- ◇ Pet medications
- ◇ Medicated ointments, lotions, drops
- ◇ Unopened Epi-Pens
- ◇ Liquid medications

The Red Med Box will NOT accept:

- ◆ Sharps, needles, lancets
- ◆ Thermometers
- ◆ IV bags
- ◆ Bloody or infectious waste
- ◆ Hydrogen peroxide
- ◆ Business waste (nursing, group home, clinic)
- ◆ Personal care products (shampoo, lotion, cream)
- ◆ Empty containers
- ◆ Inhalers

Red Med Box Locations

WMU Public Safety—511 Monroe St—Every Day, 24/7
 KDPS—150 E. Crosstown Pkwy—M-F, 8-4
 Sheriff's Office—1500 Lamont Ave—M-F, 7-4
 Also, Kalamazoo Twp., Portage, and Schoolcraft Police offices



BLOOD DRIVE NEWS

Wednesday, December 28th

Wednesday, February 22nd

11 am—6 pm

Lunch/dinner fare & door prizes!

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.



RURAL CHARACTER – WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

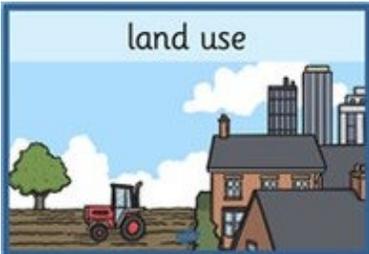
The Future Land Use Map of the Oshtemo Township Master Plan identifies the majority of the western two-thirds of Oshtemo Township for Rural Residential use. The Plan calls for the protection and preservation of natural features within the area and the defining rural character. However, a clear implementation strategy to achieve rural character preservation is lacking, and there is no detailed connection between planning policies and zoning regulations/tools which can achieve rural character. A new “Rural Character Preservation Strategy” will be established as part of the Master Plan update, which outlines a clear path for implementing the Township’s vision for this area through various zoning and other development techniques.



Community Remarks

To begin this process, Oshtemo will be using a “comment mapping” web-based survey tool called “Community Remarks.” This website allows citizens to post their ideas, comments, and concerns and relate them to a specific geographic area. The comments received by users of Community Remarks will be utilized throughout the Rural Character Preservation Strategy planning process, including the identification of key sites/elements of community importance. The Community Remarks Comment Mapping tool for Oshtemo Township can be accessed at the following web address: www.communityremarks.com/Oshtemo/

The Community Remarks Comment Mapping website will go live starting **December 1, 2016** and will allow for community comments to be entered through **January 31, 2017**. The website is interactive, allowing users to view and comment on other user-entered feedback. Please make sure to check the Comment Mapping website frequently to see additional remarks added by fellow citizens.



Rural Design Alternatives Workshop

An additional step in creating a Rural Character Preservation Strategy will be the Rural Design Alternatives Workshop. This public workshop will offer various exercises aimed at evaluating different types/forms of development and selecting preferred design approaches which are consistent with rural character and community values.

The workshop will be held on February 23, 2017 at 7 p.m. at the Oshtemo Township Hall. Please make sure to add this important workshop to your calendar.

DOG LICENSES

December 1st to March 1st

Proof of current rabies vaccination is required and must be more than 30 days from expiration at the time of license purchase. If the dog is over 1 year of age, proof of spay or neuter is required to purchase license at reduced rate.



Full Year License – Spayed/Neutered - \$10.00
Full Year License – Not Spayed/Neutered - \$40.00

COME HANG A MITTEN ON THE MITTEN TREE!

The Oshtemo Branch Library and Oshtemo Grange are sponsoring a “Mitten Tree” collecting new mittens, hats, and scarves. Donations can be made at the Oshtemo Branch Library 7265 West Main, until December 18th. Items will be donated to the Kalamazoo Deacons Conference.

Library hours are: Mon: 10 am - 8 pm
Tues: 12 pm - 8 pm
Wed: 10 am - 6 pm
Thurs: 10 am - 6 pm
Fri: 10 am - 5 pm



CHRISTMAS TREE DROP OFF

Handley’s Tree Service
8342 West Main

All ornaments and tinsel must be removed, trees may not be in plastic bags.

Thank you Dave Handley for providing this service to our residents.



First dump day of 2017 will be March 25. Look for the complete 2017 schedule and leaf drop off dates in the March newsletter.

Streetlight outages can be reported directly to Consumers Energy at new.consumersenergy.com



From Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell.....Looking ahead.....

The Public Hearing on the Oshtemo 2017 budget was held November 15, 2016, at the Township Hall. The Township Board approved the budget and it is available online at the Oshtemo website, www.oshtemo.org, on the Notice Board, and in hard copy at the Township office. Similarly, the 2017-2022 Capital Improvement Plan is available and was also considered and approved by the Board on November 15th.

General financial efforts update:

The Board is actively seeking grant and low interest loan funding sources to lower costs for the many needed sanitary sewer neighborhood infill projects.

The Board is assigning \$200,000 of general savings for future road improvements at no cost to residents or businesses. The Road Commission of Kalamazoo County informs Oshtemo Township had an average PASER rating of 5.94 in 2016. This is the top rating among Townships. "The roads in Oshtemo are some of the best in the County," Travis Bartholomew, RCKC. This reflects steady, annual Oshtemo participation with the road commission PAR program for local road maintenance.

The Board will accomplish both the 2017 capital projects and new staffing without an increase in property taxes. The police special assessment is proposed to change. See the highlights section below for details.

Revenues:

Overall, including use of savings for capital projects, revenues are increased 29% over 2016.

Revenue from Property Tax, "Statutory/EVIP/Population" Revenue Sharing, and Constitutional Revenue Sharing is projected to be \$2,462,891. This is a decrease of 2% over 2016. The decrease is attributed to the commercial property tax devaluations, from the publicized problem known as "dark stores."

Highlights of the expenditures in the budget:

An allocation increase for local roads in the General Fund to \$826,500 at no increase in taxes. Road projects include West G Ave, Ravine to 131, BTR 2.0 road construction, and chip seal road maintenance projects in support of the road commission PAR local road maintenance program. Specific PAR projects will be selected later, in coordination with the road commission.

A \$1.1 million police contract with Kalamazoo County and the Sheriff's Office maintains nine contracted deputies, including the Oshtemo Lieutenant, Sergeant, Community Policing Officer, Dedicated Traffic Officer, and five deputies. The police assessment will increase from .5 to .9 for residential areas, and will increase from 2.5 to 3.8 for business and multi-housing areas. **For the typical Oshtemo residential property, this means a \$35 annual increase.**

Fire Department staffing increased mid-2016 by four full time firefighters, and these positions continue in 2017.

With increased capital projects and development applications up over 17%, the budget proposes to add one full time Public Works technical staff person, and an additional ten hour per week Planning Department staff person.

A relatively low 4.1% increase in the cost of health insurance premiums.

A South Drake Road Corridor Improvement Authority (SoDA) \$40,000 reimbursement to the Township for Drake Road pathway construction, and \$2,700 to contract for path snow plowing.

\$5 million for major capital construction projects, including— West KL sanitary sewer extension, South Drake Road non-motorized path, Grange Hall renovation for barrier free access and use as a polling location, KLA Group North 2nd St/ West J Ave area public water extension, and economic development infrastructure for the WMU BTR 2.0 (water, sewer, road, and non-motorized). Revenues for these capital projects are from grants, partners, and Township savings.

Please contact the Supervisor's Office at 216.5220 if you have questions.





MEET YOUR NEW TOWNSHIP BOARD

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell begins her third term
Clerk Dusty Farmer served as Trustee 2012-2016
Treasurer Nancy Culp begins her fifth term
Trustee Dave Bushouse previously served from 1996-2014
Trustee Deb Everett served as Clerk from 1999-2016
Trustee Zak Ford begins his first full term, he was appointed in 2015
Trustee Ken Hudok begins his first term

The Township Board meets the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays; the complete schedule is available on our website at www.oshtemo.org
Township Board meetings are recorded and available on the Public Media Network website at <https://pmn.viebit.com/>

ELECTION WRAP UP

2016 was a very busy election year with four elections conducted in March, May, August and November.

67% of the 17,337 registered voters turned out for the November Presidential Election; the highest turnout was in Precinct 1 with 81.5%.

There is one scheduled 2017 election—May 2nd.

PERMANENT ABSENTEE VOTING is available to voters age 60 or older or those with a permanent disability. Contact the Clerk's Office if you would like to be placed on the permanent absentee list and receive an application for an absentee ballot for each election.

PRECINCT INSPECTORS NEEDED—The Clerk's Office is accepting applications for precinct inspectors. Training is provided; with the advent of the electronic poll book, computer proficiency is a desired skill. Applications are available on our website at www.oshtemo.org under the Applications and Permits link on the home page.

Please call the Clerk's Office at 216.5224 or e-mail dfarmer@oshtemo.org with any questions you have regarding voter registration, polling locations or absentee ballots.



Winter Weather Reminders

Sidewalks—Township Ordinance requires removal of snow and ice from public sidewalks.

Pedestrians, school children, and particularly residents who utilize mobility aids are reliant upon unobstructed and safe use of the sidewalks. Compliance with this ordinance serves to enhance safety of the pedestrian public as well as provide clear access to business. The ordinance provides that the owner or occupant not allow an unreasonable accumulation of snow or ice to remain upon the sidewalk or non-motorized paths/ facilities for longer than 48 hours.

Additional information on sidewalk regulations and penalties for non-compliance can be found in

Part 294, Ordinance No. 468 of the Oshtemo Township General Ordinance, available online at www.oshtemo.org. If you have questions regarding sidewalk maintenance, please contact the Ordinance Enforcement Department at 216.5227 or rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org

Roads—Snow plowing of roads and streets in the Township is performed by the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC)

The RCKC policy for plowing streets/roads in order of priority is:

- 1-Designated snow route roads
- 2-Balance of primary roads
- 3-Through local roads
- 4-Subdivision or plat streets
- 5-Dead-end and cul-de-sac roads

REMINDER:

State Law, MCL 257.677a prohibits pushing snow and ice onto, or across, roadways and requires that people do not obstruct the safety vision of motorists. If you have questions about road maintenance, please contact the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County at 381.3171 or kalamazooountyroads.com



Parks Feature New Trees, Trail Signs, and Rain Garden Plants, Thanks to Volunteers

At **Township Park**, located behind the Township Hall at 7275 West Main Street, a network of unpaved trails winds through the hilly, wooded section at the south end of the 72-acre park. Trail connections lead to Kalamazoo College's 140-acre Lillian Anderson Arboretum, allowing hikers to enjoy an even wider variety of trails and landscapes. Some park visitors are unaware of the unpaved trails or have difficulty finding them. To encourage people to explore our trails and beautiful woods, new trail signs were designed that depict a map of the park with "You Are Here" notations and trail lengths. Boy Scouts from **Troop 292** volunteered to install the nine new signs, learning to use post-hole-diggers and levels in the process. We hope you'll enjoy a winter hike in the park and explore our trails!



Also in **Township Park**, the new rain garden that was installed behind the tennis courts in the fall of 2014 has taken root. It bloomed with a wide variety of native wildflowers and grasses throughout the growing season and attracted many birds, butterflies, and other insects. However, a few bare spots were visible in the garden from erosion damage and deer browsing. Employees from **Lake Michigan Credit Union** graciously volunteered to help fill in the gaps. They planted a wide variety of native species, including White Wild Indigo, Wild Bergamot, Butterfly Weed, and Rattlesnake Master. The plants were grown in Oshtemo Township by Hidden Savanna Nursery, a local producer of native plants.

At Oshtemo Township's **Drake Farmstead**, 927 North Drake Road, volunteers from Advia Credit Union planted 20 shade, flowering, and evergreen trees in October. All of the trees were species native to Michigan, including Red and Bur Oak, Serviceberry, White Pine, and others. Most of the trees were placed along the new Drake Road sidewalk to shade pedestrians and enhance views from the street. Others were planted near the historic home, filling in gaps between century-old Sugar Maples lining the driveway. The trees were purchased through a \$2,000 grant from the Michigan Arbor Day Alliance's Go Green Youth Challenge Tree Planting Initiative. Janet Veach, Marketing Administrator for Advia, noted that "Our staff enjoyed planting the beautiful new trees at the Drake Farmstead. We are happy to support our community and look forward to seeing the trees leaf out in the spring!" If you or your organization would like to volunteer in Oshtemo's parks, contact Karen High, Parks Director, at khigh@oshtemo.org or (269) 216-5233.



Barrier-Free Access for Oshtemo's Grange Hall

The Grange Hall, 3234 North 3rd Street, will be renovated in 2017 so that visitors of all abilities can access the historic building. Built in 1937 by the West Oshtemo Grange, a nationwide farm organization that was popular in the last century, the Hall has hosted many potlucks, dances, and concerts over its long history. It was purchased by Oshtemo Township in 1980 for use as a community-wide resource. The building continues to host meetings and the monthly acoustic jam sessions of the West Oshtemo Grange, as well as Scottish Dances, Country and English Dances. It is available for rent to Township residents for private events such as family reunions, wedding receptions, and parties.



Renovations will include an addition at the northwest corner of the building to house a small elevator and new stairs. The steep stairs at the rear of the building will be replaced. Restrooms will be improved to provide barrier-free access, and a new barrier-free restroom will be added to the upper level.

The construction schedule will be determined in early 2017, with a goal of minimizing disruptions to visitors. Please contact Karen High, Parks Director, at khigh@oshtemo.org or (269) 216-5233 with any questions.



Oshtemo Fire and Rescue

Is offering...

COMMUNITY DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Do you know what to do before, during or after a disaster; such as emergency evacuation routes, family meeting place, shutting off your utilities, and more? Typical emergency services will not be readily available during community wide disasters. We must be able to take care of ourselves and our families for at least the first 24 hours. Let us help you prepare.

Offering 2 convenient dates/times

Thursday, February 2, 2017 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm

* or *

Saturday, February 4, 2017 from 10:00am – 12:00pm

This course will be held at Oshtemo Fire Station #2 located at 3500 S. 6th St.

FREE

**TOGETHER
WE PREPARE.**





Oshtemo Fire and Rescue wishes to remind our community of...

Carbon Monoxide

The odorless, colorless, tasteless KILLER.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly, colorless, odorless, and poisonous gas. It is produced by the incomplete burning of various fuels such as coal, wood, charcoal, oil, kerosene, propane, and natural gas.

Deadly amounts of carbon monoxide can be produced by defective or poorly vented appliances that use these fuels such as furnaces, fireplaces and wood stoves, as well as water heaters, generators and vehicles. Therefore, it's critical to have working carbon monoxide detectors in your home. This detector senses the presence of the gas before it reaches dangerous levels sending your family an audible warning. With today's tightly sealed and well insulated homes, CO can accumulate to hazardous levels in a short period of time.

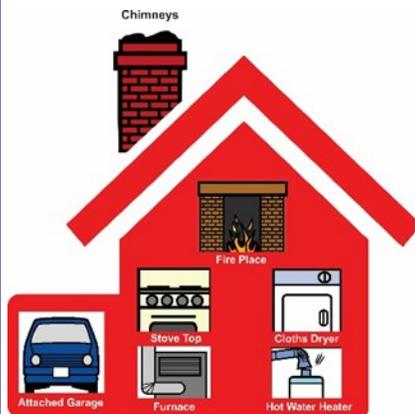
According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), unintentional CO exposure accounts for an estimated 15,000 emergency department visits and 500 unintentional deaths. *Fenton Township Michigan 2/21/2016: A family of six lost their lives from apparent CO poisoning in their home.*

Symptoms of low to moderate CO poisoning are similar to the flu, but without the fever. They can include:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea

High level CO poisoning results in progressively more severe symptoms including:

- Mental confusion
- Vomiting
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Loss of consciousness



Common Household Locations That May Leak Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Because CO poisoning can resemble other common ailments, it's important to recognize the symptoms and seek medical attention if you think you or a family member has been sickened by carbon monoxide.

The National Fire Protection Association offers the following recommendations:

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.

- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department at 911.
- If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door. Make sure everyone inside the home is accounted for. Call 911 for help from a fresh air location and stay there until emergency personnel arrive.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.



Drake Homestead

OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

The following programs will be offered this winter 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.

It has been decided that the Oshtemo Historical Society will not hold a meeting or program in the months of January and February in 2017. During these winter months it is often difficult for people to attend, due to darkness and poor weather. However, we do want to share information about two events, one in December and our program in March.

Sunday, December 4th— Our Appreciation Reception will be held between 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Oshtemo Community Center on Parkview Ave. Appetizers and beverages will be served. Updates will be given on our 2016 progress at the Drake Farmstead.

Thursday, March 16th— Michael Culp will be with us and will provide a history lesson about Michigan's 13th Infantry during the Civil War. Many men from the Kalamazoo area served in the Union Army with the 13th Infantry.

For more information about the Oshtemo Historical Society, please visit our website at

www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org

7275 West Main Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Ph 375.4260 Fax 375.7180
<http://www.oshtemo.org>

