



To advance the quality of life of all residents through a commitment to responsible growth, and value-driven municipal services that promote the relationships among economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity. (Adopted 2/14/2017)

oshtemo NEWSLETTER

January 2019

Oshtemo Township Board of Trustees

Supervisor
 Libby Heiny-Cogswell 216-5220
 libbyhc@oshtemo.org

Clerk
 Dusty Farmer 216-5224
 dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Treasurer
 Nancy Culp 216-5221
 ncoshwtp@oshtemo.org

Trustees

Deb Everett 375-4260
 deverett@oshtemo.org

Zak Ford 271-5513
 zford@oshtemo.org

Ken Hudok 359-0787
 khudok@oshtemo.org

Township Department Information

Assessor:
 Kristine Biddle 216-5225 assessor@oshtemo.org

Fire Chief:
 Mark Barnes 375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

Ordinance Enf:
 Rick Suwarsky 216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org

Parks Director:
 Karen High 216-5233 khigh@oshtemo.org
 Rental Info 216-5224 oshtemo@oshtemo.org

Planning Director:
 Julie Johnston 216-5223 jjohnston@oshtemo.org

Public Works:
 Marc Elliott 216-5236 melliott@oshtemo.org

Township Customer Service Hours


Monday thru Thursday
 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 Friday
 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 (1st Thurs of each month at 9 a.m.)

(269) 375-4260

We will be CLOSED

January 21
 February 18

PROOF OF RESIDENCY REQUIRED FOR SERVICES



2019 Dump Day Schedule

Township Hall Parking Lot
 7275 W. Main St. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

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

March 30
 April 13 and 27
 May 11 and 25
 June 29
 July 27
 August 31
 September 28
 October 26
 November 23

LAST DAY—Nov 23

Fall Leaf Drop Off Days
 Nov 9 and 23

Oshtemo Township Spotlight:

Thank You Volunteers!

We are grateful for the many volunteers who spent time working in Oshtemo Township in 2018. By serving on Boards and Committees, attending public meetings, hosting community events, planting trees, removing invasive vegetation, and more, they helped make our community a wonderful place to live, work, and recreate. They shared their precious free time with us, and did it with a smile!

We would like to extend a big THANK YOU to the following people and organizations for their support in 2019. And if you see the name of a friend or neighbor, please give them a pat on the back! (continued on page 3)



Notice from the Assessor: 2019 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW DATES

Monday, March 11: 9am-4pm
 Tuesday, March 12: 1pm-4pm & 6pm-9pm
 Wednesday, March 13: 9am-4pm
 Thursday, March 14: 1pm-4pm

At the Township Hall, 7275 W. Main St.

Call the Assessor's Office at 216-5225 beginning **March 1st** for an appointment, or use the contact form at <http://www.oshtemo.org/officials-and-departments/assessing-department/>

By board resolution, residents are able to protest by letter, provided the protest letter is received by **5:00pm** on **Friday, March 8, 2019**.

Kristine Biddle, Assessor *(more information on page 7)*



From Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell:

This is an appropriate time to look back on 2018 accomplishments; more detail is elsewhere in the newsletter, but briefly, the GO! Green Oshtemo effort entailed work that is dear to my professional landscape architecture background—coordinating a broad, multi-pronged, multi-department planning, landscape architecture, civil engineering, and environmental planning and design effort. The goal was to further the coordination between parks, non-motorized, conservation, and cemetery strategic planning. The plans, other than for conservation, do already exist, but in various stages. Notably, there was an opportunity for better coordination. We worked in concert-- Township Staff in planning, parks, and public works, outside experts, Buildings and Grounds committee members, the Clerk's Office, and private citizens. To save expense, the Supervisor and Parks Director sketched preliminary designs for cemeteries. Overall, these coordinated plans provide a tool for prioritizing implementation and expenditures.

In 2019 the “Government Efficiency – Exploring Options” ad hoc (temporary) committee will study operational and organizational issues. The group will collect data and explore options. Professionals in municipal law, accounting, public administration, and Oshtemo citizens will problem solve with Staff, MSU's Local Government Center, and the Township Board.

My email is libbyhc@oshtemo.org, and phone is 216-5220.



From Clerk Dusty Farmer:

As part of the Go! Green Oshtemo effort, the three cemeteries in Oshtemo were master planned to include areas for more cremation burials and for green burials. The long view for the cemeteries provides for better use of available land and more options for burial, including for cremains. The plans provide guidance for capital projects, so funds are used wisely, and for decreasing mowing and maintenance expenses over time. The Township asks for public comment on the plans (available on the website) by January 22nd so the input can be presented when the agenda item returns to the Township Board February 12th.

This process of master planning the cemeteries will result in updates to the cemetery ordinances, including an explanation of the types of burials offered in Oshtemo. The ordinance updates will also allow us to move forward with a planned project to clean up the cemeteries this spring. The process has been interesting and educational. I would like to thank the local community for coming together to provide input. View the plans here: <https://www.oshtemo.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Cemetery-Master-Plans.pdf>



From Treasurer Nancy Culp:

Winter tax notices were mailed out December 3rd. Tax bills are sent to the property owner unless a mortgage holder has requested it, which they must do for each tax season. If you received a Winter Tax Bill but have an escrow, you should forward the tax bill to your mortgage holder with a reminder that they must request it. If your mortgage company has requested the tax bill, you will not receive a copy, but may contact us and we will be glad to send you one. If you do not have a mortgage escrow, and have not received your Winter Tax Bill, please contact the Treasurer's office to obtain a copy. You can verify taxes have been paid by contacting the Treasurer's Office at 216-5221 or on our website (www.oshtemo.org) which is updated daily. We accept credit cards at the counter and online, but be aware of the 3% processing fee charged by our credit card vendor.

Winter taxes are due every year on February 14. A 1% fee will be added after that date and another 3% will be added after February 28th when they are moved to the county for collection. **Do not** let them go to the county for collection, as you will incur additional fees and interest. Postmarks CANNOT be accepted for payments made by mail.

Please note the Township Office hours are Monday thru Thursday 8:00am – 5:00pm and Friday 8:00am – 1:00pm. The Friday before the collection deadline our office will be open 8am-4pm. Our office is closed Saturday and Sunday. Please use the drop box in the parking lot for after-hours tax drop off. The drop box is checked daily and anything in the drop box at 8am will be posted as received the prior day.

WINTER TAXES DUE FEBRUARY 14

Thank You Volunteers— *(continued from page 1)*

Buildings & Grounds Committee -Carl Benson

Capital Improvements Committee -Tim Mallett, Dick Hertzell, Bernie Mein

Parks Committee -Cheri Bell and Paul Sotherland

Downtown Development Authority -Jack Siegel, Julie Hite, Bruce Betzler, Grant Taylor, Ethan Sivewright, Dick Skalski, Mike Lutke, Themis Corakis, Rich McDonald, Ryan Wieber, Maria Dacoba

Corridor Improvement Authority (SoDA) -Galen Rike, Cheri Jodoin, Joe Gesmundo, Corey Ashley, Kelly Bringman, Dennis Patzer, Theresa Spurr

Environmental Board -Chad Hughson, Druba Bhattari, Neil Sikora

IT Board Work Group -Fred Antosz, Matt Tomczak

Historical Society Board and volunteers -Kenn and Irene Livingston, David Bushouse (posthumously), Mary Anne Britvec, Starr Waldron, Barb Adams, Patricia Babladelis, Ilah Henderson, Kathryn Steadman, Carol Gray, Kay Oppliger, and others

GO! Green Oshtemo Study Group members -Dave & Lorri Walch, Harry and Karen Jachym, Micki Maxwell, Tyler Bassett, Paul Babladelis, Cheri Bell, Paul Sotherland, Bree Bennett, Mary Smith, Barb Malsom, Chad Hughson, Anna Kornoelje, Carl Benson, Scott Betzler, Norman Langeland, Laurie Vander Berg, Richard Brewer



David Walch, Bruce Dannenhauer, Dennis Patzer, Kathryn Bergeron, Matthew Hunt, Shari Wykrent, Dan Befus, Jeff Fleming, Chris Lawson

West Oshtemo Grange

Country Dancing Kalamazoo

Oshtemo 4-H Club

Boy Scout Troop 292

Arbor Financial Credit Union

Advia Credit Union

Kalamazoo Wiffle League

K'Acres Disc Golf League

Oshtemo Rotary Club

Bronson Project SEARCH

Interested in volunteering? To be contacted about volunteer opportunities as they arise, please send an e-mail to volunteer@oshtemo.org and ask to be added to our **Volunteer E-mail List**. You can also check the Volunteer page on our website at www.oshtemo.org/volunteer or follow Oshtemo Township on Facebook to find out about volunteer projects. Follow the Oshtemo Friends of the Parks and Historical Society Facebook pages for volunteer opportunities as well.

Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Department—



The Sheriff's Office would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! January and February are often a time when many travel to escape the cold winter temps and winter driving. We would like to share a few safe winter driving tips to keep in mind whether you are escaping the snow or will have to drive in it this winter season.

- ▶ Before driving your vehicle, clean snow, ice or dirt from the windows, the forward sensors, headlights, tail lights, backup camera, and other sensors around the vehicle.
- ▶ Keep the following in your vehicle:
 - Snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper.
 - Abrasive material such as sand or kitty litter, in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.
 - Jumper cables, flashlight, and blankets for protection from the cold.
 - A cell phone with charger, water, food, and any necessary medicine (for longer trips or when driving in lightly populated areas).
- ▶ Plan Your Travel and Route: Keep yourself and others safe by planning ahead before you venture out into bad weather.
 - Check the weather, road conditions, and traffic.
 - Don't rush; allow plenty of time to get to your destination safely.
 - Plan to leave early if necessary.
 - Familiarize yourself with directions and maps before you go, even if you use a GPS system, and let others know your route and anticipated arrival time.
- ▶ Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones
 - Always wear your seat belt every trip, every time—and ensure that everyone else in your vehicle is buckled-up in age and size-appropriate car seats, booster seats, or seat belts.
- ▶ Stay Alert & Avoid Risky Driving Behaviors
 - Do not text or engage in any activities that may distract you while driving.
 - Obey all posted speed limits, but drive even slower if necessary for weather conditions.
 - Drive sober. Alcohol and drugs impair perception, judgment, motor skills, and memory – the skills critical for safe and responsible driving.
- ▶ What to Do in a Winter Emergency- If you are stopped or stalled in wintry weather:
 - Stay with your car and don't overexert yourself.
 - Put bright markers on the antenna or windows and keep the interior dome light turned on.
 - To avoid asphyxiation from carbon monoxide poisoning, don't run your car for long periods of time with the windows up or in an enclosed space. If you must run your vehicle, clear the exhaust pipe of any snow and run it only sporadically — just long enough to stay warm.
 - Call 911- if you do not know your specific location give the name of the road you are on, direction of travel and the closest intersection. Be able to give dispatchers a description of your vehicle. Make, Model and Color, and any distinctive features like damage or markings.

Fire Department Assessment Increase Update—

A frequent question from residents in recent weeks asks why there was a recent change to the Township fire assessment. The Township fire assessment has not been increased since 1979. The Township simply could not continue to operate at 2.5 mills when its newest fire engine cost nearly \$800,000. Also, the Township could not maintain sufficient on-call firefighters and felt compelled to add 10 full-time firefighters over the last two years in order to ensure the safety of its citizens, as well as its firefighters. The Supervisors Office (HR) and Fire Department accepted applications and interviewed candidates. Following physical agility and other testing, the goal is to hire six additional 24-hour (full time) firefighters by the end of January.

Public Works—

Drake Road Non-Motorized Path

Oshtemo was awarded a \$507K grant to build a non-motorized path on the west side of Drake Road from West Main Street to Green Meadow Drive. The construction contract was awarded to Kamminga & Roodvoets, Inc. The construction will start mid-April 2019 and is scheduled to complete in mid-August. Construction will start at the Drake Road and West Main intersection and proceed south. The right lane may be closed at times to provide a safety buffer to the construction workers and to allow for curb improvements. The Public Works Department will host a public meeting in February or March for interested residents to discuss the schedule and other concerns with the contractor.

Oshtemo was also awarded two other grants totaling \$473K to build a non-motorized path from Green Meadow Drive to Stadium Drive. That portion of the Drake Road non-motorized path is delayed pending approval from Amtrak for the railroad crossing.

Stadium Drive Shared-Use Path

Oshtemo was awarded a \$260K grant for 2020 to construct a six-foot shared-use path on both sides of Stadium Drive from 11th Street to the Oshtemo Downtown Development Authority (DDA) boundary (approximately Quail Run Drive). The Oshtemo DDA is planning to complete the six-foot shared-use path on both sides of Stadium Drive within the DDA area (approximately Quail Run Drive to 8th Street) in 2020 as well. Engineering design of the sidewalk is underway and easement acquisition has started.

USDA Sewer Extension Project

Phase I of the USDA sewer extension project was expected to go out for bids in January 2019. The Federal government shutdown will affect this work. The due date for these bids will be 6 weeks after posting. The contractor will be selected and then we will immediately start working with the contractor to develop a construction schedule. When the schedule is completed, the Public Works Department will host public meetings with the contractor and affected neighborhoods to discuss the schedule and other concerns.

Planning Department—Go! Green Oshtemo Update

The draft *GO! Green Oshtemo Plan* is available for public comment and the Township would like to hear from you! The full Plan is available on Oshtemo's website at <http://www.oshtemo.org/gogreen/>. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Thursday, January 24th at 6:00 pm to garner input on the Plan. Comments can either be provided to the Planning Commission through the Planning Director at jjohnston@oshtemo.org or by attending the meeting.

The *GO! Green Oshtemo Plan* is the first of its kind for Oshtemo Township where parks, recreation, nonmotorized facilities, and conservation of open space and greenways are planned in a comprehensive and coordinated way. This project is a Township-wide effort to determine the best location and future goals for these facilities. In addition, the Plan is a guide that addresses expressed community desires related to these important amenities, which play a vital role in the lives of Township residents by providing:

- ◆ Active recreational opportunities
- ◆ Passive enjoyment of rural areas and natural landscapes
- ◆ Opportunities for environmental conservation and sustained rural character
- ◆ Improved community health and quality of life



Oshtemo Historical Society— Drake House Restoration

Big changes are coming to the Drake House as we enter 2019. The Drake Farmstead Capital Campaign raised the \$250,000 to match the Township's commitment, and restoration efforts are moving forward both inside and out. Below is a review of the work to renovate the Drake House kitchen as a reception room accomplished by the Oshtemo Historical Society to date, and the projected goals for 2019.

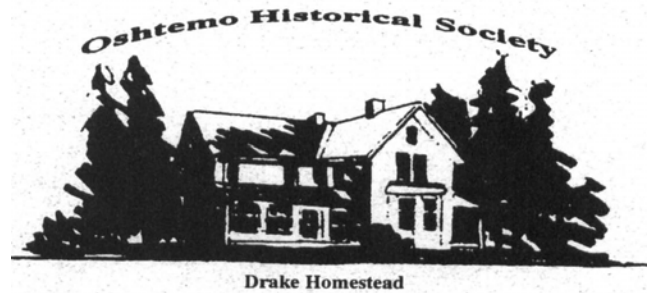
2016-Restoration/Design Committees worked with Nelson Nave, Architect, to discuss redesigning the kitchen into a reception room. OHS members removed some of the wall paneling and all of the upper cupboards, exposing what was underneath.

2017-OHS members gathered bids for restoration projects from contractors. Projects bids include re-plastering or wall-boarding the walls, new flooring, removal of the sink, new north windows, electrical work, refinishing the south window sashes, obtaining a new period entrance door, tin paneled ceiling, and wood trim for doors, windows and baseboards.

2018-Members removed pine-paneled island and vinyl flooring, removed lower cupboards, counter and sink, installed a temporary stainless steel sink in the back kitchen continued to gather bids, and chose types of furniture for the multi-purpose reception room.

2019 Projected goals- Recruit volunteers for interior work, finish tearing off the plaster, wood, and lath from the walls, finish collecting bids, installation of new electrical work, installation of blue board with plaster skim coat on walls, and create a fund drive for other interior restoration projects.

If you would like to help the OHS, you can either volunteer to help remove plaster and lath from the walls in the spring or send a donation. We thank you very much for your generosity and support in restoring this 158-year-old historic home in Oshtemo Township. Donations can be mailed to 7275 W. Main St., Kalamazoo, MI 49009. To volunteer, email ohs@oshtemo.org



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◆ Road Closures/Detours
◆ General Public News

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Visit : www.kalamazooountyroads.com



Hiring a contractor making improvements on your property in 2019?

Decks, pools, sheds, and roofs need permits and might be subject to setback rules. Contact the Southwest Michigan Building Authority to find out which permit you need.
(269) 585-4150



**911
ADDRESS
SIGNS
HELP
SAVE
LIVES**

Do you have an Address Sign?
If you don't have an address number sign, they are available to order through the Township office for **\$10.00.**

Please contact Linda to place an order:
375-4260 or lpotok@oshtemo.org

Non-emergency dispatch update—

In an effort to help better connect with contracted officers in Oshtemo Township, residents can contact consolidated dispatch to request a conversation with a Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Deputy assigned to Oshtemo Township. The non-emergency phone number is **488-8911**. As always, if you are experiencing an emergency, please call **911**.

Parks Announcement—

The Township Board recently approved new rental rates for 2019, along with the use of Oshtemo rental facilities for non-residents. Residents will receive a discounted rate. Please view the new rates on the rental agreements at www.oshtemo.org/parks-and-recreation-facilities/

Road Commission of Kalamazoo County— 2019 County Primary Road Repair List

- KL Ave between Drake Road and 11th Street – complete the road widening project to three lanes.
- 12th Street between Kalamazoo Christian Schools and the south Township boundary – mill and Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA) overlay
- G Avenue between 2nd Street and 10th Street – chip seal and fog seal
- 10th Street between H Ave and G Ave – chip seal and fog seal
- 11th Street between Stadium Drive and West Michigan Ave – chip seal and fog seal
- 4th Street between M-43 and Stadium Drive – chip seal and fog seal
- Almena Drive at KL Ave and 1st Street – chip seal and fog seal
- KL Ave between 4th Street and Drake Road – chip seal and fog seal
- N Ave between 6th Street and 9th Street – chip seal and fog seal
- Stadium Drive between 6th Street and 8th Street – chip seal and fog seal
- 2nd Street between M-43 and AB Ave – chip seal and fog seal
- 6th Street between M-43 and H Ave – chip seal and fog seal
- West Michigan Ave between Stadium Drive and Drake Road – chip seal and fog seal
- Van Kal Avenue between Stadium Drive and Almena Drive – chip seal and fog seal



Road
Commission
of Kalamazoo
County

The county local roads (aka subdivision streets) have not yet been determined. To receive timely updates on the construction plans and road alerts, subscribe to RCKC Connect, the Road Commission's message alert system for road construction, road closures and detours, and general public news at www.kalamazooountyroads.com.

Notice from Assessor—Board of Review—(continued from page 1)

The Oshtemo Board of Review, appointed by the Township Board, is comprised of Township residents who are responsible for hearing property tax valuation appeals from Oshtemo Township property owners. The Board of Review can hear appeals regarding the following: State Equalized Value (SEV), assessment roll classification changes, disabled veteran exemption requests and poverty exemption requests. The 2019 Assessment Change Notices will be sent out mid to late February. After receiving your 2019 Assessment Change Notice and prior to March 8th, if you believe your property valuation is inaccurate or have general questions, please call the Assessor's Office (269) 216-5225 to discuss your concerns. If the Assessor is not able to address your concerns, you may schedule an appointment to appear before the 2019 March Board of Review to appeal the property valuation.



OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

As we have done the last two years, there will be no meeting/program in the months of January and February.

Our group has been busy, throughout the year, with archival needs, i.e., sorting, and cataloging the items and material we have received for our collection. They will be used for reference and/or for display in our small museum.

There has also been work done at the Drake Farmstead in preparation for the new reception area. This area will be located inside the south porch door and will replace the 50's knotty pine kitchen.

We are looking forward to many improvements in 2019. For more information, please see the article inside this newsletter on page 6.

For more information about the Oshtemo Historical Society, please visit our website at www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org

www.oshtemo.org
Ph 375.4260 Fax 375.7180
Kalamazoo, MI 49009
7275 West Main Street

