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

Ordinance Enforcement Assistant

LouAnn grew up in Kalamazoo and moved to Oshtemo several years ago. She spent the majority of her career with the city of Kalamazoo where she worked in various departments including Human Resources, Public Safety, and Community Planning & Development, from which she eventually retired. LouAnn began working as an assistant in the Oshtemo Ordinance Enforcement Department in early 2015, using her past experience and vast knowledge to support residents and businesses in the Township. Each day LouAnn assists with scheduling township apartment rental inspections and certifications, while also responding to resident concerns regarding zoning and general ordinances. Thanks, LouAnn!

**Reminder**

Winter taxes are due Wednesday, February 14th. If you did not receive your tax bill, please contact the Treasurer’s Office immediately at 269-216-5221. You may pay your taxes in person at 7275 West Main, or you may mail them to the same address. If you pay after Feb.14th, there will be a 1% fee added to the total. If the taxes are not paid before March 1st, they will be sent to the County Treasurer.

If you would like to continue to receive a hard copy of the newsletter, please contact the Clerk’s office at (269)216-5224 or dfarmer@oshtemo.org. You can also sign up on the Township website at Oshtemo.org to receive a digital copy.
Township Board: First meetings of the month begin at 7:15 PM, and second meetings begin at 6 PM with public comment. IT and Joint meetings begin at 6 PM.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular Meetings</th>
<th>Budget Meetings</th>
<th>IT Board Group</th>
<th>Joint Meeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 9</td>
<td>August 27 1PM-3PM</td>
<td>January 23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>August 28 5 PM</td>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>November 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 27</td>
<td>September 25 4PM-8PM</td>
<td>July 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td></td>
<td>November 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>May 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 15</td>
<td></td>
<td>September 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 267</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning Commission: All meetings are held in the Township Hall Meeting Room and start at 7pm.

- January 11th & 25th
- February 8th & 22nd
- March 8th & 22nd
- April 12th & 26th
- May 10th & 24th
- June 14th & 28th
- July 12th & 26th
- August 9th & 23rd
- September 13th & 27th
- October 11th & 25th
- November 8th
- December 15th

From Road Commission of Kalamazoo County
The Snow Route System

The RCKC has designated a special network of roads within the county as a snow route system. Snow route roads receive our first attention. When winter weather affects road conditions, our goal is to provide the maximum level of service to the greatest number of people as quickly as possible. This network includes more than 260 miles.

Snow Removal Priorities:
1. Snow route roads
2. Balance of primary roads
3. Local Roads
4. Subdivision/plat streets
5. Dead-end and cul-de-sac roads

Everyday, service is provided to priorities 1, 2, and 3 during snow events. Every other day service is our goal for plat streets, dead-end and cul-de-sac roads. (If a storm is long lasting or a second storm starts before clean-up on priorities 4 and 5 have been completed, crews will return to priorities 1, 2, and 3.)

Property owners are responsible for clearing the sidewalks in front of their homes and businesses.

Is Your Streetlight Out?
Streetlight outages can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by calling: 800-477-5050
Or through their website at: consumersenergy.com/outages/outage-center
Or there is a link on the Township's website (www.oshtemo.org) under the Frequently Asked Questions tab.

Are you or a hired contractor making improvements on your property?
Contact the Southwest Michigan Building Authority to find out which permit you need. Don’t waste money with unnecessary fines. Call SMBA today!
(269) 585-4150
From the Assessor
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 2018 Assessment Change Notices will be sent out mid to late February. After receiving your 2018 Assessment Change Notice and prior to March 9th, 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 2018 March Board of Review to appeal the property valuation.

Notice from the Assessor
2018 MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW DATES

Monday, March 12: 9am-4pm
Tuesday, March 13: 1pm-4pm & 6pm-9pm
Wednesday, March 14: 9am-4pm
Thursday, March 15: 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 9, 2018.

Kristine Biddle, Assessor

Supervisor Libby Heiny-Cogswell:

With the lengthy process of budgeting for 2018 complete, the work in the New Year begins! There is much activity in the Township Office, Fire Department, and Police force, as the forecasted community growth continues. Some upcoming work and other highlights—

- Township Board early 2018 discussion with the Planning Commission on the Master Plan Update. Review and participation with the public is highly encouraged. (Refer Planning Department update).
- 2018 Police Protection by the KCSO contracted officers, including the Oshtemo Lieutenant, Troy Faulk, Sergeant, Traffic Deputy, Community Policing Deputy, and five additional Deputies.
- View the renovated Oshtemo Grange Hall at one of the upcoming dance events-- ‘Country Dancing in Kalamazoo’ holds contra and square dances at the Grange Hall on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of most months, and English country dances on 3rd Wednesdays. Details at http://people.albion.edu/ram/cdk/#upcoming.
- Broad-based Steering Committee visioning work, with multiple Township departments and the community, to develop plans for integrated greenway, park, cemetery, non-motorized and sidewalk systems.

Lastly, but so important to the myriad of Township operations, I would like to extend a sincere Thank You to residents, community business members, and organizations that helped to accomplish so much in 2017!
**Ordinance Enforcement Update**

Oshtemo Township receives many resident concerns about traffic speeds, so the Township took action to respond to these safety concerns by investing in a second radar speed trailer. The technologically sophisticated speed trailer is dedicated for use on Oshtemo Township roads and neighborhoods. It is compact with a large speed display and a battery power system with solar panel charging, allowing the unit to be in nearly continuous use from location to location without downtime for recharging. The speed display for approaching traffic is a reminder of the speed limit and a caution for speeding drivers to slow down. On-board traffic data collection continuously captures vehicle speeds, direction, length and count for both approaching and departing vehicles. Partnering with the Kalamazoo County Sheriff's Office, reports are shared to help direct traffic patrol officers to areas of concern. The Township remains committed to the safety of residents and visitors, and this provides an important tool toward that goal.

“Information garnered through this new speed trailer will prove invaluable with the reduction of accidents and related traffic issues.” - Lt. Troy Faulk, KCSD

---

**From Clerk Dusty Farmer:**

Happy New Year from the Clerk’s office! This year will be busy as I continue to represent Township residents as an Oshtemo Planning Commissioner, Central County Transportation Authority representative, Kalamazoo County representative to the South Central Planning Council, and Oshtemo Representative on the Metro Local Advisory Council. In the Clerk’s office we will focus on continuing to improve efficiencies in expenditures and budgeting, ensuring that elections run smoothly, and participating in a Township-wide project that will include developing a Cemetery Master Plan. In an effort to maintain a high level of service to Township residents, the Clerk’s office will be participating in various training opportunities this year. In early March, we will attend the Clerk’s Institute from the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerk’s to learn more about local government finances, media and community relations, and strategic planning for the Clerk’s office. Throughout the spring we will attend election training opportunities with the Michigan State Bureau of Elections that will include training for the Qualified Voter File and certification to train our own election workers in the Township. As a reminder, our election dates in Oshtemo are as follows:

- **May 8, 2018** - Local Election
- **August 7, 2018** - State Primary
- **November 6, 2018** - State General Election

You can be added to the permanent absentee list for any reason, so please contact our office at 216-5224 for more information.

---

**Cemetery Update:** In 2018 we will be ready for a cemetery clean up effort in each of the Township’s three cemeteries: Genesee Prairie, West Oshtemo, and Hill. In the spring we will begin cleaning up old flowers and displays that are weathered and have started degrading. We will be in contact with family members, and if you have any questions, please contact Deputy Clerk Amanda McMillon or Clerk Dusty Farmer at 216-5224.

---
Thank you! We would like to recognize the following people, businesses, and foundations for their support of the Capital Campaign for Drake Farmstead Park. Together, these civic-minded folks have donated approximately $230,000 for improvements to our community’s newest park, which will be located at 927 North Drake Road. Combined with Oshtemo Township’s commitment of $250,000, we have a grand total of $480,000. Just $20,000 left to raise in order to meet our goal of $500,000! If you would like to help, please complete the form below or contact Karen High, Oshtemo Township Parks Director, at khigh@oshtemo.org or (269) 216-5233.

Add my name to the list! I’d like to contribute to Drake Farmstead Park too!

☐ To donate by credit card, please visit www.oshtemofriends.org/donate
☐ To donate by cash or check, please mail or deliver to: Oshtemo Township Hall, 7275 West Main Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49009. Checks should be made payable to Oshtemo Friends of the Parks. Please include your name and address so we know who to thank!

Oshtemo Friends of the Parks is a qualified 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Your charitable gift is tax deductible to the full extent of state and federal law.

Curt and Liz Aardema
Bob and Laura Ailes
Apex Contractors, Inc.
Balkema Excavating
Christine C. Ballard
Bob and Myra Baugher
Cheri Bell
Pat and Carl Benson
Best Way Disposal
Scott and Julie Betzler
Nancy Biro
Blackberry Systems
Halli and Grace Borgfjord
Jean Bounier
Jim and Elaine Branch
Larry Breije
Richard Brewer and Kathy Takahashi
James M. and Mary Anne Britvec
BS&A Software
William and Darlene Buell
Dave and Kathy Campbell
LaVerne and Deborah Caron
Jack Cogwell
David and Diana Corning
Nancy Culp
Irv and Alberta Cummings
Adam and Lisa Danapilis
Dan and Linda Derfiny
William E. Dimond
Nancy Donovan
Jesse Duranteau
Edwards Garment
Valerie and Ken Eisenberg
ELC Leasing Corporation
Kalamazoo River Community Recreational Foundation
Rick and Deb Everett
Janet Everitt and David Marousek
Fader Equipment
Fahey, Schultz, Burzycz, Rhodes, PLC
Kathryn A. Fitor
Dusty Farmer
First National Bank of Michigan
Lacey and Zak Ford
Wes and Annmarie Freeland
Jim and Roxanne Frey
Kathleen Garland-Rike
Gentzink Appraisal Company
John W. Gesink
Glas Associates
Larry and Pat Glass
Gloria J. (Slack) Greig
Gary Greenop
Sue Grossman
Nancy Hamilton
Libby Heiny-Cogswell
Jim Hess
Karen High
Lydia Hines
Jack and Andy Hopkins
John and Peggy Hopkins
Keith and Mary Kay Hopkins
Connie Houts
Steve Humphrey
Matthew Hunt
Irving S. Gilmore Foundation
Pam and Mark Jackson
Virginia Jacobowitz
Jerre Locke James
Phil Johnson and Mary Baggerman
Kalsee Charitable Activities Team
Ali Khan
Lake Michigan Mailers
Freya Lake
Langeland Family Funeral Homes
Robert Latterner
Kenn and Irene Livingstone
Millard and Madelyn Loy
MacAllister Rentals
Betty Upjohn Mason
Barb McMann
Joyce McNally
Stanley Medendorp
The Meijer Foundation
Metro Toyota
Neal and Amy Miedema
Charles and Doris Miller
William L. Miller
Moses Fire Equipment, Inc
Mulders Landscape Supplies
Natural Health Center
Gary and Lillian Neff
Nelson Breech Nave, AIA
North Coast Window Works
OCBA Landscape Architects
Kay Oppliger
Ludwig and Marie Ouzoonian
Anne and Paul Pancella
Robert and Jane Pangle
Becky and Denny Patzer
Robert H. Pikkaert
James Porter
Tedd and Carolyn Rhodes
Cheryl Rodbard
Julie Rogers and Ed Orloff
Patricia Ruppel
Karla and Joyce Sandelin
Susanne L. Schipper
Larry and Marilyn Schlack
Terry and Jackie Schley
Bill and Marcia Schrader
Roy Secor
David Sheldon
William Slack
Paul and Pam Sotherland
Gary and Debra Start
Kathryn Steadman
Steensma Lawn & Power
Kara and Robert Stewart
Jim and Mary Jo Strehlow
Brian and Jackie Stults
Adam Tabor
Steve Taplin
Grant Taylor
TGAP Ventures LLC
Joyce and William Truscott
Betty Upjohn Mason
Richard and Carol Van Antwerp
Ken Vandervest
Bill and Starr Waldron
Dr. Michael and Peggy Warlick
Jennifer Wilson
Dale Woodlin
Woodsmiths Custom Millwork
Darla and Tom Wright
Yoshi and Betty Yagi
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Zhang
Now Accepting Reservations for 2018!

Planning a special event in 2018? Consider Oshtemo Township’s convenient and affordable parks and community buildings for your next event! Our picnic shelters are clean, well-maintained, and feature plenty of outdoor space for fun and games. Or check out the unique indoor event spaces at the Oshtemo Community Center and Grange Hall, now with the option of serving alcohol. See below for an overview of each of our rental properties. More details, rental applications, and reservation calendars are available online at oshtemo.org/parks-and-recreation-facilities/ or call the Township Hall at (269) 375-4260.

The picnic shelter at Flesher Field, 3664 South Ninth Street, is conveniently located close to our newest playground and features an attractive wood pergola. It is handicap accessible, has two charcoal grills, and holds nine picnic tables.

Flesher Field’s newest feature is a gazebo and garden area with native wildflowers, grasses, flowering shrubs and trees. It can be rented for outdoor weddings, concerts, and other events. Rentals include the 20’ wide gazebo, lawn area with space for approximately 300 guests, and crushed stone paths. Tent space and electricity are available if desired.

The picnic shelter at Township Park, located behind the Township Hall at 7275 West Main Street, is strategically placed between the playground, tennis courts, and wiffleball field. It is handicap accessible, has a charcoal grill, and holds 12 picnic tables.

Picnic shelter / gazebo rental fees for Oshtemo Township residents are $35 for a half day or $70 for a full day from Monday through Thursday and increase to $50 for a half day or $100 for a full day from Friday through Sunday. Fees are higher for those that reside outside of Oshtemo Township.

Grange Hall, 3234 North 3rd Street, is a charming historic building with ties to Oshtemo’s agricultural heritage. It is a wonderful venue for family reunions, dances, or concerts. The upper level has an open floor plan with hardwood floors, a raised stage, and restroom. The lower level features a kitchen, tables, chairs, and restrooms. Completely renovated in 2017, the building is now fully accessible. A small playground and basketball court are also located on site. Rental fee is $100 on weekdays (Monday through Thursday) or $150 on weekends (Friday through Sunday). Security deposit and proof of insurance liability are required. If alcohol will be served, a Host Liquor Liability Insurance Policy and additional security deposit are required. Rental is available only to Oshtemo Township residents.

Originally a fire station, the Oshtemo Community Center, 6407 Parkview, features two rooms that can be rented separately or together. Each room includes a small refrigerator, sink, microwave, tables, and chairs. A shared foyer and restrooms are located between the two rooms. Rental fee is $50 for a half day or $75 for a full day from Monday through Thursday and $75 for a half day and $100 for a full day from Friday through Sunday. Security deposit and proof of insurance liability are required. If alcohol will be served, a Host Liquor Liability Insurance Policy and additional security deposit are required. Rental is available only to Oshtemo Township residents.

Did You Know? Oshtemo Friends of the Parks offers FREE outdoor concerts at the Flesher Field gazebo and FREE outdoor movies at Township Park during June, July and August each summer! Dates, performers and films will be published in upcoming newsletters, or visit www.oshtemofriends.org for more information.
Oshtemo Fire and Rescue—Heating Fire Safety Tips

Our winter of 2017/18 has arrived with a vengeance. Its recent bone chilling temperatures are predicted to be with us for the foreseeable future. With that in mind, we wanted to remind everyone of a few home heating fire safety tips shared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Furnaces
Your furnace typically sits idle all summer long and although not in use, it can deteriorate during that slumber. Rust and even the arrival of an unwanted pest can negatively alter is functionality and safety. Therefore, an annual inspection is recommended.

Alternative heating sources.
As temperatures dip to new lows, installed heating systems sometimes struggle to keep up with demand. When alternative sources such as space heaters, fireplaces and kerosene heaters are employed, additional cautions must be taken to keep your family safe.

Wood Stoves and Fireplaces
Keep the glass or metal screen closed on a fireplace to prevent hot embers from landing inside your home. Only burn dried, seasoned wood. Put the fire out before going to bed or leaving your home.

Any chimney servicing a wood burning device needs an annual inspection and cleaning. Countless house fires are caused by fires inside a chimney that penetrate into the structural members of a home. Even if you are home, these fires can get a stronghold long before occupants are aware of their existence.

Kerosene Heaters
We always recommend that a unit be approved by an independent testing laboratory such as United Laboratories (UL). That will insure that the unit meets current industry safety standards. Never refill a Kerosene heater inside the house. Even when outside, always wait a few minutes until the unit has cooled before refueling. Hot surfaces and flammable liquids are not a good mixture.

Also, cold fuel can expand and overflow the container once taken into a warm house. Therefore, leave some space in the tank. At the least, spilled Kerosene onto your floor or carpet is nearly impossible to remove. Worst case is that this flammable liquid will act as an accelerant should a flame come into contact.

Finally, as is the case for any appliance that produces heat, keeping all combustible materials at least 3’ away is critical.

Chaplain Steve Johnson joins Oshtemo Fire and Rescue

We are pleased to introduce Pastor Steve Johnson as our department’s volunteer Chaplain. Steve came to us with a public safety background which has allowed his nearly immediate integration into a supportive role for our fire and EMS professionals and the citizens we serve.

Early in his career, Steve spent four years as a volunteer firefighter in Fremont, Michigan before shifting his public safety interests into a full-time police officer position for nearly 9 years. Eventually he departed law enforcement to pursue studies in pastoral ministry.

As a graduate of Grand Rapids School of the Bible and Music, Cornerstone University (BA), and Moody Graduate School in Chicago (MA), he has served as Pastor of Oakwood Bible Church in Kalamazoo for the past 30 years and continues to do so. In support of his role as Department Chaplain, he has completed the Community Service Chaplaincy program, is certified in Critical Incident Stress Management, and is scheduled for certification training in First Responder Counseling in January 2018. Steve and his wife Beth, remain committed to the needs of their church and our community while enjoying the growth of their 7 grandchildren.

If you have a related skill or interest that you are willing to share for the benefit of our community, please contact us. Fire Corps might be for you. 269-375-0487. mbarnes@oshtemo.org.
Tax Season Warnings

The Sheriff's Office continues to warn residents about scam phone calls from thieves' intent on stealing their money or their identity. Criminals may pose as the IRS or other agencies to trick victims out of their money or personal information.

Tips on knowing a fraudulent call intent on gaining personal information:

- **Scammers make unsolicited calls.** Thieves call taxpayers claiming to be IRS officials. They demand that the victim pay a bogus tax bill. They con the victim into sending cash, usually through a prepaid debit card or wire transfer. They may also leave “urgent” callback requests through phone “robo-calls,” or via phishing email.
- **Callers try to scare their victims.** Many phone scams use threats to intimidate and bully a victim into paying. They may even threaten to arrest, deport or revoke the license of their victim if they don't get the money.
- **Scams use caller ID spoofing.** Scammers often alter caller ID to make it look like the IRS or another agency is calling. The callers use IRS titles and fake badge numbers to appear legitimate. They may use the victim’s name, address and other personal information to make the call sound official.
- **Cons try new tricks all the time.** Some schemes provide an actual IRS address where they tell the victim to mail a receipt for the payment they make. Others use emails that contain a fake IRS document with a phone number or an email address for a reply. These scams often use official IRS letterhead in emails or regular mail that they send to their victims. They try these ploys to make the ruse look official.

The IRS will not:

- Call you to demand immediate payment. The IRS will not call you if you owe taxes without first sending you a bill in the mail.
- Demand that you pay taxes and not allow you to question or appeal the amount you owe.
- Require that you pay your taxes a certain way. For instance, require that you pay with a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for your credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Threaten to bring in police or other agencies to arrest you for not paying.

Never give personal information to anyone over the phone or the internet.

- Do not give out any information. Hang up immediately.
- If you do receive a letter in the mail, take the letter to a tax professional for help.
- To Report an IRS imposter tax collection scam to the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) call 1-800-366-4484. If you have questions regarding any type of solicited scams or you feel you may be a victim of a fraudulent scam call the Sheriff's Office and ask to speak with an officer.

KCSO Dispatch 269-383-8822
Public Works Update

Water Main Extension Project Wrapping Up

The public water extension project on North 2nd St, West J Ave, and Maple Hill Estates is now in service, with the remaining components nearing completion. This partnership project with the KLA Group provides public water service to residents with private wells affected by the State’s tightening of safe drinking water standards for groundwater contaminants associated with the historic KL Ave Landfill. The project installed 9,200 feet of water main to provide public water service to 64 properties.

While the project necessarily removed many trees from the road right-of-way, the project scope will provide professionally recommended replacement trees. Because the pipe installation continued through October and November, the replacement tree work will now be completed in the spring when the weather improves. Per Road Commission of Kalamazoo County policy, the replacement trees cannot be planted in the road right-of-way. Therefore the Township will be seeking permission from the property owners to access their properties to plant the trees near the road right-of-way. A meeting with residents will be scheduled to coordinate this phase of the project and the types of trees the property owners want planted.

KL Ave Sewer Completed

Oshtemo Township completed a ½ mile sewer extension under KL Ave between 8th and 9th Streets, and a short extension south on 8th St to the railroad tracks. This project extends a major sewer interceptor and provides the primary sewage collector for the industrial-zoned area along KL Ave and 8th St. In accordance with newly adopted County Road Commission pavement preservation policies, residents should expect to see the new road chip sealed in 2018 or 2019 to enhance the longevity of pavement’s water seal. Research studies have shown that a new pavement will last longer and require less maintenance (i.e., a tax payer savings) if a chip seal is applied 1-2 years following new roadway construction.

USDA Rural Development Loan for Sewer Expansion

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development agency has tentatively accepted the Township’s loan application for sewer work in 2018-19. Due to budgetary constraints at the USDA, our overall public sewer project will be funded in stages. The first phase is $8.35M to install sanitary sewers in Beech Ave, the plat neighborhoods of Fairlane, Meridian, Sky Ridge and Whitegate Farms, and a sewer extension along West Main between 7th and 8th Streets with a sewage pump station about ½ mile north on 7th Street. Subsequent stage(s) will be submitted as new loan applications to USDA each fiscal year thereafter, working in coordination with available USDA funds. Topographic survey and engineering design work has been initiated. The Township is in the final steps of working with USDA of the grant/loan process, and USDA underwriting. The USDA has stated Oshtemo is eligible for some grant money in addition to a steeply discounted-rate for loan financing.

Mandatory Sewer Connections

The USDA loan will be paid through fees for new sewer service connections. For fairness and consistency, this mandatory connection requirement is extended throughout the Township in the manner applicable to state statutes. That is, properties that have sewer service available will need to connect within two years of receipt of formal notice from the Township. Beginning in 2018 the Township will begin sending mandatory connection notices to the 300+ properties that have sewer service available but have not connected. Homes with septic systems installed within the last 15 years may be allowed to extend the window to complete their sewer connection out until their septic system reaches 15 years of age. The Township currently assists home owners with financing the sewer connection fee by offering an installment-payment agreement to home owners. A payment plan of up 20 years is currently available, and may be extended further by the Board based upon the length of financing provided by USDA to the Township.
WMU Business Technical Research Park 2.0

In 2018 Oshtemo Township will be partnering with Western Michigan University and the City of Kalamazoo to expand the WMU Business Technical Research Park, along the west side Drake Road, north of Parkview Avenue. The project is informally known as BTR 2.0. Oshtemo Township will be contributing the public water and public sewer system within the site in anticipation of future connection fees.

Drake Road Non-Motorized Path

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has informed Oshtemo we will receive grant money to help build (in two segments) a non-motorized path along Drake Road, from West Main Street to the railroad tracks. The Township is currently finalizing the lengthy process of acquisition of any remaining easements needed to proceed. The 2018 project is being constructed in two segments due to two separate grant programs being used by the Township. The remainder of the path from the railroad tracks to Stadium Drive is dependent on Amtrak’s acceptance of the proposed railroad crossing improvements. If we receive timely Amtrak approval, we will proceed with a pending third MDOT grant to construct this remaining segment. Otherwise, the non-motorized path between the railroad tracks and Stadium Drive will be deferred until the following year.

Master Plan Update

The Oshtemo Township Master Plan provides the long-range vision for our community, guiding the use of land to better realize that vision. In 2017, the Township Planning Commission began work on updating this plan per the requirements of the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. This five-year update focused on four main topics, which include:

- Planning Drivers – those key trends influencing land use planning and development at the local level.
- Rural Character Preservation Strategy – a set of goals and tactics to save rural character in the western portion of the Township.
- Maple Hill South Sub-Area Plan – an area of the Township outlined in the 2011 Master Plan where land use changes are expected to occur within the next 10 years.
- Future Land Use Plan – the desired land use vision for the Township.

The Planning Commission held their required public hearing on the draft Master Plan Update on December 14, 2017 and a recommendation of approval was forwarded to the Township Board. It is now time for the Township Board to begin their deliberations. The first meeting for this review will be a joint meeting with the Planning Commission, which is scheduled for Thursday, January 25th at 7:00 pm. The full draft Plan is currently available on the Planning Department’s webpage at www.oshtemo.org.

Public comment is welcome! Comments on the plan can be provided at any time through either attending a Township Board meeting, writing a letter directly to the Township Board, or sending an email to Julie Johnston, Planning Director at jjohnston@oshtemo.org who will forward the message to the Board. If you would like to get information sent to you directly, consider sending your email to Julie to be placed on the Master Plan contacts list.
This last year brought us good news and sad news. On the good side, there was much progress made on the renovation of the house at the Drake Farmstead. Then, the community was sadden last July by the death of our OHS President, Millard Loy. He was a special person, one who loved this community. We all miss him.

As we did in 2017, there will not be any meetings/programs in the months of January and February. There will be a special meeting in March.

**Thursday, March 15th - “March Springboard to 2018”, 7:00 p.m. at the Township Hall, 7275 West Main St.**

At this meeting we will focus on our organization, taking stock of our accomplishments, current projects, and what we want to accomplish in the future. Besides our OHS Members, we will include the Oshtemo Township Board & staff and Friends of the Park Board. We urge everyone to BRING A FRIEND to this meeting. We need new people and new ideas. Refreshments will be served.

Let’s start the New Year off on a positive note, with lots of people and lots of ideas, in order to move us forward in 2018.

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