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# Oakfield Township Outlook

*Summer 2018*

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10300 14 Mile Rd, Rockford, MI. 49341. (616)754-5679

Fax (616)754-0989

Office Hours Monday 8-12 pm, Tuesday & Wednesday 8-12 & 1-5 pm,  
Thursday 8-12 pm

## From the Supervisor:

Paving of roads: the Township is paving 16 Mile Road from the Courtland Township line to Harvard Road. This is a joint project with Spencer Township and will be completed this summer. Now that the new bridge has been completed on 13 Mile Road over Wabasis Creek the Township has started the engineering for paving on 13 Mile Road from Podunk Road to Wabasis Road. This project will be started in the spring of 2019 and depending on the cost of the project we will decide if it will be a one year project or a two year project. When I was reelected I hoped to pave three new miles of roads in the Township, in fact we are going to pave 3 ½ miles in this term of office.

Greg Dean, Oakfield Township Supervisor



## Zoning News & Notes:

Now that Spring is upon us it is time to take stock of your property conditions. While cleaning up, be sure to dispose of yard waste. Also, a reminder that unlicensed motor vehicles are not allowed to be stored in yards or behind barns or garages. While I don't patrol the Township seeking out these vehicles, once one is reported I am duty bound to contact the property owner and note that it must be disposed of or placed within a structure, such as a garage or pole barn.

Additionally, property owners that are planning to construct additions of other structures must come into the office and apply for a Zoning Permit prior to starting construction. The area where the structure it to be placed should be staked out so I can inspect the site for zoning and placement approval. It is imperative that the structure meets the setback restrictions of Oakfield Township. Please also note that accessory buildings such as pole barns and/or garages cannot be placed on property that does not have a residence on the property.

Roger Mason, Zoning Administrator

## Clerk's Corner:



We are looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming elections! Please vote on August 7, 2018 at the primary election and November 6, 2018 at the General election! If you would like to sign up for absentee voting for future elections please read the list below to see if you qualify.

You can receive an absentee ballot if:

- You are 60 years of age or older
- You expect to be absent from the community the entire time the polls are open on election day
- You are physically unable to attend the polls without assistance
- You cannot attend the polls because of religious beliefs
- You have been appointed a precinct inspector in a precinct other than where you reside
- You are confined to jail awaiting arraignment or trial.

Call or stop by and we will add you to the absentee list if you meet one of the above requirements.

If you have signed up for absentee ballots, prior to each election an application postcard requesting the ballot will be mailed automatically to you. Once the signed application is received and verified by the Clerk, your ballot will be mailed. The Clerk must have a signed application for **EACH** election.



Have you ever checked out Oakfield Townships 3 cemeteries?

Stop by and take a look! We are proud of the many veterans that have served our country. Look for the flags! It is interesting to see the rich history we have here in Oakfield Township.

A huge thank you to all who have served and are serving!!

Horton Cemetery on the corner of 14 Mile & Lappley

Oakfield Cemetery on Wellman & Stultz

White Swan Cemetery on the corner of 12 Mile & Nugent



Enjoy your Summer!  
Linda VanHouten, Clerk  
Bonnie Rausch, Deputy Clerk

## The Treasurer's Desk:



### **FROM YOUR TREASURER:**

It is almost time to send tax bills once again and we wanted to review a few key issues.

**2018 SUMMER TAXES ARE DUE JULY 2 AND PAYABLE UNTIL 5 PM ON SEPTEMBER 14, 2018, WITHOUT INTEREST.**

#### Payment Options:

Check or money order preferred. Please write legibly and include parcel number(s) and telephone number. Payments made through your Bank Bill Pay DO NOT arrive at the township on the date you pay them. Please allow enough time for mailed payments to reach the township before the deadline. **POSTMARKS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AS ON-TIME PAYMENTS.** If your check is not honored by the bank, the tax is considered unpaid and will be restored to the tax roll without further notice. If paying with cash, please bring exact change. *Credit or debit cards are not accepted.* Township Office hours are Monday & Thursday 8am-noon, Tuesday & Wednesday 8am-noon and 1pm-5pm. The township office is closed on Fridays. However, we will be open 9am-5pm on Friday September 14, 2018 for tax collection.

**THERE ARE A FEW IMPORTANT THINGS TO CHECK AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE YOUR TAX BILL.**

#### ESCROW ACCOUNTS FOR TAXES

If your taxes are paid from an escrow account, your copy of the tax bill should state under the “**Escrow Message**” (top left corner) that your bill has been sent to your mortgage company or the tax service that services your mortgage company. If this message does not appear on your tax bill, **you** are responsible for paying. You should contact your mortgage holder and resolve the problem.

#### PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE EXEMPTION

Look in the top section of your bill under “Tax Detail” to verify you have the 100% Principal Residence Exemption (PRE). If you qualify, and the exemption is in place, the tax detail portion of your bill will state “PRE % 100.000”. By State of Michigan standards, you must own and **occupy** your home on or before June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year and it must be the only property for which you have filed. If you think you qualify for a principal residence exemption and don't have it, please contact our assessor, Matthew Smith, at (616) 754-5679. The exemption reduces the School Operating Tax for **Cedar Springs** and **Rockford** School Districts on the **summer** bill.

QUALIFYING SENIORS MAY APPLY FOR A SUMMER TAX DEFERRMENT. This will defer payment of the summer tax until the winter taxes are due. Please contact the Treasurer's office for more information.

#### REVIEW YOUR TAX BILL FOR ACCURACY

We would again encourage you to read and review your bill for accuracy. Are your name and address correct? Is your principal residence exemption up to date? If you have moved and still own the property, please notify the Township of your change of address. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TAXES EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T RECEIVE THE BILL BECAUSE OF A WRONG MAILING ADDRESS. We strive to keep all information current, but with continued activity of sales, building, and parcel splits, errors can occur. Some changes take time to clear through the system, so if you have a question on your parcel, please call our office for conformation of status.

**IF YOU WANT A RECEIPT, PLEASE ENCLOSE BOTH PORTIONS OF THE TAX BILL WITH YOUR CHECK AND A STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE. WE WILL RETURN THE TOP PORTION.**

\*\*If you find any discrepancies on the bill or have any questions, please contact us immediately. The phone number is (616) 754-5679.

**THE LAST DAY TO PAY TAXES WITHOUT INTEREST IS SEPTEMBER 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018, at 5:00 PM.**

Larry D. Parker, Treasurer & Betsy Koett, Deputy Treasurer

Assessor's Desk:



Please check your tax bill for correct spelling, addresses and legal descriptions.

Disabled Veterans who are 100% disabled and/or 100% unemployable are now eligible for an exemption from property taxes and no longer need to apply for the Adapted Housing Grant. Please submit a Veterans Exemption Affidavit and a copy of your VA letter to the township Assessor between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup> in order to apply. Applications must be made annually.

As of Jan. 1, 2014; if a property is transferred between parents and offspring that transfer will no longer result in an uncapping of the property's taxable value.

Parcel information can be found on our website [oakfieldtwp.org](http://oakfieldtwp.org) or at [accesskent.com](http://accesskent.com) by selecting Property Search under the Online Services menu.

Matthew J. Smith  
Oakfield Township Assessor

## Fire Department:



As we enter into the beautiful spring time here in Michigan, many of us do what we can to beautify our homes and surrounding properties. As we do that, we naturally think of burning unwanted items.

So let's talk a little bit about open burning. Open Burning is defined by the DNR as "the burning of unwanted materials such as paper, trees, leaves, grass and other debris, where smoke and other emissions are released directly into the air".

Both the State of Michigan, and local authorities have laws that regulate open burning. "Air quality regulations prohibit open burning that creates smoke or nuisances. Forest fire prevention regulations require persons to obtain permits to conduct open burning when the ground is not covered by snow. In the southern Lower Peninsula burning permits must be obtained through the local fire departments".

Things that cannot be burned include but is not limited to building materials, plastics, rubber, and man-made materials of any kind. The general rule of thumb is if it is a natural growing product, a burn permit may be obtained, given that conditions are met.

The publication entitled "Open Burning Regulations in Michigan" was used as reference in this article, and may be accessed through the Michigan Department of Natural Resources website.

If you have any questions concerning the obtaining of burn permits, please feel free to call my office.

Thank You, Samuel Peterson, Fire Chief

## Fire Auxiliary Commission:

We are a small group, but we are active. And, we would love to have you join us. We only get together 4 times per year for meetings, and those only last about 45 minutes to an hour. We do, however, get together for events as needed.

Last year we started working with Michigan Blood to hold blood drives throughout the year. We are starting with 4 per year until we build up a group of regular donors. The drives haven't been going as well as we had hoped. We have another scheduled for July 3 from 3 to 7 pm. We know that is a busy time for everyone, but it is also one of the times that blood is needed most. Please consider donating.

Annual Chili Cook-off – We had our 1<sup>st</sup> annual Chili Cook-off in February and it was a big hit. Not only were the chili's all delicious, but we were able to bring in over \$500 in profit for the Auxiliary. We had 9 entries this year and hope for more in 2019.

Spring Flower Basket Sale – We held our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual flower basket sale in April, with delivery in time for Mother's Day. We, along with some of our firefighters, sold 131 baskets this year, bringing in over \$600 in profits.

Profits – Do you wonder what we do with the monies we make? Well, each year we purchase Christmas gifts for the residents of the Adult Foster Care homes in our township. There are around 24 total residents. For 2018, we were able to include a large frozen turkey for each of the homes too. We also have been working on purchasing dress uniform shirts for our firefighters. We keep a snack box of goodies for the guys to have when they are out on calls. There are other things we help with too.

For sale – Do you need a reflective house number sign for your home? If so, call the fire station (616-754-5122) and place an order. The price is \$15.00.

### **Upcoming events -**

June 4 – Regular meeting, 6 PM at the fire station

July 3 – Blood drive, 3 to 7 PM at the fire station

TBD – Firefighters family picnic/pot luck

Sept 27 – Blood drive

Oct 31 – Halloween Open House, 6 to 8 PM at the fire station

Dec 14 – Blood drive

**Any questions?** Feel free to call Faith Fraser, president, at 616-889-2109 or Molly Seekamp, secretary, at 616-754-5125.



## Oakfield Historical Commission Update:

### STORIES FROM THE OAKFIELD MUSEUM

The Oakfield Museum is a real treasure-trove of stories from the history of Oakfield Township. Here are a just a few of them.

**RURAL MAIL CARRIERS:** Prior to the 1900s most folks had to go to their local post office (Harvard, White Swan or Podunk/Oakfield Centre) to get their mail and catch up on the latest news. Later, a person could submit a petition of signatures with a map of a proposed 25-mile mail route and become a rural mail carrier. The first in Oakfield township was Mr. Ona Holmden of the Harvard area. His winter delivery sleigh is displayed at the museum as well as a photo of him delivering summer mail in a horse and buggy. Unfortunately, when Mr. Holmden bought a car to make his delivery work easier, he had a bad accident and wound up in a wheelchair, also displayed in the museum.

**HOBO IN HARVARD:** An advertising poster in the museum's Harvard area was reportedly created by a hobo traveling through Harvard on a train – his art in exchange for perhaps food or pay. The poster features several Harvard businesses of the day with small pictures drawn to depict the product or type of business. Apparently this same hobo must have visited Ada, for the

Averill/Ada Museum also has the same style poster, but depicting businesses in Ada. A visit to the Byron Center Museum also discovered a similar poster with Byron Center businesses! The hobo certainly got around and used his talents in a creative way!

**PULL UP THE PIANO:** Upstairs in the Oakfield Museum there's a stage at one end where programs were presented for the community. There were also potlucks, oyster suppers, dances and such. When the piano from downstairs was needed for an event upstairs, they would remove a cut-out section of the stage floor and use the ceiling-mounted hoist to lift the piano up through the hole for their music. Ask to see it when you come to the museum!

**MUSEUM CLOSSES DUE TO LACK OF VOLUNTEERS:** *This is a story we hope we DON'T have to tell!* The museum operates with only a few volunteers but could do so much more with more help. A seven-member Historical Commission oversees the museum, but it's hard to even find seven township residents to meet several times a year with other volunteers to discuss their interest and love for the history of the township. **YOU are needed** to help our museum survive and display our history. Call Clair or Sharon Bouck 616-754-4553 for more information, or ask at the township hall.

**COME VISIT THE MUSEUM** and learn more of the interesting stories to be found there. The museum is open the second and fourth Sundays of June through September from 2 to 4 pm or by appointment. Oakfield records include births, deaths, taxes and cemeteries and notebooks of news articles and obituaries are indexed as well. The museum is located on Podunk Road, ¾ mile south of M-57 or accessible off Lincoln Lake Road on Podunk Road.



## Meeting Schedule

***Township Board of Trustees:***  
7:30 p.m. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month

***Planning Commission:***  
7:00 p.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday; March, June, September,  
December  
Additionally if needed.

***Zoning Board of Appeals:***  
7:00 p.m. 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month (as needed)



**10300 14 Mile Road**  
**Rockford, MI. 49341**  
Phone: 616-754-5679  
Fax: 616-754-0989  
Web Site: oakfieldtwp.org

**Oakfield Township Board of Trustees:**  
William Greg Dean, Supervisor  
Linda L. VanHouten, Clerk  
Larry Parker, Treasurer  
Trustees: Bryan Porter, Pamela Riker, Ken Rittersdorf, and  
Chad Sowerby

**Assessor- Matthew Smith**  
1-5 pm Monday, 8-12 & 1-5 pm Tuesday, 1-5 pm Wednesday

**Zoning Administrator – Roger Mason**  
6:00 to 7:00 pm Tuesday  
9:30 to 11:00 am Saturday

**Building Inspector- P.C.I.**  
8:30 am to 10:30 Tuesday and Thursday

**Fire Chief- Sam Peterson**  
8 am – 4 pm Monday – Friday  
Burn Permits: Fire Barn 754-5122