

Winter

Laketon Township

Winter 2013

Recreation Plan—Community Open House

Planning for park improvements is one of many township government functions. On **Tues, December 10th, 2013 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm**, Laketon Township will be holding a community open house to give citizens an opportunity to speak with township staff and share ideas or ask questions regarding the Recreation Plan.

The Recreation Plan outlines specific activities for improvements to the township's recreational amenities. The plan is necessary to qualify to apply for a variety of State grants. As an example, the new leg of the

bike trail on Bear Lake Rd (from Fenner Rd to Pennsylvania Avenue) was an objective in the last plan. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources awarded Laketon Township \$300,000 in grant funds for development of the trail.

The State of Michigan requires that a Recreation Plan be updated every 5 (five) years. Our new plan MUST be provided to the State by April 1, 2014 in order to qualify to apply for any additional grant funding.

Topics that may come up at the open house include: various improvements to

Mullally or Green Creek Parks (e.g., field improvements, upgraded parking areas, additional sport fields and play equipment). Improvements to the Horton Park boat launch on Bear Lake or another leg of the trail (bike path) within the township.

Please join us at the Laketon Township Hall for a few minutes to discuss the possibilities!



Sewer Rates—Why the increase?

If you have municipal sewer you are probably aware that the rates are increasing in 2014. Currently, the flat rate quarterly bill for a residential home (REU) is \$63.00 and has been that amount since January 1, 2011. The flat rate quarterly bill in 2014 will be increasing to \$78.00 for a residential home (REU).

Every year, the Muskegon County Board of Public Works approves and passes along to the cities and townships annual increases in the wholesale rates it charges for wastewater flow. In the last few years, the Laketon Township Sewer Fund has absorbed annual increases in the rate from the County of

21.9%, 6%, and most recently 5.2%. These increases HAVE NOT been passed on to the residents. However, the Laketon Township Sewer Fund can no longer continue to absorb these increases and still continue to maintain an adequate fund balance for sewer maintenance and repair. The Laketon Township Board of Trustees therefore approved a rate increase that will take effect on Jan. 1, 2014. Residents will see their first increased bill on April 1, 2014 for January, February and March usage.

There was an interesting article in the Muskegon Chronicle in September 2013 regarding the wastewater plant rate in-

creases. The article noted the most recent 5.2% increase was the smallest increase since 2009 when the wastewater system lost half its income due to the closure of the Sappi paper mill. The article contained other interesting information such as the fact that the system was built in 1972 and has a "rare design that features an earth friendly process with large water treatment pools and farmland where the water is used, all spread over 11,000 acres". The article in its entirety can be found on mlive.com at:

http://www.mlive.com/news/muskegon/index.ssf/2013/09/muskgon_county_waste_water_pl.html

Tidbits

- **U.S. Passports—** Planning a trip out of the country? Clerk Christina Achterhoff can process your application for a U.S. Passport. **Please call for an appointment: 231-744-2454**
- **Clerk's Dept:** Michigan law requires that anyone picking up their absentee ballot in person show a photo ID. The Clerk is not permitted to release an absentee ballot to anyone other than the registered voter after photo ID has been shown. Thank you for your understanding.
- **Township Hall: Holiday Closings—** Closed on Christmas Eve & Christmas Day (12/24/13 & 12/25/13) and New Year's Eve & New Year's Day (12/31/13 & 01/01/2014)
- **2014 Yard Waste Cards—** will be available starting December 16th. Cost will again be \$10.00 for the 2014 calendar year.





Community Survey

In October, a community opinion survey was mailed to every household in Laketon Township. The survey was developed as part of the Master Plan and Recreation Plan updates, which the State of Michigan requires to be reviewed and/or updated every 5 (five) years.

Survey information will provide the Planning Commission and the Township Board with valuable information on how residents feel about various aspects of community living. Questions were asked that address public services, recreational amenities and land use preferences.

As of the writing of this newsletter, the surveys are still being collected and the response rate has been good. So far approximately 700 surveys have been returned, which is almost one-quarter of all households. This is considered a great response rate for a mail-out survey—more than twice what is normally expected using this method of distribution.

Surveys will be tabulated and reported back to the community. Results will be posted on the township website. The Planning Commission has also discussed the possibility of holding a community/town hall meeting to announce the results of the survey. Please stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

Are you paying too much?

Do you own and occupy your home? Are you getting the **Principal Residence Exemption**?

If you qualify, this will exempt you from 18 mills of school taxes—and save you a chunk of money!

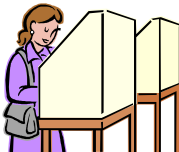
Check either of your property tax bills. If you have the exemption, it will show 100% in the **PRE** column. If you are unsure if you have this exemption or not, feel free to call and ask, we'll be glad to check it for you. If you don't, we can assist you in filing the proper paperwork. Call Laketon Township at 231-744-2454 with any questions!

Snowplowing Reminders

With the winter weather season descending upon us here in the "Great White North", it's again time for friendly reminders for snow removal practices. There are two big safety concerns that come to mind: large snow piles at the ends of driveways that affect visibility and snow/ice preventing access to fire hydrants. Therefore, if we can all take a little time to observe the following it will be greatly appreciated.

- Per the Michigan Vehicle Code (Act 300 of 1949 Section 257.677a(3)) states "A person shall not deposit, or cause to be deposited, snow, ice, or slush onto or across a roadway or the shoulder of a roadway in a manner which obstructs the safety vision of the driver of a motor vehicle." Please be sure to keep snow pushed back from the road as much as possible. This is to keep you and all of the motoring public as safe as possible.
- Fire Hydrants: While township maintenance staff do shovel out the fire hydrants, it is extremely helpful if the homeowners help out by keeping fire hydrants clear of vehicles, yard ornaments, overgrown landscaping etc. Your help is greatly appreciated and is crucial in keeping our community and homes safe in the event of a fire! Thank You!!
- Bike Path: At this time, Laketon Township will not be engaging in snow removal from the bike path. That being said, please refrain from piling snow, ice or other debris upon the bike path that would take longer to melt in the spring and prevent use when the weather again becomes nice enough for use of the path. Thank you to all the homeowners along the path for your cooperation.

Have a wonderful winter season and practice safety first!



Election Poll Workers Needed

The Laketon Township Clerk's Department is always in need of a pool of workers available to work the polls on election days.

Elections are typically held in February, May, August and November. Some years there may be elections in all of these months and some years just a couple of these months. It is typically a 12 to 14 hour work day for election poll workers.

This is not a volunteer position. Election poll workers are compensated for their time. Basic computer skills are becoming a necessity with the transition to electronic poll books.

If you are interested in the election process and would like to apply, please stop in to the Laketon Township Hall during regular business hours to obtain an application or call Clerk Christina Achterhoff or Deputy Clerk Molly Joslyn at 744-2454.

"Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home." — [Edith Sitwell](#), British Poet, b.1887- d.1964