



the Cannon Communicator

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Winter 2006

From the Supervisor's Desk...

Cannon Township – 2006 Year in Review

Looking back over the past twelve months, Cannon Township has been generally tranquil for the most part with just a few new endeavors; some continuing and some ending. There are new people to help guide our Township, new places to look forward to frequenting and new things to help us cope with our daily responsibilities.

The Township Planning Commission has a new planning consultant team to help guide the Township with site plan reviews, new development deliberation and ordinance evaluations. Mr. Val Lazdins and Mr. Paul LeBlanc of LSL Planning Consultants joined us in November, replacing Steve Langworthy.

Much of the Planning Commission's time over the last several months has been spent reviewing and revamping many of our zoning ordinances. This is primarily due to the fact that there have not been a lot of applications for developments. The Planning Commission has used this time to perform some needed maintenance to our ordinances.

Much of the Planning Commission's time during the start of the year has been aimed at our "Village Planned Unit Development or VPUD" at the northwest corner of Myers Lake Avenue and Belding Road. The VPUD plan was submitted to the Township Board earlier this year by the Planning Commission with the request to approve the applicant's development. With much enthusiasm, the Township Board approved the plan.

The "Hub" of this site will be the proposed "upscale" grocery store. Our market analysis points to this being a prime location for a grocery store as well as many other retail and commercial necessities. The developer has applied for a building permit to break ground for this very much anticipated grocery store.

The one item that probably raised more interest and inquiries than anything else this year is the "cell towers". Cellular communication is definitely not only a new-age passion, but an everyday necessity for both business and families.

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The Township currently has three new cell towers built by Cingular/AT&T. All three towers are capable of sharing with up to five additional carriers. The Township Center site currently has Cingular and T-Mobile, and an application from NEXTEL/Sprint has been received, with three additional service providers coming soon. There is also a tower in downtown Cannonsburg and one near Pettis and Cannonsburg Road.

Thanks to the voters of Cannon Township, the Township Fire Committee can begin feasibility studies and preliminary analysis of our much needed Fire Department expansion. The millage was overwhelmingly approved, and the Board thanks everyone who inquired about the necessity of the millage. Only the language of the millage changed and not the dollars. The Township can now use the money received for both operating and capital expenditures.

Lastly and hopefully evermore, our dealing with the Landon Manufactured Housing Development has been put to rest. Earlier this year the lawsuit with Landon Holdings against Grattan Township (in which we were heavily vested) was dropped by Landon. This was a very expensive endeavor, but worth every penny. This not only protected the Township's right to local control, but also demonstrated that two communities can work together and accomplish a common goal.

As always, your input and feedback to me and the Township Board is welcome and appreciated. It is citizen involvement that helps make Cannon a stronger community and safer place to live. I hope 2006 was good to your family and that 2007 is even better.

Pete MacGregor, Cannon Township Supervisor

Trustee Updates

Fire Millage

The 1.000 millage renewal last November passed by 63%. Subsequent to this the Township Board voted to reduce the millage to .9400 (same as the 2006 rate). Plans are underway to begin preliminary discussion for an addition to the fire station on Belding Road. A big thank you goes to all who voted for the fire millage.

Update on Roads

Preliminary planning to upgrade or resurface roads in 2007 includes Egypt Valley from Belding Road south to Cannonsburg Road and parts of the Lake Bella Vista area. The County has also targeted 2009 to resurface Cannonsburg Road from Chauncey to Myers Lake Avenue. The cost for the Cannonsburg Road project is estimated at \$700,000 with the Federal Government paying 50% and the County 50%.

Dick Davies, Trustee

Zoning Administrator

Land Division and Combination forms are available at the office. All land divisions and combinations must be approved by the Township. If you own property on a private road that was not approved by the Township, the road must be upgraded to meet today's standards before any building permits shall be issued. The Private Road Ordinance is on the website – www.cannontwp.org under Zoning Ordinances, Chapter 21.A.

Reminder - All docks shall be out of the inland lakes no later than December 15, 2006 (except for Sunfish Lake).

A cell tower has been constructed on the Township property at 6878 Belding Road with Cingular/AT&T and T-Mobile approved for antennas.

The Planning Commission welcomes its newest member, Bill Jackson, who lives in the Rockford Village, to a three year term. He recently served a three year term on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Christine James, Zoning Administrator

Paper Trailer to be Moved –

Those who regularly recycle newspapers at the Boy Scout trailer on the Township property will soon see the trailer parked in a new location. With the advent of the construction of the trail, the parking area where the trailer is currently parked will be used more often by trail users. In addition, the trailer spoils the view of the grounds from the picnic tables located just to the west of the parking area. The new location of the trailer will be behind the building where the new drive to the cell tower is located.

Tree recycling rules – (see related Watershed article)

- Bring your tree to the west parking lot between 9 AM and 3 PM on Saturday, January 6 or 13.
- Check to see that all decorations are removed
- No greenery with wire allowed
- Trees may be dropped off at other times, but you are responsible for putting it in the designated area. Absolutely no trees may be dropped off after January 13th at 3 PM!
- Donations to the Rockford High School National Honor Society are welcome. If you wish to donate at a time other than when the students are here, you may leave the donation in an envelope in the drop box by the front door. Please mark it "RHS NHS." Thanks!



Congratulations



THE Fire Chief's Report

I would like to begin this article with congratulations to James Palm for successfully completing his Medical First Responder course. He is now a Michigan licensed MFR. James brings the number of medically licensed personnel on Cannon Township Fire Department up to 17. Congratulations James.

Grant

It seemed to have lasted longer than a child waiting for Christmas to arrive. On the day after Thanksgiving, the Cannon Township Fire Department received confirmation from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that our grant request that had been submitted back in April was approved. This grant will allow our department to purchase 20 new sets of firefighting gear including coats, pants and hoods, and will allow us to purchase replacement boots, gloves and helmets. Additionally, the grant will also allow us to buy new monitors for all of our firefighters, and eight new portable radios for reliable communications. Thank you to all of those on the department that helped make this grant possible.

Ice Safety

Winter has arrived in West Michigan, and with it, falling temperatures, snow and ice. Here are some safety tips offered by the Department of Natural Resources:

BEFORE VENTURING OUT ON A FROZEN LAKE OR POND KEEP IN MIND, THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS 100 PERCENT SAFE ICE!

Recommended minimum ice thickness:

- 4" of new clear ice is the minimum thickness for travel on foot
- 5" is the minimum for snowmobiles and ATVs

[Remember that these thicknesses are merely guidelines for new, clear, solid ice. Many factors other than thickness can cause ice to be unsafe.]

If you plan to go ice fishing, check for known thin ice areas with a local resort or bait shop. Test the thickness yourself using an ice chisel, ice auger or even a cordless 1/4 inch drill with a long bit. Go out with a buddy and keep a good distance apart as you walk out. If one of you goes in, the other can call for help (it's amazing how many people carry cellular phones these days). The companion can also attempt a rescue if one of you is carrying rope or other survival gear.

Refrain from driving on ice whenever possible. Snowmobiles and ATV's need at least 5 inches. Don't "overdrive" your snowmobile's headlight. At even 30 miles per hour, it can take a much longer distance

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to stop on ice than your headlight shines. Many fatal snowmobile through-the-ice accidents occur because the machine was traveling too fast for the operator to stop when the headlamp illuminated the hole in the ice.

Wear a life vest under your winter gear. Or wear one of the new flotation snowmobile suits. And it's a good idea to carry a pair of ice picks that may be homemade or purchased from most well-stocked sporting goods stores that cater to winter anglers. It's amazing how difficult it can be to pull yourself back onto the surface of unbroken but wet and slippery ice while wearing a snowmobile suit weighted down with 60 lbs. of water. The ice picks really help to pull you back onto solid ice.

Ice Skating Safety:

- Wear skates that fit comfortably and provide enough ankle support to keep you on your feet.
- Have the blades professionally sharpened at the beginning of each season.
- Always check for cracks, holes and other debris.
- Wear warm clothing and rest when you become tired or cold.
- Never skate alone.
- Always supervise children near lakes, ponds, and creeks.
- Educate children of the danger of ice by taking them to sites and advising them of places they must avoid.



Family Safety:

- Remind children that under no circumstances should they go onto a frozen lake to chase a ball or save a pet.
- Always keep your pets on a leash. Many rescues are the result of dog owners trying to rescue their dog that walked out onto the ice.

What if a companion falls through thin ice?

REACH, THROW, GO

- Try to reach them with something - rope, ladder, stick, ski pole, etc.
- Throw them something to help them stay afloat - a cooler, plastic milk/soda bottles, spare tire, etc.
- Call 911. It's amazing how many people carry cell phones.
- Wait for emergency responders then bring them to the exact location of the victim.

What if YOU fall in?

Try not to panic.

Instead, remain calm and turn toward the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms on

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the unbroken surface of the ice [here's where the ice picks come in handy - screwdrivers make great ice picks] Work forward on the ice by kicking your feet. If the ice breaks, maintain your position and slide forward again. Once you are lying on the ice, don't stand. Instead, roll away from the hole. That spreads out your weight until you are on solid ice. This sounds much easier than it really is to do. The best advice is don't put yourself into needless danger by venturing out too soon or too late in the season.

To Call or Not To Call 911...

If you are wondering if you have an emergency or not, err on the side of caution by calling 911 rather than your fire department. The dispatchers that handle 911 calls are highly trained and, with your help, determine if there is a true emergency. They will be able to dispatch the appropriate emergency personnel without delay.



With the winter months upon us, take a minute and review the emergency plan for your home and car. Check to make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working. Replace batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detector.

**And remember to have a wonderful and safe holiday season.
From all of us at the Cannon Township Fire Department,
Happy Holidays!**

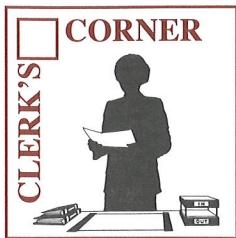
Trail update –

The only news is that there is no news – from the State of Michigan, that is. The Township has all the necessary easements in place, the money in the bank waiting to pay our match, and certainly the desire to see the trail constructed soon. We're waiting for final confirmation that we can begin the bidding process. Stay tuned!

Updates can be found on the web site – www.cannontwp.org – under "what's new." You can also join the trail email contact list. Send your request to bonnies@cannontwp.org and I'll put you on the list. Whenever there is news to tell, I will update the web page and also send the information to everyone on this list.

Historical Museum –

The museum is closed for the winter months, but appointments can be made to visit by calling Margaret Janose at 874-6865. Also, a reminder that dues for the Historical Society are due on January 1st at the bargain rate of \$5.00 a family. Best deal in town!



Ballots, Voting and Elections

It has been a busy year in the Clerk's Department with three elections in 2006 and the introduction of a new piece of voting equipment. Many of you voted for the first time in your new polling place this past November. Your polling place assignment should remain the same for the next few years, and it is effective for all elections.

Some of you commented that you are unhappy with your new polling place, so I will explain why you're voting where you are. It was necessary to meet State requirements when setting up new precincts. This involved determining the number of eligible voters on each street, and then trying to divide these streets evenly so there would be a fairly equal amount of voters in each precinct. State law requires that precincts be divided by the centerline of a street, which caused some difficulties since some streets like 7 Mile and Kreuter do not extend all the way through.

I tried a lot of different configurations and ended up with the divisions the way they are. I realize that some of you have to travel a long way from your home to your polling place, but this is caused by the restrictions I had to adhere to. For instance, if you live on the north side of Cannonsburg Road near Pettis, you vote at Bella Vista Church on Belding Road when the polling place for Precinct One, West Cannon Baptist Church, is right across the street. Some voters who live on the far eastern edge of the Township also vote at Bella Vista Church. On the way there, they pass two closer polling places, Bostwick Lake Congregational Church and the Township Center. It seems unreasonable, I know, but based on the restrictions, it was the way things turned out.

The good news is that you only vote – at most – three times a year. For those three days, traveling a couple extra miles away from home should not be too much of a hardship. And remember, absentee ballots are available if you are 60 years of age or older or you have a handicap. Legislation keeps popping up to allow all voters to request an absentee ballot regardless of the reason. I would love to see that approved in the near future. We had 1311 absentee ballots cast during the November election. This was 19% of our voters. Our overall turnout was 72%. I think that is great for a gubernatorial election! It makes all the work we go through worthwhile.

The AutoMark machine was introduced at the August Primary. Its purpose is to mark ballots for any voter, but especially those with disabilities. You can use it by touching the screen or by using the arrow keys on the keypad. These machines will be available at every election. If you have some extra time, you may try one just for the fun of it. They are especially worthwhile if you have any kind of visual problem or trouble with using a pen to write. These machines were required – one per polling place – because of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) legislation, yet I am aware of only two voters who made use of our five machines. These machines are valued at \$6467.00, paid for through federal funds, so it is unfortunate that they stand idle during the voting process.

2007 should be a quieter year since the only anticipated election will be the May school election. That gives the Clerk's Office more time to catch up on daily work and things we've put off like filing and filing and filing... Have a great Christmas and a wonderful new year.





WATERSHED PAGES



A Citizen's Guide to Cold Weather Practices

Winter means mounds of snow to shovel and layers of ice to remove from our sidewalks and driveways. We often make the job easier by applying deicers like salt, but besides sodium chloride, many deicers also contain chemicals like cyanide. When ice melts, the salts and chemicals dissolve and flow into street drains that lead directly to nearby streams and lakes, endangering aquatic life. By following a few tips, you can reduce your salt use and prevent water pollution.

1. Try an alternative.

Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) was developed as a deicing alternative because it has fewer adverse environmental impacts than salt and doesn't cause corrosion. Although CMA is more expensive than rock salt, it is recommended for environmentally sensitive areas.



2. Reduce your salt use.

By limiting the amount of salt you use on sidewalks and driveways, you can reduce the amount of polluted snow melt washing into waterways.

3. Use that shovel!

The most important step in deicing is to physically remove as much ice as possible before applying salt. Use a shovel to break up the ice before you add another layer of salt to your sidewalk. Adding more salt without removing what has melted can result in over-application, meaning more salt and chemicals end up in nearby streams and lakes. You can also reduce salt use by limiting access to your home to one entrance. For every doorway that is not used, there will be less salt running into the catch basin in your street, and ultimately the Grand River.

Izaac Walton League – Annual Winterfest

Cannon Township residents are welcome to attend the annual Ikes' Winterfest held at the Conservation Center on Myers Lake Avenue on January 20th. The gates open at 11:00 AM. Food will be served throughout the day. Weather permitting, there will be ice fishing, hiking, and sledding. Inside there will be events such as ping pong, fly tying classes and games for all ages. Call Chuck or Kim Tasma if you have questions at 887-8542. Reservations not required and there are no charges!



Update from the Watershed Administrative Assistant

Bear Creek Apparel

Wrap yourself or a loved one up in a Bear Creek Watershed Sweatshirt or T-shirt. They are available for purchase at Cannon Township Center and come in youth and adult sizes. The options are: T-shirts \$7, Crew neck sweatshirts \$12 and Hoodie Sweatshirts \$15. All shirts are available in grey or white with the blue and green Bear Creek logo on the front.

Christmas Tree Recycling

The annual Cannon Township Christmas Tree Recycling will take place Saturday, January 6 and Saturday, January 13 from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Township Center parking lot, 6878 Belding Rd. Please check your tree for any stray ornaments before you drop it off. Also, please do not drop off anything that contains wire as this will not go through our chipper. The Rockford High School National Honor Society students will work at the Christmas Tree Recycling each Saturday.

Forestry Grant Awarded

I am pleased to announce that Cannon Township received a grant from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Urban and Community Forestry Program. The grant award is for \$995.40 and will help fund the Township's "Family of Brochures for Protecting Natural Features" project. The "Family of Brochures for Protecting Natural Features" will be a packet containing one booklet and three brochures. The booklet will be titled "Cannon Township Best Management Practices for Natural Features" and stems from the document of the same name, created by the Bear Creek Watershed Committee. The three brochures will each be titled, "Wetlands Education," "Cannon Township Wetlands Ordinance" and "Cannon Township Storm Water Ordinance." The booklet and brochure will be placed in a die-cut folder using recycled paper.

The purpose of the "Family of Brochures for Protecting Natural Features" project is to serve as a guidance and educational tool for developers and landowners on how to preserve natural features of the land. The packet will be given to any developer or landowner who wishes to change or develop their land in the Township. When we say "preserve natural features" we mean preserving woodlands, greenway corridors, the protection of critical habitat and the preservation of waterways. The packet will offer a fast and concise source of information on best management practices, wetlands and storm water. Preserving the land will ensure the long-term health and well-being of our Township.

We hope to have the Family of Brochures for Protecting Natural Features ready by January 2007. We are very proud of this project. I would like to extend my thanks to the Bear Creek Watershed Committee, particularly to Lori Larsen, Betty Jo Crosby, Bonnie Shupe Blackledge, Barb McGuirl and Patti Anderson for their hard work in making this project possible.

Kim Sapkowski, Watershed Assistant



“DATES TO REMEMBER”

2006

Dec 25, 26 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY – OFFICE CLOSED

Dec 29 Quarterly Sewer Bills Mailed

2007

Jan 1, 2 NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY – OFFICE CLOSED

Jan 6, 13 Christmas Tree Recycling 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

Jan 8 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm

Jan 9 Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm

Jan 16 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 7:00 pm

Jan 22 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm

Jan 31 **QUARTERLY SEWER BILLS DUE**

Feb 12 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm

Feb 13 Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm

Feb 14 **2006 TAXES DUE – Penalty begins Feb 15, 2007**

Feb 19 Assessor's Week – 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Feb 20 Assessor's Week – 9:00 am – 12:00 am

Feb 20 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 7:00 pm

Feb 22 Assessor's Week – 9:00 am – 12:00 am

Feb 26 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm

Feb 28 **Deadline for Collection of 2006 Taxes at Township Office**

March 1 **Last Day to obtain Dog Licenses at Township Office**

March 12 Board of Review – 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm

March 13 Planning Commission Meeting – 6:00 pm

March 15 Board of Review – 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm, 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

March 20 Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting – 7:00 pm

March 26 Township Board Meeting – 7:00 pm

Any changes or additions to the calendar can be found on our web site
– www.cannontwp.org under “Township Events.”

Clip and Save E-mail Addresses

Supervisor, Pete MacGregor pmacgregor@cannontwp.org
Clerk, Bonnie Shupe Blackledge bonnies@cannontwp.org
Treasurer, Dan Barker dbarker@cannontwp.org
Trustee Diane Jones dianecjones2005@yahoo.com
Trustee Jim LaPeer jlapeer@cannontwp.org
Trustee Dick Davies rrd8565@hotmail.com
Trustee Chuck Bloom heronview@sbcglobal.net
Deputy Clerk, Nancy Popma nancyp@cannontwp.org
Deputy Treasurer, Milissa Soderstrom milissas@cannontwp.org
Zoning Administrator, Christine James christinej@cannontwp.org
Code Enforcement Officer, Bob Devereaux zeo@cannontwp.org
Administrative Assistant Sue Clarin suec@cannontwp.org
Watershed Assistant, Kim Sapkowski ksapkowski@cannontwp.org
Fire Chief, Harry Morris Chief@Cannontwp.org
State Representative, Tom Pearce tompearce@house.mi.gov
..... Phone: 1-888-414-3684
State Senator, Mark Jansen senmjansen@senate.michigan.gov
..... Phone: 1-800-774-1174
Congressman Vern Ehlers www.house.gov/ehlers
..... Phone: 1-202-225-3831
Cannon Township Web Site www.cannontwp.org
Kent County Web Site www.accesskent.com
State of Michigan Web Site www.michigan.gov



CANNON TOWNSHIP
6878 Belding Road, NE
Rockford, MI 49341

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROCKFORD, MI 49341
PERMIT NO.1

Township Board

Supervisor Pete Macgregor
Clerk Bonnie Shupe Blackledge
Treasurer Dan Barker
Trustees Diane Jones
..... Dick Davies
..... Chuck Bloom
..... Jim Lapeer
Township Offices 874-6966
(Hours 8am - 5pm, Mon - Fri)
Fax 874-8940
Fire Department 874-9725
Emergency 911
Township Board Meetings
2nd & 4th Monday, Monthly
7:00 pm, Township Hall