

Fall 2026

CANNON TOWNSHIP

Communicator

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From Your Township Board

This fall’s Cannon Communicator is packed with the things that make our Township special: major park and trail progress, election and public safety updates, a strong financial audit, community stories, and local history. From the new Cannon Township Community Center taking shape to the families, firefighters and volunteers helping Cannon thrive, there’s a lot happening — and a lot to be proud of.

Thank you for staying informed, asking questions and continuing to help make Cannon Township such a wonderful place to call home.
We’re all here to serve you.



Steve Grimm
Supervisor



Jim Alles
Clerk



David Spencer
Treasurer



Henry Betten
Trustee



Cy Balk
Trustee



Todd Olson
Trustee



Jessica
Gutowski-Slaydon
Trustee

HERE TO SERVE YOU

- Cannon Township Center
6878 Belding Road, Rockford, MI 49341
- Main Office: 616-874-6966
Zoning Administrator: 616-884-2206

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Thank You, Cannon Township



Steve Grimm

Supervisor

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Committees:

Fire & Law Enforcement, Sewer

Communications, Personnel

Finance & Elections



On August 4, the residents of Cannon Township approved the dedicated Fire Millage. On behalf of the Cannon Township Fire Department, thank you. The support of our fire department ensures that, for the next 10 years, the department will be fully funded. Under the leadership of Chief Jim Morris, the money will be well spent. The money will be used to purchase and maintain the equipment that keeps our fire fighters safe, such as air packs and other turn-out gear, as well as state of the art technology, such as thermal cameras and radios. This equipment is not cheap, and as technology advances, the cost goes up. The money is also spent on continuing to prepare for the future. As Cannon Township continues to grow, our fire department will stay ahead of that growth,

continuing its unsurpassed commitment to the safety of our residents. I have said many times that the Cannon Township Fire Department is the best. That statement is, and has been true because of the dedication of the men and women who serve, but also because of the commitment of the residents in seeing to it that those who put their lives on the line have the best equipment possible. So, thanks to those who serve, and to you for funding them.

(RE)MEET YOUR TRUSTEES

I think it is important that, every two years or so, I take the opportunity to acknowledge the Cannon Township trustees who represent you on the board. There is a great deal more to serving as a trustee than sitting in a board meeting every other week.

CY BALK

Cy serves on the Parks and Recreation Committee and is chair of the Invasive Species and Watershed Committee. Both committees include residents who are dedicated to the betterment of Cannon Township. Cy also leads the Cannon Township Community Center Brick Donor Campaign which gives people an opportunity to recognize family members, commemorate loved ones and acknowledge their connection to the Township.

Cy also leads Cannon's Youth, Summer Lingo, Bingo which is a free seasonal community program designed to encourage families to explore local parks, trails, wildlife, and history.

HENRY BETTEN

Henry Betten serves on the Sewer Committee, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Fire Committee. Outside his role as trustee, Henry serves as the chair of the Bostwick Lake Wellness Committee. Henry is a fiscal hawk, always looking for ways to save the taxpayers money. Henry supported the successful effort to abolish the administrative fee every other municipality charges residents to

take their money from them through taxes. It was also Henry's idea to cut our tax revenues by five percent.

JESSICA GUTOWSKI-SLAYDON

Jessica is our resident Thomas Jefferson impersonator. It was her idea to honor our Township and our nation in the public reading of the Declaration of Independence on July 8 of this year, the semi quincen-



tennial of the first public reading of the Declaration. You may have seen her and I on the local morning shows promoting the event. Watch the Fox Morning Mix clip here. bit.ly/TJevent

Jessica also serves on the Planning Commission, chairs the Communications Committee, serves with Cy Balk on the Invasive Species/Wetlands Committee, and on the Brick Donor Campaign, and is the person and responsible for this publication.

TODD OLSON

Todd served on the Parks and Recreation Committee for many years

before he became a trustee. He is the person most currently responsible for the pickleball courts located at the Township Center. He is also responsible for our trail system. As a trustee, Todd is chair of the Parks and Recreation Committee and serves on the Facilities Committee, which at present, is overseeing the construction of the Cannon Township Community Center building located at Balk Family Park, as well as the amenities in the park itself. In these roles, Todd seeks and listens to the opinions and ideas of our residents, some of whom serve with Todd on the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Todd's commitment to the recreational amenities in Cannon is a direct result of his love of the outdoors. As he has said many times, if an outdoor activity ends in "ing", chances are he is passionate about it.

Our fire department and our trustees are dedicated to the betterment of our Township, the intelligent oversight of its growth, the conservative fiscal management of its resources, and the protection of the health and safety of our residents and those who visit.

Technology, Roads, Elections, Cemeteries



Jim Alles
Clerk

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Committees:

Elections, Personnel, Cemetery
Fire & Law enforcement, Facilities
Communications & GVMC Rep

ELECTIONS

Cannon had a very good turnout for the August Primary election with approximately 42% of the 12,500 registered voters casting their vote. Ideally it should be closer to 100%, but we are pleased with the turnout. In the past, about 30% have voted in the Primary election.

November 3rd is the General Election and we are anticipating a large turnout because of the races that are up for grabs this time. Absent Voter (AV) ballots were sent out



the last week of September to voters on the Permanent Ballot List or if you turned in an absent voter application. Avoid the lines and request an AV ballot at bit.ly/AV-sign-up or cast your vote during the 9 days of Early Voting.

There are several ways to cast your AV ballot:



1. Mail it back in the prepaid envelope.



2. Drop it in one of Cannon Township's three secure drop boxes located at the Township Center 6878 Belding Road.



3. Bring it with you to either Early Voting Saturday, October 24th – Sunday, November 1st or on Election Day November 3rd and insert your ballot through the tabulator yourself.

Please safeguard your ballot when it arrives. Ensure that the information on the envelope is correct and **SIGN THE ENVELOPE WITH THE SIGNATURE ON YOUR DRIVER LICENSE**. You will notice that I emphasized the previous sentence. If your signature does not match the driver's license, your ballot is set aside and you will be contacted to verify that you are the person that signed the ballot. **YOU MAY NOT SIGN ANYONE ELSE'S BALLOT**. You may sign your spouse's paycheck or other documents, but Michigan law does not allow a person to sign an absent voter ballot for someone else. Power of attorney is also not acceptable. For the Primary Election we received numerous absent voter ballots that required signature verification (Cure), along with several ballots with no signature. A Notice is mailed to the voter informing them of the process to Cure their signature for their ballot to be counted. Unfortunately, 10 did not cure their signature and their ballot was NOT counted. Also, if you are mailing your ballot back; please note it must be received by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day to be counted; 17 ballots were received after the close of polls and were not counted.

Here's how ballots are handled, secured and accounted for throughout the election process.

1. BALLOTS ARE MAILED

Ballots are mailed out in a preprinted envelope.

2. YOU FILL OUT THE BALLOT

You fill out the ballot, insert it in the secrecy sleeve, sign your envelope, and mail back in the prepaid envelope provided.

3. WE CHECK THE BALLOT DROP BOXES

We check the ballot drop boxes daily. AV ballot signatures are verified with our voter registration file/Driver License signature, recorded as received, and locked in a secure room.

4. ELECTION WORKERS OPEN THE SEALED BALLOTS

On counting day, a team of five to seven election workers, both Republicans and Democrats, meet, are sworn in, and begin to open the sealed ballots.

5. BALLOTS ARE PLACED IN GROUPS

The ballots are removed from the envelopes and secrecy sleeves and placed in groups of 25 for tabulation.

6. BALLOTS ARE RECORDED

The next step is a bit more complex. The ballots are run through a High-Speed Tabulator that does the same thing the precinct tabulator does but much faster. The tabulator checks the paper ballot markings are where they should be and records the voting results. If the tabulator finds a voter error on the ballot, that ballot is sent to another machine called the Adjudicator. This machine shows a copy of the ballot to a Republican and a Democrat inspector who will inspect the discrepancy and determine if they can interpret the voter's intent. If possible, they identify the voter intent and correct the ballot; if not, the ballot is cast and that race is not counted.

If anyone is interested in how the security of the election is safeguarded, I would be more than happy to meet and go over the process in person.

I know this has been long, and if you have read it to the end, congratulations — you are a better-informed voter!

As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me at jalles@cannontwp.gov or call me at 616-884-2207.

ROADS

Lots of construction in Cannon this past summer. I hope that the inconvenience did not outweigh the improvements in our transportation system. We are in the process of reviewing projects for the summer of 2027, so if you know of a problem, please let me know.

CEMETERIES

The Cannonsburg cemeteries on Sunfish Lake Road were completely sold out; however, I was able to buy back several spaces that families decided they no longer needed. So now there are spaces available. If you know of anyone that no longer needs their space, please let me know and I will work with them to buy back the sites and make them available.

The new cemetery is moving slowly along. The environmental study is complete and the results are positive. There are no issues with contamination so the process can continue. The next step is a PFP (Request for Proposal) to

develop the road and clear the area. That information should be out in early October, and we can then start to figure out the budget.

The volunteers have been cleaning headstones and fixing some broken ones plus doing general maintenance of the cemeteries. Thank You, folks, for a GREAT job.

As a reminder, decorative stones and plantings are not allowed in the cemetery and will be removed. The extra items pose a risk of damage to other headstones when the lawn is mowed. Plantings may look nice for a while, but Iris and other plants spread and eventually they can completely cover the headstone. If you put an urn at your loved one's site, please place it in line with the other headstones. That way it will not be in the path of the mowers.

David Spencer Treasurer

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Committees:
Finance, Personnel, Parks &
Rec, Elections, Rockford Area
Foundation Rep



Treasurer's Report

Cannon Township undergoes an independent financial audit annually conducted by the accounting firm Siegfried Crandall PC. The firm examines Cannon's financial records and issues an opinion on their findings. Again, Cannon Township received an "Unqualified/Clean Opinion". In auditor's terms, this means Cannon Township received the best possible audit opinion. Siegfried Crandall stated:

"We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities, the business-type activity, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Township of Cannon, Michigan (the Township), as of and for the year ended March 31, 2026, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Township's basic financial statements as listed in the contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activity, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Township, as of March 31, 2026, and the respective changes in financial position and, where applicable, cash flows thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

**An email from the auditors stated:
"congratulations on another
excellent audit".**

The deadline for paying summer taxes (September 14, 2026) has passed. If you have not paid your Summer 2026 taxes, please do so as soon as possible. Unfortunately, an additional 1% interest charge continues to accrue on the summer balance on the first of every month. Upcoming, the 2026 winter tax bills will be out the first week of December.

The Treasurer's Department has a few suggestions on how to efficiently pay your property taxes without relying on the post office. Consider setting up either an automatic ACH for your payments, pay online at our website, or use our secure drop box at the Cannon Township office front door which can be accessed 24 hours/day.

As previously mentioned, the Treasurer's Department recommends that you review your tax bill to make sure you receive the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE). If the PRE is in place your annual tax savings are approximately 18 mills. There are two places on your tax bill to check to make sure the "PRE" is in place. On your tax bill you should see: **% PRE/MBT:100% and Exempt next to your school district Operating Tax on your bill.** If the PRE is not in place, please bring this to the Assessor or Treasurer's attention, and we will arrange for the proper forms for you to sign.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at (616) 884-2201 or Judy at (616) 884-2202.

Parks & Recreation and Facilities Update



Todd Olson
Trustee

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Committees:
Parks & Rec, Facilities,
Fundraising Committee

Hello again Friends and Neighbors,

Welcome to fall! My favorite time of year! I hope this article finds everyone feeling like they really got the most out of the last six months of warm weather and outdoor activities here in Michigan. It always seems to go by way too fast. To start, I wanted to give everyone a few quick updates on projects currently underway throughout Cannon Township.

BALK FAMILY PARK

The outpouring of support from generous Cannon Township residents has been amazing! I guess I shouldn't be surprised. We live in the greatest little Township in the county, filled with wonderful and generous people.

To date, we have donors who have generously committed \$450,000 to cover the cost of the Outdoor Discovery Center playground; \$150,000 to cover the cost of the flagpole, landscaping, and hardscaping around the front of the building; \$35,000 for a bird-watching platform; \$50,000 to cover the cost of two outdoor classrooms; \$50,000 to build the disc golf course; and \$10,000 to cover the cost of creating artwork from the pine trees that will be displayed inside the building and on the playground.

Thanks to Trustee Cy Balk, Trustee Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon, Ray Moulden, and Roch Gagnon, the brick campaign has been a huge success. As of September 28, we have raised \$39,400 which is the equivalent of 296 bricks sold to offset the cost of the Cannon Township Community Center.

To further illustrate the incredible outpouring of support, both Visser Brothers, which is serving as the general contractor, and Andrus Architecture, which designed the building, are providing their services at cost with no profit. Their generosity is saving the Township hundreds of thousands of dollars on the project.



Pictured are a few progress photos of the artwork that will be featured at Balk Family Park.

To say I am in awe of this community is an understatement. It truly makes me proud to live where we do. Thank you to each and every donor who has helped make this project possible. Your generosity will benefit many generations here in Cannon Township!

The building is on track to be completed by the first of the year. The playground, bird-watching station, and outdoor classrooms are on track to be completed by the end of November.



More information and updates on the progress of Balk Family Park can be found here: bit.ly/balkpark

CONGRATULATIONS TO MADDIE REED

Congratulations to Maddie Reed on earning her Eagle Scout Award. Maddie is the first female Scout in Rockford and Cannon Township to earn both the Arrow of Light, the highest rank in Cub Scouting, and the Eagle Scout Award, the highest rank in Scouting America.



KENT COUNTY PARKS GRAND RIVER
GREENWAY MULTI-USE TRAIL EXPANSION

This project is also progressing nicely. Kent County is on track to complete the section along Cannonsburg Road from Chauncey Drive to Pettis Avenue, and south on Pettis to Knapp Street, by mid-November.

Due to some unforeseen delays involving federal regulations, the section along Cannonsburg Road from Northland Drive to Chauncey Drive will be postponed until spring 2027. The Federal Government has now approved Kent County to proceed with that section, but unfortunately, the approval came too late to complete the work before the weather turns colder and the asphalt plants shut down in mid-November.



More information on the Grand River Greenway project being conducted by the Kent County Parks Department can be found here: bit.ly/c-p-trail

CANNON TRAIL EXPANSION TO CONNECT
TO ROCKFORD ALONG KIES AVENUE



This project is coming along nicely. If you haven't driven by to see the project taking shape, I would encourage you to do so. The project is currently on track to be completed by mid-November 2026.

More information and updates on the Cannon Trail expansion can be found here: bit.ly/Kies-trail



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Non-Motorized
Trail Rules and
Etiquette

Ben Swayze
Kent County Parks Director

Non-Motorized Use Only: Perhaps the biggest point of confusion is e-bikes, which look like traditional bicycles but are equipped with a battery to assist riders. There are three classifications of e-bikes. Class 1 e-bikes have "pedal assist" up to 20 MPH but do not have a throttle. Our department considers these bicycles, and they are allowed anywhere regular bikes are. Class 2 and 3 e-bikes are pedal-assist but also have a throttle (up to 20 and 28 MPH, respectively), and they are not permitted on trails.

Editor's note: Cannon Twp allows Class 2 e-bikes with the proper permit, but Kent County Trails does not allow them.

Other motorized devices, such as e-motos, dirt bikes, all-terrain vehicles, electric scooters, and golf carts, are strictly prohibited.

Observe Speed Limits: The speed limit for all Kent County Parks trails is 15 MPH, regardless of what you may be riding.
Yield to Pedestrians: Pedestrians always have the right of way!

Keep Right, Except to Pass: Treat the trail like a highway: keep to the right and pass on the left.

Announce Yourself: If you are passing someone, make sure to ring a bell or call it out so they know you are coming. "Passing on your left!"

Keep Pets on a Leash: Do not let your pets stray across the path and create a tripping hazard. And make sure to pick up after them!

Don't Block the Trail: Travel no more than two across, and pull over when stopping.

Be Considerate: Be respectful of all trail visitors.



Cannon Township Brings History to Life

Cannon Township celebrated America's founding with a mix of history, community spirit and a little colonial creativity during its Declaration of Independence Reading and Thomas Jefferson Look-Alike Contest on Wednesday, July 8, at the Cannon Township Historical Museum.

Around 90 residents and guests gathered outside the museum to hear the Declaration of Independence read aloud by a wide range of community members, including local officials, public servants, students, business owners and residents. The evening also featured a Thomas Jefferson Look-Alike Contest, where historical accuracy was optional but enthusiasm was strongly encouraged.

The event was held as part of the broader celebration of America's 250th anniversary and was designed to make history feel accessible, memorable and engaging for all ages.

Cannon Township Supervisor Steve Grimm welcomed the crowd and thanked the many readers, volunteers and community partners who helped make the evening possible.

"This event was a great example of what makes Cannon Township different," Grimm said. "We brought people together, honored our history and had a little fun while doing it. That is community at its best."

Trustee Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon, who organized the event, said the goal was to find a meaningful way to celebrate the Declaration while also giving families a reason to participate.

"This event put a modern twist on history to engage more people," Gutowski-Slaydon said. "This history is too important for our youth to lose, and we hope this celebration gives more people a fun and meaningful way to connect with it while honoring our Founding Fathers, and Mothers!"

Following the reading, attendees were invited to continue the evening with a Cannon Township Fire Department open house, Tour the Cannon Township Museum and an informal community gathering at Honey Creek Inn.

Thank-you to everyone who participated in the reading and helped bring the Declaration to life, including Supervisor Steve Grimm, Kent County Sheriff Bryan Muir, Kent County Prosecutor Chris Becker, County Commissioners Katie DeBoer and Robert S. Womack, Treasurer David Spencer, Clerk Jim Alles, Trustees Todd Olson and Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon, Blake, Dax and Parks Slaydon, Brandon Erhart, Amanda and Caleb Gach, Candy Lancioni, Hillary Hatch, Rachel Partridge, Justin Ortiz, Kieth Sprague, Neil Blakeslee, and Josh Gardner.

A recording of the event is available here:



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OH, CANNON KIDS ROCK!

Brings More Than 150 Together at Township Center Park

More than 150 children, parents, grandparents and community members gathered at Cannon Township Center Park on Thursday, August 13, for the second annual Oh, Cannon Kids Rock! event.

The free, open house-style event gave local children an opportunity to paint rocks that will become part of a growing community art installation in the park. More than 100 rocks were painted throughout the afternoon.

Local artist Jeff Grill, who developed the concept, prepared the rocks and guided young participants as they created their designs. The painted rocks will be sealed and incorporated into the park's growing labyrinth installation, allowing children to return in the future and see their own contribution as part of the larger project.

In addition to rock painting, families enjoyed a variety of educational and interactive activities. The Cannon Township Fire Department assisted with event setup and cleanup and provided a sprinkler for children to cool off. Prein & Newhof hosted an educational station focused on the Earth's layers, while the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council provided a safety booth featuring light-up and reflective safety items for youth and adults.

The afternoon also included a free raffle, with iChiro Clinics generously donating raffle items.

Kids who attended were also able to check off a box on their Youth Summer Lingo BINGO card, a summer activity organized by the Cannon Township Invasive Species Committee.

Oh, Cannon Kids Rock! was created to give children a fun, hands-on way to engage with their community while contributing to a lasting public art project.

If you would like to get involved with the 2027 event, contact Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon at jslaydon@cannontwp.gov.



There's A New Sheriff In Town



Bryan Muir
Sheriff,
Kent County Sheriff

Cannon Township Summer Stats

Summer was a busy season in Cannon Township with deputies from the Kent County Sheriff's Office continuing to work closely with Township officials and residents to keep our community a safe and enjoyable place to live, work, and visit.

As I step into the role of Kent County Sheriff, I do so with a deep appreciation for the people and communities I have had the privilege to serve throughout my career.

I joined the Kent County Sheriff's Office in 2001 and have had the opportunity to work in Road Patrol, the Detective Bureau and Support Services. Over the years, I have served as a Sergeant, Lieutenant, Captain, Chief Deputy and most recently as Undersheriff. Each role has taught me something different about leadership, service and the responsibility we have to the people who depend on us. I am also grateful for the many opportunities I have had to continue learning, including earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Grand Valley State University and a master's degree in public administration, as well as attending the FBI National Academy, MSU School of Staff and Command, Leadership Grand Rapids and the Grand Rapids Leadership Institute.

But when people ask what I enjoy most about this job, the answer is actually pretty simple: helping people.

Some of my own childhood experiences helped shape that desire to serve, and it has stayed with me throughout my career. The moments that mean the most are often when someone is going through one of the hardest days of their life and needs to know they are not facing it alone. Sometimes that means helping a victim feel safe again. Sometimes it means making sure someone feels heard, helping a family find answers, or simply following through when they need someone in their corner. We cannot always undo what has happened, but we can listen, show compassion and help people take the next step.

That is still the most rewarding part of this work for me.

As Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young retires after 37 years of service, I am honored to continue the work of the Kent County Sheriff's Office and build on the strong foundation already in place. I look forward to continuing to serve Cannon Township and communities throughout Kent County.

Pictured are Sheriff Bryan Muir, County Commissioner Katie DeBoer, County Prosecutor Chris Becker and County Commissioner Robert Wornack at Cannon Township's Declaration of Independence event on July 8.

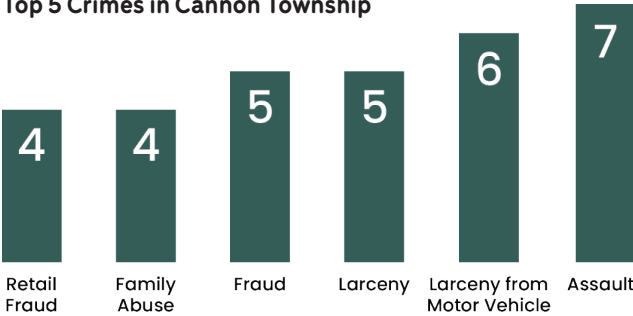
Summer Activity in Cannon Township

Deputies remained active throughout Cannon Township this summer responding to calls for service, conducting traffic enforcement, investigating criminal complaints, and assisting residents.

From June 1 through August 18 there were 46 crimes reported in Cannon Township according to the Kent County Sheriff's Office Crime Clearance Reporting Dashboard. These offenses were primarily property-related, with approximately half of reported offenses involving property crimes. Crimes against persons accounted for roughly one-fifth of activity, while crimes against society and other offenses each represented smaller portions of reported incidents.

Traffic safety also remained an important focus. Deputies responded to several crashes during the summer, including a serious rollover crash on Pettis Avenue in late June and a July crash involving a bicyclist at Cannonsburg Road and Myers Lake Avenue. These incidents are important reminders for all motorists to slow down, remain attentive, and watch carefully for motorcyclists, pedestrians, and other roadway users. Together, we can help keep Cannon Township a safe community for everyone.

Top 5 Crimes in Cannon Township



There's Still Time to Buy a Brick

Thank you to those who donated to the Cannon Township Community Center. I am excited to see the bricks on the walk into the building and see the family names, memories, local businesses, or memories of Cannon Township. It is not too late if you are still interested in participating in the brick campaign. Kindly buy one here: bit.ly/buy-Balk-brick

If you are interested in making a donation outside of the brick campaign, please contact me directly.

Bike trail: When there is no snow on the ground, I try to get as many laps on the Cannon Trail as I can on my bike. Right now, I am excited to see the many years of planning come to fruition as the trail extends from Luton Park all the way to Courtland Drive. This new piece opens up many opportunities for trail users to get to Rockford and beyond.



Cy Balk
Trustee

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Committees:
Parks & Rec, Invasive Species and Wetlands, Fundraising Committee

One of my favorite parts of the trail is the boardwalk over Sunfish Lake. The views are gorgeous and the wetlands in this area change throughout the year. Every time I pass over the boardwalk, I slow down and try to observe one living creature. Sometimes it's a deer feeding on a bush or a song bird flying past. It is easy to miss the natural beauty around us, if you do not slow down and take the time to observe. Where do you like to slow down and observe the beauty on a trail? Do you have a favorite spot on the trail? Send me an email as I would love to know where your favorite spot is.



Polish Citizen of the Year

Thank you to County Commissioner Hennessy for delivering Cannon Township's proclamation to Don Kurylowicz, this year's Polish Citizen of the Year!

It looks like it was a wonderful celebration and we're glad Cannon Township could help recognize Don on this well-deserved honor.



Rooted Close to Home: Meet the Stulp Family

For Gabe and Danielle Stulp, staying close to home was not something they simply fell into. It was a choice.

Both grew up in the Rockford community, graduated from Rockford High School in 2009 and eventually decided this was where they wanted to raise their own family.

Today, Gabe and Danielle live in Cannon Township with their three sons, Jack, 10, Henry, 8, and Noah, 4.

Gabe and Danielle are high school sweethearts who met as freshmen. Gabe played football and lacrosse while Danielle was a cheerleader. They married in 2013 and moved to Cannon Township in 2017, settling near Egypt Valley.

Like many families who grew up in the area, they wanted their own children to have some of the same opportunities they had growing up in Rockford.

They say they were not specifically searching for Cannon Township when they moved, but once they settled here, they swiftly fell in love with the trails, parks, proximity to Cannonsburg Ski Area and Crestwood Elementary.

For them, one of the best parts of Cannon Township is convenience and connection. In nearly any direction, they say, there is a park, trail, event or family member nearby. Their children are growing up with cousins who are also their friends, and the family has the chance to work with neighbors who often become customers too. Their message to the community sums it up pretty well:

“Cannon Township is a great place to work, live and play!”



Sports are a big part of Stulp family life.

Gabe continued playing lacrosse in college at Indiana Tech University where he majored in business. Danielle cheered competitively and on the sidelines, then spent 12 years coaching cheerleading in Rockford, including at the middle school level and with the varsity sideline team.

Now their boys are following with activities of their own.

Jack is a fourth grader at Crestwood Elementary and goalkeeper for the SCOR academy team. Henry, a third grader at Crestwood, is working toward his black belt at Pro Karate Rockford and is trying tackle football this fall. Noah is beginning the GSRP program at Weefolk and, according to his family, is more than ready for his own turn in the world of sports.

The family describes life with three boys in a way many parents can probably appreciate: loud, chaotic, a little smelly and full of laughter, adventure and dirt.

Their household also includes Dakota, a 13-year-old black lab and coonhound mix Gabe gave Danielle as a wedding present. Although Dakota is now mostly blind, he remains a much-loved part of the family.

Family is especially important to the Stulps because so much of theirs is still right here.

Both sets of grandparents, along with aunts, uncles and cousins, live in the Rockford area. On Sundays, the extended family can often be found taking up an entire pew at Our Lady of Consolation, with grandparents, parents and 10 grandchildren all together. Their lives overlap in plenty of other ways too, from cousins sharing soccer teams and preschool to siblings working together in the family business.

When they are not working or running between sports, the Stulps spend as much time together as they can. Summer often means campgrounds, pools and Michigan lakes, including trips throughout the state and into the Upper Peninsula. Winters bring skiing, and every other year the extended Gerow family heads to Marco Island, Florida.



Building a Business in Cannon Township

The Stulps' connection to the community is not limited to where they live. It is also where they work.

Gabe founded Exterior Refresh in 2018, and the company has grown into a full-service exterior property maintenance business serving both residential and commercial customers. Their work includes lawn and landscape maintenance, landscape design and installation, irrigation, tree trimming and removal, hardscaping, drainage solutions, seasonal cleanups and snow and ice management. The company's goal is simple: help customers keep the outside of their homes and businesses looking their best year-round. Now based in Cannon Township, Exterior Refresh continues to grow while staying closely connected to the Rockford community.

Their new location is located at 9340 Belding Road next to Cannon Concrete, ShoreMate and Euro Autowerks.

Danielle is similarly rooted as she works as finance manager for her family's business Gerow Management Company, which manages condominium associations throughout the greater Grand Rapids area.

The Stulps also give back in practical ways. Danielle spent years coaching cheerleading, Gabe's company works throughout the Rockford community and both parents have volunteered with their children's sports, field trips and classroom activities.

To learn more about Exterior Refresh visit their website at exteriorrefresh.com



PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATE

Could You Pass The Zoning Test?



Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon
Trustee

P: (616) 915-5370
E: jslaydon@cannontwp.gov

Committees:
Invasive Species and Wetlands,
Communications, Fundraising, Planning
Commission

PC vs. ZBA: What’s the Difference?

If you have ever wondered what the difference is between the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals, you are not alone.

I serve on the Planning Commission, and I think it is a really fun committee to be part of. We often get an early look at development proposals, site plans and land-use questions coming through the Township. It is an ideal role for someone who likes to know what is coming, read the fine print and understand how our zoning ordinance helps shape Cannon Township.

Our Planning Commission has seven members. It reviews items such as site plans, special land uses, planned unit developments and other development proposals.

The Zoning Board of Appeals, or ZBA, is different. Cannon’s ZBA has at least five members. One ZBA member must also serve on the Planning Commission, and one member may also be a Township Board member.

The ZBA handles things like variance requests, appeals of zoning decisions and ordinance interpretations. Its decisions

generally do not go on to the Township Board. Instead, a ZBA decision is final at the Township level and may be appealed to circuit court.

For a typical dimensional variance, the ZBA is essentially asking whether there is a real practical difficulty, whether the property has unusual circumstances, whether the request is reasonable and minimal, and whether the problem was not simply created by the property owner.

To determine whether it’s a PC or ZBA item you can ask yourself these questions (or just call Ed, our zoning administrator) :)

Planning Commission: Does this proposed use or development fit our ordinance and community plans but it’s larger than 30,000 sq ft?

ZBA: Is there a legitimate reason the ordinance cannot reasonably be applied exactly as written to this particular property?

Both boards help protect property rights while also making sure development happens thoughtfully and consistently.

Cannon Township ZBA Members include:

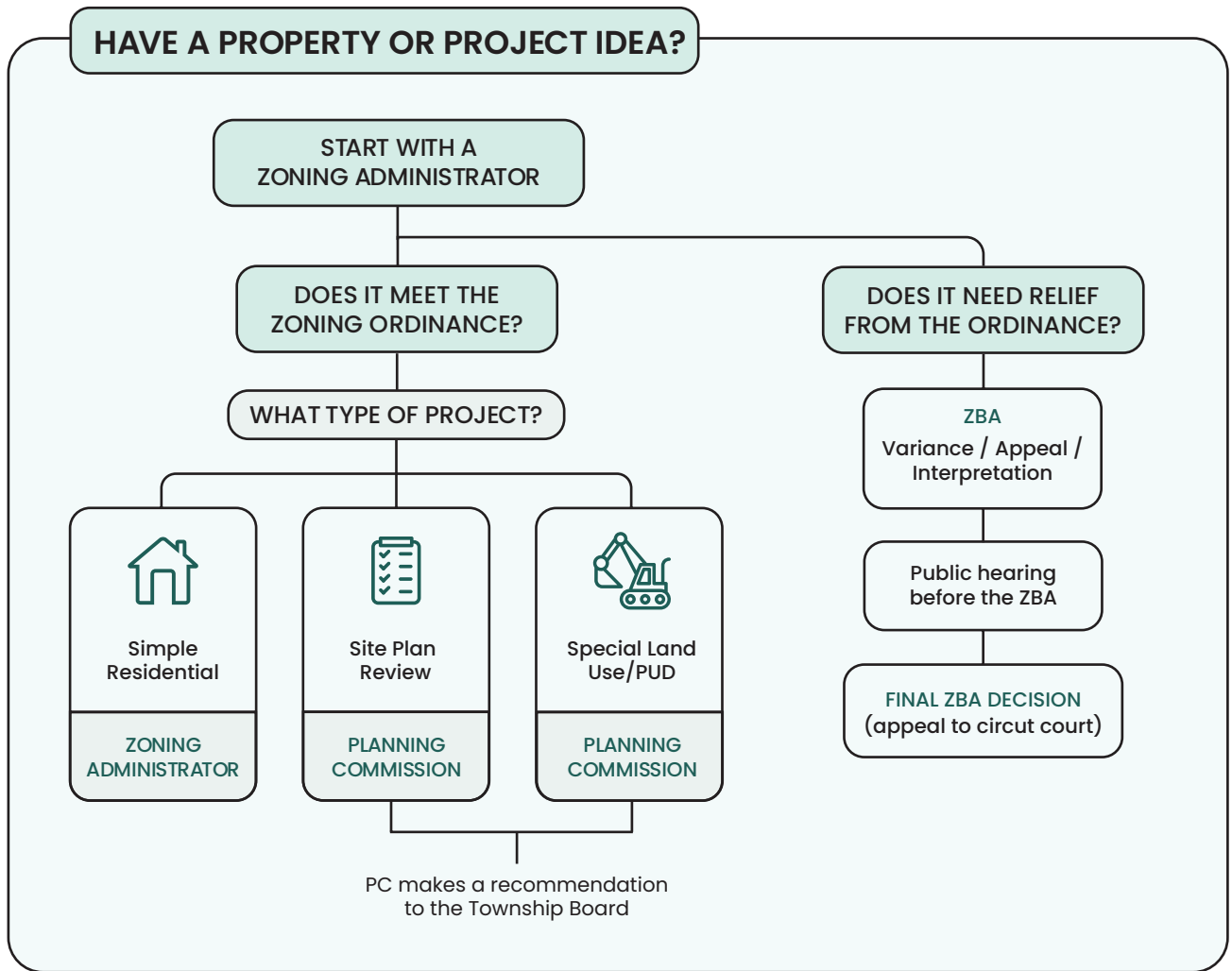
Henry Betten, Township Board Representative; Steve Friar; Rachel Major; Ben Masterson, Chair, Planning Commission Representative; and Andy Ochmanek.

ZBA Alternates include: Paul Eslinger & Bonnie Toft

Cannon Township Planning Commission Members include:

Jessica Gutowski-Slaydon, Township Board Representative; Aileen Liepprandt; Ben Masterson, Secretary; Peter Prina; Rita Proctor; Kelly Salzman; and Jeff Twyman, Chair.

HAVE A PROPERTY OR PROJECT IDEA?



Which Board Would You Go To?

See if you can guess before checking the answers below.

<p>1. You want to build a house that meets all zoning setbacks and requirements. Where do you start?</p> <p>A. Planning Commission B. ZBA C. Zoning Administrator D. Township Board</p>	<p>2. You own a residential lot larger than 30,000 square feet and want accessory buildings totaling more than the amount normally permitted without special review. Where might the request go?</p> <p>A. Planning Commission B. ZBA C. Fire Department D. Township Treasurer</p>	<p>3. Your property is unusually narrow and you cannot meet the required side-yard setback. You want permission to build closer to the property line. Where would you go?</p> <p>A. Planning Commission B. ZBA C. Township Board D. Parks & Recreation Committee</p>	<p>4. A business proposes a new development that requires a site plan or special land use review. Who would typically review it?</p> <p>A. ZBA B. Planning Commission C. Historical Society D. Board of Review</p>
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Answers

1. C – Zoning Administrator. Many straightforward projects that meet the ordinance can be handled administratively.
2. A – Planning Commission. Certain larger accessory-building requests can require special land use review.
3. B – ZBA. This is the classic example of a dimensional variance request.
4. B – Planning Commission. Site plans, special land uses and many larger development proposals are reviewed there.

Summers on a Simpler Shore

Hillary Hatch

Cannon Township Historical Society



Harry's family stayed in what was known as a Kenyon Camp House—a substantial canvas tent stretched over a wooden frame. It offered more comfort than a typical tent, though summer storms could still make for anxious nights. Each autumn, the camp house was dismantled and stored in the carriage house on the Young family farm until the following summer.

Modern conveniences were few. Water came from a hand-operated pitcher pump on the back porch, cooking was done on a three-burner kerosene stove, lighting came from bracket-mounted oil lamps, food was kept cool in an icebox, and a "one-holer" outhouse served the family's needs.

Looking back, Harry admitted he would not trade today's conveniences for gravel roads, kerosene lamps, hand pumps, ice deliveries, or outhouses. Yet one thing he deeply missed was the untouched character of Silver Lake.



"My only regret is that present inhabitants cannot know the quiet, the wildness, and the beauty that is forever gone. When one fished or canoed through the dusk into the night, the lake seemed to have a new and magic life. The marshes were full of singing frogs and busy shore birds; ducks chuckled and quacked, and the loon told us all that the lake was wild. Then the kerosene lamps would come on. There are few more pleasing sights than a sprinkling of oil lamps around a quiet lake."

While the lake has changed over the decades, its enduring beauty continues to make it a treasured part of our community's history.

For generations, Silver Lake has drawn people to fish, build summer cottages, and enjoy its peaceful beauty. During the 1920s, a country club was established and remained a gathering place for nearly a century. While the lake is now lined with beautiful year-round homes, cottages once dotted the shoreline.

In the late 1800s, History of Kent County described the lake this way:

"Silver Lake, on sections nine and ten, lying just north of and touching the line of the Grand Rapids & Ionia State Road, as its name indicates, is a most beautiful sheet of water, containing about 300 acres."

Among those captivated by Silver Lake was Harry Adams, who grew up in Detroit but spent many summers at the lake. His daughter, Mary Ann Frey, later shared his recollections.





Cannon Township Community Center Architect's Design Statement

By: Robert Andrus

A successfully designed building balances the stated program or function needs with the desired design aesthetic within the cost budget. The program needs for the Cannon Township Community Center at the James and Shirley Balk Park were straightforward: a building to accommodate four voting precincts simultaneously that could also be used for larger Township or public meetings, and as well as a rental facility for a multitude of uses such as wedding receptions, showers, fundraising events, banquets, parties, etc. Set within a county park which is to be fully developed in the coming years, the building also houses toilet facilities accessible from the exterior for park users without interfering with activities inside the building. Election machine storage, table and

chair storage, a catering kitchen, and a management office round out the accessory function needs.

The desired design aesthetic was to create a building that would not be trendy, but look relevant 50 plus years from now for the next generations, and also

to "belong" in the park setting. The resultant design uses exposed wood columns, beams and roof decking in the main assembly room which has floor to ceiling glass looking out past a large gathering patio and over a detention pond and woods and features a functional natural gas fireplace.

The exterior continues the theme with a double-shed metal roof, wood-looking siding, stone walls as well as wood window trellis sunshades, and a hewn wood entry canopy. Punched clerestory windows on the high south facing assembly room wall will allow natural light to radiate within the space. Materials both inside and out were carefully selected not only for their design aesthetic, but also for longevity and minimal maintenance.

We believe the Cannon Township Community Center at the James and Shirley Balk Park will be a centerpiece of Cannon Township and serve as a model for other communities throughout the area.





Fire Department Update

James M. Morris
Fire Chief, EMT

Thank You for Making Our 2026 Pancake Breakfast a Success!

The Cannon Township Fire Department would like to extend a thank-you to everyone who joined us for this year's annual Pancake Breakfast! Another record-breaking year! More than 500 people attended and over \$5,000 was raised for two fantastic causes: Great Lakes Burn Camp and Riding for Ryan.

We also want to give a special shout-out to our community partners who brought equipment and personnel for families to interact with and explore, including the Kent County Sheriff's Office, Rockford Ambulance and Nelson's Towing.

A big thank-you also goes to our generous sponsors, Flying W Ranch, The Tilted Tulip, Fire Department Coffee and BIGGBY Coffee, for helping make the event possible.

And a huge thank-you to our local Scouts, who were a tremendous help throughout the morning and pitched in wherever they were needed.

New Fire Truck Update

Progress on our new fire truck purchase remains right on track as we move smoothly through the specification and manufacturing stages. We have been working closely with the manufacturer to ensure every feature from cab layout and hose storage to pump specs and emergency lighting meets the exact operational needs of our department and community. Pictured is the assembly of the cab and chassis, which were built at Spartan Motors in Charlotte, Michigan. From here it will go to Toyne in Breda, Iowa where the pump and body will be installed. The building phase is progressing as scheduled; we are officially slated to take delivery of the new truck in the fall of 2027.

We are welcoming three new hires to your Cannon Township Fire Department, KC Zenner, Blake Cell, Chirs Kuriata. They will be attending the Fire Academy this fall, which will be completed in May of 2027.



Cannon Township Overlay Districts

Edmund Lockhart
Zoning Administrator Planner

One of the tools in a zoning ordinance is the ability to create overlay districts. These overlay districts are a secondary zoning requirement set over a specific area. The properties within an overlay are required to abide by the base zoning requirements, as well as any specific requirements within the overlay.

Here in Cannon, we currently have six overlay districts: The Unique Recreation Resource Area Overlay District, Bear Creek Watershed Overlay District, Cannonsburg Historic Area Overlay District, and the Access Management Overlay District.

The Unique Recreation Resource Area Overlay addresses areas that are designated for recreation activities and encompasses Cannonsburg State Game Area, Cannonsburg Ski Area, Pando Ski Area, Camp Roger, Townsend Park, Pickerel Lake County Park, and Luton Park.

The Bear Creek Watershed Overlay and Rogue River Overlay address protections for the creek and river, and sets specific setbacks and brush removal areas. Bear Creek's includes all lands within 100 ft of the creek. The Rogue River Overlay includes all lands within 200 ft. of the river.

Cannonsburg Historic Overlay, addresses land uses within Cannonsburg and all requirements for review. The area that falls under this is listed in the Zoning Ordinance in section 450-20.02.

The Access Management Overlay addresses access to M-44 and Cannonsburg Road, and all land within 200 ft of the center line of each. The overlay addresses specific driveway spacing, access points, and their design.



DATE	EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
10/26/2026	Township Board Meeting - Can- celled		Cannon Township Center
10/24/26 - 11/01/26	9 Days Early Voting - General Election	8:30am - 4:30pm	Cannon Township Center
10/31/2026	Office Open for Absentee Ballots	8:30am - 4:30pm	Cannon Township Center
10/31/2026	Sewer Bills Due		Cannon Township Center
10/31/2026	Halloween Treats	6:00pm - 8:00pm	Fire Department
11/02/2026	Last Day to Pick Up Absentee Ballots	4:00pm Deadline	Cannon Township Center
11/03/2026	General Election	7:00am - 8:00pm	Voting at your precinct loca- tion
11/09/2026	Township Board Meeting	7:00pm	Cannon Township Center
11/10/2026	Planning Commission Meeting	6:00pm	Cannon Township Center
11/11/2026	Office Closed - Veteran's Day		Cannon Township Center
11/16/2026	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting	6:00pm	Cannon Township Center
11/23/2026	Township Board Meeting	7:00pm	Cannon Township Center
11/25/26 - 11/27/26	Office Closed - Thanksgiving Holiday		Cannon Township Center
12/01/2026	Winter Property Tax Bills Mailed		
12/08/2026	Planning Commission Meeting	6:00pm	Cannon Township Center
12/14/2026	Township Board Meeting	7:00pm	Cannon Township Center
12/23/26 - 12/25/26	Office Closed - Christmas Holiday		Cannon Township Center
12/28/2026	NO Township Board Meeting		
12/31/26 - 01/01/27	Office Closed - New Year's Hol- iday		Cannon Township Center
01/11/2027	Township Board Meeting	7:00pm	Cannon Township Center
01/12/2027	Planning Commission Meeting	6:00pm	Cannon Township Center
01/18/2027	Office Closed - Martin Luther King Jr Day		Cannon Township Center
01/18/2027	Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting	6:00pm	Cannon Township Center
01/25/2027	Township Board Meeting	7:00pm	Cannon Township Center
01/31/2027	Sewer Bills Due		Cannon Township Center

PHOTO | PREIN & NEWHOF | AERIAL SHOT
ABOVE THE NEW CANNON COMMUNITY
CENTER AT BALK FAMILY PARK