



Williamstown Township News

*A publication of the Williamstown Township Board
Serving Williamstown Township residents in the
Williamston, Okemos, Haslett and Perry School Districts
December 2008*

*Williamstown Township, 4990 North Zimmer Road, Williamston MI 48895
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From the desk of Supervisor Mickey Martin

Weekly email - Get the latest Township information in your e-mail every week by signing up on our website. I send a weekly email notifying everyone on the list of upcoming meetings, events and information regarding Township issues. It is a great way to keep up and be on top of meetings and reminders of ongoing services such as recycling. I hope you take advantage of this service. Go to the Township Website and follow the instructions to sign up. www.williamstowntownship.com

911 Service – If you have an emergency please dial 911. When you reach 911 a recording will answer stating your call will be answered in the order it was received. **Please do not hang up.** At the same time you are hearing the recording your call is routed through the computer gathering all of your information and your location while a doorbell chime alerts a responder that there is a 911 call waiting. Someone on staff then ends the call they are on or the Supervisor can sign in and take the call. Even though it is a stressful time to hear a recording please do not hang up as your call will be answered within seconds. Please remember to have street numbers visible at the roadside to help emergency vehicles find you.

Budget – By the time you receive this newsletter I will have submitted to the Township Board the first draft of our 2009-2010 budget. All committees: Historical, Parks and Recreation, Cemetery and departments will be reviewing their goals and what funds they will need in terms of funds to complete them. It will be a more difficult time again this year due to the anticipation of revenue cuts from the State of Michigan, lowering of State Equalized Values of properties, slower development, fewer building projects and higher costs for services and goods. Each committee and department will need to find ways to deliver high quality service to our residents with fewer dollars in some areas. Please contact me with any input or suggestions you may have regarding the budget. The budget will be discussed at each upcoming Board meeting until its adoption in March of 2009.

Assessment Information for 2009

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) mandated from the state this year is 4.4%. Following the guidelines of **Proposal A passed in 1994** Taxable Values on properties will increase by 4.4% for taxing purposes next year. **Taxable Value** is the basis for your property taxes. This will be calculated using the inflation rate of 1.044 for the 2008 capped value. Properties that have been uncapped as a result of a sale may see a higher increase in taxable value as well as properties for which there is new construction. The **assessed value**, however, is **not** the value that is multiplied by the millage rate to establish taxes. Assessed value in many cases will decrease due to the decline in the residential home sales **but taxable values may increase 4.4% if it is still lower than the assessed value.** Your change notice will be sent out in February 2008. Please review your change notice when you receive it and if you have questions or concerns please contact me at the Township office. Remember, it is taxable value that is used to compute tax bills.

Homestead Exemption is also indicated on the change notice. You should check your notice at the center bottom for the number that can range from 0 to 100%. To receive 100% property exemption you must own and occupy your residence. All homeowners for newly constructed homes must file an exemption form with their local government and occupy the home by May 1st to receive the exemption. The forms are available at the Township office.

If you believe your information is incorrect, please contact the office immediately.

Notes from Treasurer Janet Eyster

Winter Property Tax Due Date

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Winter property taxes are due every year on February 14. Since that day falls on a Saturday this year, and Monday the 16 is Presidents' Day, the due date will be extended until **Tuesday, February 17**. The township hall will be open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Tuesday, February 17, with no business other than property tax payments conducted from 9:00 to 10:00 and 4:00 to 5:00. Regular office hours are 10:00 to 4:00 on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and 1:00 to 7:00 on Wednesday. The office is closed on Mondays.

For taxpayers wishing to make payments during 2008, the township will be open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Tuesday, December 30.

Tax payments need to actually arrive in the office in order to be processed – **postmarks cannot be accepted as a payment date**. Tax payments can also be left in the bronze drop slot beneath the bulletin board by the front entry of the township hall, only if payment is made by check, and the stub from the bottom of the tax bill is included with the check. Residents should not leave cash in the drop slot. **All taxpayers who pay by mail or in the drop slot will receive an official property tax receipt by return mail, ONLY if they have requested one by checking the box on their tax stub.**

Taxes that are not paid by February 17 will be charged a 3% penalty. Late payments, with the added 3% penalty, CAN ONLY be accepted at the township until 5:00 PM on Saturday, February 28. We will be open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM that day. Any summer or winter real property taxes (as opposed to personal property taxes) that are still unpaid on March 1, 2009 must be turned over to the Ingham County Treasurer for collection, which involves additional fees for the taxpayer.

REMINDER: Anyone eligible for a Poverty Exemption must have their application in before 4:00 PM on December 5.

News from Clerk Ernie Gaffner

Thank you for placing your confidence in me to be the new township clerk. Thanks to Howard Dahlstrom for his openness and availability to assist me in the transfer of this office. The new deputy clerk is Shirley Mitchell, known by many for her work in the township on past elections. Both Shirley and I will do our best to meet the expectations of the clerk's office. After a few weeks of getting to know the office and its' intricacies, we will post the hours of our availability.

Township Clerk Howard Dahlstrom did an exceptional job of assisting Township residents in their efforts to vote on November 4th. The polls were extremely busy in the morning and the additional polling booths, obtained by Howard, reduced the wait time for voters. More than 25% of registered voters in the Township cast an absentee ballot. Overall, there was an 81.9% turnout for the election this year.

Recycling

2nd Saturday of the Month
9 am – 3 pm
Township Hall

Please remember that there are **no early or late drop-offs** and all material must be put in its appropriate bin. If items are not sorted properly, ALL materials end up in the landfill and the Township is charged double for the recycle container rental. For a list of accepted materials, visit our website: www.williamstowntownship.com

Burning

A Master Burning Permit is required before burning within the Township and is available at the Township office – activation is required **each time** you burn. Leaf burning is **only** allowed in the RE, AG-SF, and AG-C zones. For our complete burn ordinance and regulations, visit our website: www.williamstowntownship.com

Historical Committee

In lieu of the regularly scheduled October meeting, a special program was held for township residents interested in researching the history of their old house. Invitations were sent to all those who own a house built prior to 1900.

The speaker, David Votta, archivist at the Capital Area District Library, using a very helpful handout talked about how to research the history of an old house.

It was decided that a follow-up meeting would be held in the spring to discuss restoration of old houses, problems encountered, solutions found and resources available for help. This will be followed by a tour of one or two restored homes.

Work continues on the restoration of the Branch School. If you are interested in participating, please contact the Township.

Planning Commission

Elected to serve another term as officers are Mike Fielek as Chair, Rex LaMore as Vice Chair and Gerald Eidt as Secretary. Gerald Eidt, Gerhart Schultink and Rod Imhoff were reappointed to serve until 2011.

The Planning Commission has started the review process of the Zoning Ordinance and will be holding workshop meetings throughout the year to continue the process.

A brief synopsis of recommendations made to the board include:

- Special Use Permit and Site Plan Approval for Burgdorf Winery with conditions
- Denial of a Site Plan regarding the Capital City Rifle Club
- Pond approval for Joey's Pet Outfitters with conditions
- Revisions to the zoning ordinance to allow on-site wind energy systems as an accessory use

Other items currently being explored and/or discussed include:

- possible development of a Trails and Greenways Master Plan
- the Grand River Corridor
- Changes to the Wetland Ordinance.
- Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance regarding Wetland Buffer.

Please take a moment and visit the Township website to participate in a Survey regarding the Trails and Greenways.

The Planning Commission meets on a regular basis on the third Tuesday of the Month. Workshops are held on the fourth Tuesday as needed. Agendas can be found on line at the website: www.williamstowntownship.com

Summit Cemetery Columbarium

Construction of the Summit Cemetery columbarium has been completed. The site includes three separate walls surrounded by a brick paved area and landscaping with benches for seating. Located on the crest of the hill at Summit the site commands an excellent view of the surrounding area. The intent was to develop the area in a way to make it a peaceful and serene setting for remembering our deceased loved ones.

The existing veterans memorial has been kept at its' original location and is included in the columbarium complex. It has been highlighted with a new and taller flagpole. The only additional add-on that has been proposed is electrical service to light the flagpole and to provide low voltage lighting to accent the landscaping and surrounding area.

Initially only the center wall will contain niches (72) with the other two walls slated for future expansion. Each niche will accommodate two standard urns with cremated remains. Niches are now available for sale. The cost of a niche for township and city residents is \$1000 and the cost for non-residents is \$1800. When remains of the deceased are committed to the niche a bronze urn with nameplate is available and the granite faceplate can be engraved with the person's name and birth/death dates. The cost for these additional services is \$159.00.

For more information or purchase of niches contact the township office. The office also has a display which includes a niche, an urn and examples of engraved faceplates.

As a separate issue the cemetery committee is soliciting input for ideas to enhance the appearance of the two columbarium walls that are slated for future expansion but which will not contain niches for some years to come. At the present time the openings of these two walls are closed with covers made of stucco board and painted with a neutral color. The openings measure about 6.5 ft. by 3.5 ft. We are looking for ideas such as murals or symbols appropriate for the setting that can be displayed on the panels. Ideally any improvement should be of minimal cost. Anyone with ideas or talent to contribute can contact the writer or the township office.

Greg Lammers, Cemetery Committee

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 2008	January 2009	February 2009
2— Township Board Meeting 7:00 PM	1—Closed— Happy New Year!	3— Township Board Meeting 7:00 PM
9— Board of Review 6:00 PM		11 — Parks & Recreation Meeting 7:00 PM
10— Parks & Recreation Meeting 7:00 PM	10— Recycling 9AM-3PM	14—Recycling 9AM-3PM
13— Recycling 9AM-3PM	13— Township Board Meeting 7:00 PM	18—Historical Committee Meeting 7:00 PM
16—Township Board Mtg. (tent) 5:30 PM	14—Parks & Recreation Meeting 7:00 PM	17— Property Tax payments due
16—Planning Commission Meeting 7:30 PM	20—Township Board Mtg. (tent) 5:30 PM	17— Township Board Mtg. (tent) 5:30 PM
17—Historical Committee Meeting 7:00 PM	20—Planning Commission Meeting 7:30 PM	17— Planning Commission Mtg. 7:30 PM
24 & 25th-Closed	27—Planning Comm. Workshop (tent.) 7:30 PM	24—Planning Comm. Workshop (tent.) 7:30 PM
30—Extended hours for tax payments 9AM-5PM		
31—Closed		

WILLIAMSTOWN TOWNSHIP REPRESENTATIVES

TOWNSHIP BOARD (ELECTED)

Supervisor - Mickey Martin
 Clerk - Ernie Gaffner
 Treasurer - Janet Eyster
 Trustee - Martin Wright
 Trustee - Frans Wilbrink
 Trustee - Rick Williams
 Trustee - Robert Hayes

HIRED STAFF

Building Inspector - Mark Miller
 Supervisor Asst - Michelle Morse
 Caretaker— Mac Donnelly
 Advisor—Benjamin Moline
 Sexton/Maintenance- Mark Tabor
 Code enforcement - Mark Miller
 Webmaster: Wendell Proudfoot

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Deputy Clerk - Shirley Mitchell
 Deputy Treasurer- Lori Hurst

PLANNING COMMISSION

Michael Fielek- Chair
 Rex LaMore- Vice Chair
 Gerald Eidt- Secy
 Wanda Bloomquist- Planning Asst
 Ronald Cook
 Ger Schultink
 Rutgar Hoag
 Rod Imhoff
 Martin Wright, Twp. Board Rep.

BOARD OF REVIEW

Gerald Eidt
 Kurt Guter
 Edward Timm

BOARD OF APPEALS

Michael Fielek- Chair
 Dali Giese
 Dan Kraft
 Kurt Guter
 Mickey Martin, Supervisor

CONSTRUCTION BOARD OF APPEALS

Aage Jensen
 Stephan Patopsty
 Mark Stevens

COMMUNICATION COMMISSION

Marv Thomson, Chair
 Norma Johnston
 Ivonne Key
 Kurt Guter
 Nancy Williams
 Rick Williams, Twp. Board Rep

NIESA REPRESENTATIVES

Ronald Wiegandt, Alternate Twp. Rep.
 Frans Wilbrink, Twp. Board Rep.

CEMETERY COMMITTEE

Greg Lammers— Chair
 Andy Andersen- Member at Large
 Scott VanAllsburg—Williamston City Rep.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Jerry Fulcher - Chair
 Betty Challis
 Bill Bailey
 Jan Morris
 Tom Trepky

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

John McLaughlin- Chair
 Richard Kill
 Terry Monahan
 Mickey Martin, Twp. Board Rep.

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Tom Johnson— Chair
 Rutgar Hoag
 Steve Eyke
 Gloria VanDusen
 Ann Campbell
 Scott Crilly
 Frans Wilbrink, Twp. Board Rep.

COMPENSATION COMMISSION

Wilbur McNinch- Chair
 Dave Robinson- Secy
 Bob Lambardini
 Andy Sheets
 Sally Martin Stewart

ALSO REPRESENTING OUR TOWNSHIP:

United States Senator	Carl Levin (D)	web: levin.senate.gov	377-1508
United States Senator	Debbie Stabenow (D)	web: stabenow.senate.gov	203-1760
United States Representative (Dist 8)	Mike Rogers (R)	web: www.mikerogers.house.gov	702-8000
Michigan State Senator (Dist 23)	Gretchen Whitmer(D)	web: sengwhitmer@senate.michigan.gov	373-5397
Michigan State Rep. (Dist 67)	Barb Byrum (D)	e-mail: barbbyrum@house.mi.gov	373-0587
Michigan State Rep. (Dist 69)	Mark Meadows (D)	e-mail: markmeadows@house.mi.gov	373-1786
Ingham County Comm. (Dist 13)	Randy Schafer (R)	web: www.ingham.org	655-1325