

# Vergennes Township

A Place Where People Like to Live  
www.vergennestwp.org



10381 Bailey Dr., P.O. Box 208, Lowell, MI 49331

897-5671

Hours: M, W, – 9–3, Th – 9–Noon



## SUMMER 2016

**SUPERVISOR:**  
**TREASURER:**  
**CLERK:**  
**TRUSTEES:**

**TIM WITTENBACH**  
**JEAN HOFFMAN**  
**MARI STONE**  
**RICK GILLET**  
**DUANE RASCH**

*Township Board Meetings are held the third Monday of every month at 7:00 P.M. in the Township Hall.  
Planning Commission Meetings are held quarterly at 7:00 P.M. in the Township Hall.*

## CLERK'S CORNER

*by Mari Stone, Vergennes Township Clerk*

The Presidential Primary in March is behind us, but I continue to be in high election mode. In case you haven't heard, we have two more elections coming up in 2016. State and local elections will be the focus in August. The **August 2 Primary Election** will decide which partisan candidates will appear on the November General ballot. In Vergennes, we will see several local and state candidates of the same party running for the right to appear on the November ballot against the opposing party candidate. This election always requires voters to choose a party to vote in, and does not allow for "splitting your ticket". The ballot will have two columns to choose between, as opposed to the Presidential Primary which had the two parties on different ballots.

The **November 8 General Election** may bring out a record turnout of voters. Additionally, a new law in the State of Michigan has eliminated straight party voting effective with the November 8, 2016 Election. This means when voting your November ballot, you will need to work through the entire ballot and select candidate(s) in each position you would like to vote for, instead of having the option to fill in one oval that gives a vote to all candidates of the corresponding party. This could potentially create long lines at the precincts. Some experts estimate a 50% increase in time spent in line at the polls. I am doing all I can to encourage Absentee Voting, as well as strategizing the physical process in the precincts. I think it's safe to say that voters who use Precinct 1 at the township hall know why!

### So, here is my pitch

Pursuant to Election Law, if you meet one of these requirements, you may vote 'absentee':

- Age 60 years old or older
- Unable to vote without assistance at the polls (any handicap under ADA)
- Expecting to be out of town on Election Day
- In Jail awaiting arraignment or trial
- Unable to attend the polls due to religious reasons
- Appointed to work as an election inspector in a precinct outside of your precinct of residence

There is a wealth of information available on the **Michigan Voter Information Center** at <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/MVIC/>. You can verify your registration, check where your precinct is located, and actually preview your ballot. You can also click on Absentee Voting and print an application to send to our office. Once we receive your completed application, including a checked box indicating the reason you qualify, we will mail you a ballot. No phone calls, no time crunch, no lines, no hassle. Also, if you are (or will be turning) 60 on or before November 8, 2016 you qualify to be on our.....

### Permanent Absentee Voter List.

When on this list, you will automatically receive an absent voter **APPLICATION** for every election. If you choose to return that application, we will mail you a ballot. Of course you can always choose to vote in person by simply not returning the application. If this

*Continued on next page!*

would appeal to you, **please complete, detach, and return the request slip on the back of the newsletter so that we can add you to the Permanent Absent Voter List. If you have a tax payment to make you may include the request in the same yellow envelope. (Thank you Jean Hoffman!) Please make a separate request slip for each voter.** If you have any questions, please contact the Township Office at (616) 897-5671, or email me at [clerk@vergenestwp.org](mailto:clerk@vergenestwp.org).

#### **Attention: College Students and Mail in Voter Registrations**

Michigan Election Law requires first time registered voters in the state of Michigan that register by mail to vote in person their first time. Any registration transaction not conducted by the local Clerk, County Clerk, SOS Branch employee, or Public Assistance Agency employee or any of their authorized staff is considered a by-mail registration.

Under the above definition, the registration drives held at schools and universities result in a Must Vote In Person (MVIP) status. The State Qualified Voter File (QVF) is programmed to keep track of this status when "Mail Registration" is selected as Registration Location at the time of entry. If a voter with this status requests an absentee ballot, they must do so in person in order to satisfy the MVIP status. Our office has heard from some disappointed families in past elections, with students far off and not returning home before the end of the semester. The remedy is to stop by the township office, or any Secretary of State branch office, have the voter show ID, and re-sign a registration form before heading off to school. You can always call our office and we will be happy to check this voter status for you. Another solution would be to encourage them to vote in person at the August Primary. They can accomplish two things at once – experience voting for the first time, and fulfill this requirement!

## **FROM THE KENT COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION BOARD**

The 2016 PDR Application Cycle deadline is coming up on July 31st 2016.

We encourage landowners, townships, villages and cities to tell farmers, neighbors and community members about our land preservation program. Farmers benefit through the permanent protection of their farmland through direct compensation for selling their development rights. In fact, ensuring their land will continue in agriculture for future generations benefits the entire community by maintaining the agricultural economy and rural character of Kent County's farming communities.

Please go to our website at <https://www.accesskent.com/Departments/BOC/PDR/> to find out more about our program and the link to this year's application (found along the left-hand side of our main page).

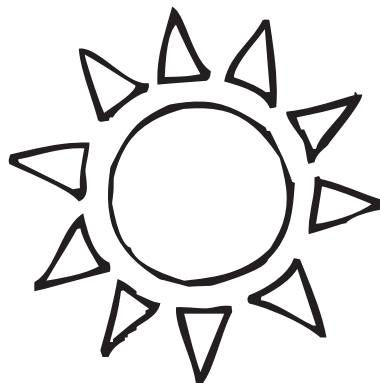
Thank you for your interest, and please contact us with any questions.

**Kent/MSU Extension**

**Attn: Stacy Byers**

**775 Ball Ave NE**

**Grand Rapids, MI 49503 Questions call (517) 244-7197 or e-mail: [emailchristians@gmail.com](mailto:emailchristians@gmail.com)**



## SUMMER TAXES – 2016

Taxes are due on September 14th. Please mail early, as we do not accept postmarks as the due date. We cannot be responsible for any delays with the postal service. Please use the yellow return envelope provided for you in the tax statement.

**If you are having difficulty in making a one-time tax payment**, please feel free to make **ANY** partial payments from July 1st through September 14th or longer if need be. You will then only have interest on the total of the unpaid taxes. You have until February 28th before any portion of the unpaid bill will be turned over delinquent to the county.

**If you would like a paid receipt, include both parts of your tax bill with a self-addressed envelope. We will return the top portion of the bill with a dated paid -stamp on it.** Otherwise, just include the lower part of your bill with your check and your cancelled check is your receipt.

**Credit card payments ARE NOT accepted at Township office.**

**Note for ONLINE BILL PAYMENTS:** Payments made through your bank **do not** arrive at the township on the date you pay them. Please allow enough time for payments to be mailed from your bank to the township. **Payments must be received at the township on or before the due date to avoid interest and penalties.**

Make checks payable to: **Vergennes Township**. Any payment received after the due date that does not have

interest added will be applied as a partial payment. State law prohibits the Township from waiving these charges.

Office hours are Monday and Wednesday - from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Thursday – from 9a.m- noon. For your convenience, there is a mail slot in the door for after-hour payments. Be sure to place a check or money order only through the slot—please no cash.

**It is your responsibility to make sure your taxes are paid.** Pay early to avoid any interest being added to your tax bill. You can check periodically on the Vergennes Township website to see if your taxes have been posted. The web site is usually updated daily. If you click on tax and assessing information, you will be redirected to another web site. You can search by name, address or parcel number. [www.vergennestwp.org](http://www.vergennestwp.org).

Please check your tax statement for accuracy. If you have a mortgage company, please look under your name for the mortgage company to which the tax bill was sent. If the mortgage company is wrong, please contact me at the Township so that I can correct this.

Under "Tax Detail" on your tax statement, you will find your **Principle Residence Exemption**. Your **P.R.E.** will show you how much your tax bill has been reduced. If you feel you qualify for a P.R.E., please contact our assessor.

Have a wonderful and safe summer.  
Jean Hoffman - Treasurer

## SUMMER TAX DEFERMENTS

To Qualify:

\*Your HOUSEHOLD INCOME must not exceed \$40,000 and must be either:

- Senior citizen (62 years or older)
- Paraplegic, quadriplegic
- Eligible service person, eligible veteran, eligible widow or widower
- Blind person
- Totally and permanently disabled

\*Agriculture

The forms are available in the office from Treasurer Jean Hoffman from July 1<sup>st</sup> through September 14<sup>th</sup>. The deferment period covers one year only, so you must re-apply each tax year.

## HALL ADDITION UPDATE

Earlier this year, the Township Board invited four design/build firms to participate in an RFP for the Schematic Design and Budget for a hall addition project. The firms were asked to propose conceptual solutions and cost options, and to help provide the scope, budget and schedule for the project. The Board has determined that an addition to the north on the upper level would be the preferred location, but we were open to other suggestions.

Our needs include adequate work area for existing staff positions, the provision of file and supply storage, a reception area, a dedicated break area with kitchenette,

a large conference room (potentially use the current upper level meeting room) and a dedicated work/copy area. All of this would of course accomplish additional needs such as updating the wiring, electrical and mechanical systems that have been utilized over the years in the century old building.

The field has been narrowed down to two proposals. The board will be working with these firms over the summer to identify the best construction schedule and continue to work on details of the project. At this time, it is likely we will not break ground until at least late fall, or perhaps spring of 2017.

## EXTENTION OF LARA TRAIL TO M-21

The paved non-motorized trail that runs from the Wittenbach Agriscience Center on Vergennes through the Lowell High School property and down to Cherry Creek Elementary in the City of Lowell is due to be expanded in the near future. The Lowell Area Recreation Authority (LARA) will be extending the Alden Nash portion that turns east onto Gee Drive to cross M-21, connecting the trail to the new Lowell Township park being built behind Walgreens. This exciting addition will more easily enable our Vergennes Township residents to access a safe route to shopping and recreational activities on foot or by bike.

In May, the Board approved spending \$10,000 to help support the \$200,000 project, as did the City of Lowell and Lowell Township. Residents in attendance supported the expenditure, observing the added safety benefits and opportunities to exercise around the community.

Also, Vergennes Township resident Tom Postema of Scenic View Landscaping has offered to keep the trail at the Cooper Woodlands Preserve cleaned up and useable for the public at no charge to the Township or LARA. He is active in the geo caching community and believes it is a perfect area for it. The mowed trail can be accessed from the LARA trail parking area east of Alden Nash along Foreman Dr. The Preserve is a 34 acre wooded lot with abundant wildlife viewing opportunities. It is owned by Lowell Area Schools, and is under the care of the Lowell Area Recreation Authority.

Anyone wishing to support the extension, or wanting more information on the activities of LARA, can contact Mari Stone at [clerk@vergennestwp.org](mailto:clerk@vergennestwp.org), Betsy Davidson, 616-293-3206, or visit the website at [www.lowellareatrailway.org](http://www.lowellareatrailway.org)

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### PERMANENT ABSENT VOTER LIST REQUEST

**Yes**, I am age 60 or older, or qualify under one of the other reasons that will always allow me to vote absentee, and would like to be placed on the **Permanent Absent Voter List**. By returning this form I will now receive an absentee ballot application for every election from this date forward.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

BIRTHDATE \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_