

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 2012

SUPERVISOR:
TREASURER:
CLERK:
TRUSTEES:

TIM WITTENBACH
JEAN HOFFMAN
MARI STONE
RICK GILLET
ALLAN BAIRD

*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

Hello Vergennes residents — I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying the summer. It seems that it's been around a while already, with the very early spring we had. Things have been revving up at the township offices over the last several months, and we are now in preparation for the August Primary and November General Elections. You can read more information about them in this newsletter.

Intersection Safety

This fall the Kent County Road Commission is planning to re-construct the intersection of Bailey Dr. and Parnell, right outside the township offices. The intent is to make the intersection a safer crossing, widening the area and creating better drainage. The work is scheduled to take place after the August Primary and before the November General Election. I will be grateful for the enhanced safety in November — our voter turnout is always high during a Presidential year, and the volume of traffic around this corner is amazing with so many vehicles in and out of the driveways, not to mention voters walking to and from cars. Please take care when approaching this intersection any day, but especially on election day!

Commercial Property at Lincoln Lake and Vergennes

I am writing this prior to the Public Hearing on July 9th for comments regarding a proposed gas station/convenience store at the corner of Lincoln Lake and Vergennes. J&H has requested permission to construct one of their family owned stations on the SE corner, comparing it to a similar operation near Rockford, and not as large as the one near the I96 exit on Alden Nash. They are proposing a small restaurant within the store as well.

Without knowing the outcome of the Public Hearing or Planning Commission decision, I can only tell you that the intersection has been zoned Commercial for around 10 years, and that I believe our zoning ordinance has very stringent Commercial District requirements. If you have concerns and would like to express them, the hearing is at 7pm at the township hall, and written comments for the record can be submitted to the clerk any time prior to that time. There is a mail slot in the office door for your convenience.



ELECTION INFORMATION



If you are not yet registered to vote in Vergennes Township, the last day to do so and still participate in the August 7th Primary Election is July 9th. If you visit the township office prior to that date we can assist you here, or you may go to any Secretary of State's office. The last day for the November

6th General Election is October 9th.

The state Qualified Voter File works in conjunction with your Michigan driver's license. Any change to your license will affect your voter registration, as you must be registered in the same municipality as your drivers' license address.

Qualifications to register to vote

- Citizen of the United States
- At least 18 years of age on or before Election Day
- Must be a Resident of Vergennes Township

If you are interested in an absentee ballot for these elections, just call the office (897-5671) or send me an e-mail clerk@vergennestwp.org and we will assist you. Please feel free to take advantage of this convenience if you are 60 years of age or older, or will be unable to attend the polls for any reason on Election Day. Walk-in Absentee Voting will also be available in the Township Office on Saturday, August 4 and Saturday Nov. 3, from 11 AM to 2 PM for anyone who needs to obtain a last minute absentee ballot. You may also vote in the office by emergency absentee ballot on the Monday before an election until 4 PM.

August Primary - The August ballot will be a partisan ballot and contains the names of many candidates

running under their respective party headings in order to narrow down the field. The ballot contains partisan columns that voters may not “cross-vote”. In other words, if you vote for a candidate in one party, you may not vote for candidates in the other party(s). This is called “spoiling a ballot”, and at the polls you can receive another should this happen. With absentee voters, we are not allowed to do that, so be careful to follow the instructions on the ballot if you are voting AV in the primary.

November General – The November ballot will be full, including the positions of President, US Senator, US Representative, State Senator, State Representative, County Commissioner, School Board Member, and Township Officials. In this election, you may mix your vote for any candidates regardless of political parties.

If you want to make sure you are registered to vote, you can go online to www.michigan.gov/vote, or contact us at the township offices.



GRATTAN TWILIGHT CANCER WALK



The tradition continues with the 4rd annual GRATTAN TWILIGHT CANCER WALK! Many people in our small community and surrounding areas have been affected by cancer of all types. We wish to raise funds and distribute 100% of the profits to GILDA'S CLUB OF LOWELL. Gilda's Club is a FREE cancer and grief support community for children, adults, families and friends.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 2, 2012
GRATTAN RACEWAY PARK
7201 LESSITER, GRATTAN TWP

Registration begins at 5:30 pm
Walk begins at 7:00 pm

A donation of \$10.00 includes the walk and a t-shirt. The event consists of a 2 mile walk around the track, silent auction and music. Hot dogs and ice cream treats will be available for a donation. Bring a lawn chair and enjoy the music from 6:00-9:00 pm. This is a fun event for the whole family.

Please visit the website at www.GrattanTLCWalk.com for more information about this cause and for registration forms.

SUMMER TIPS



12 Tips for Staying Cool This Summer

- Be aware of the heat. Pay attention to it and modify your activities appropriately.
- Pay attention to your hydration status, and be sure to drink plenty of fluids.
- Try to stay in relatively cool

areas, even when outside. Many public places such as libraries, shopping malls and movie theatres are air conditioned.

- Avoid hot enclosed places, such as cars. Never leave children unattended in a car parked in the sun.
- Use a fan, if available.

- Stay on the lowest floor of your building.
- Eat well-balanced, light and regular meals.
- Wear loose-fitting, lightweight and light-colored clothing.
- Cover windows that receive a significant amount of sun with drapes or shades to help

keep your house cool.

- Weather stripping and proper insulation will keep cool air inside your home.
- Cool beverages are good for cooling down the body, while alcoholic drinks can impair the body's ability to regulate its temperature.



SUMMER TAX 2012



SUMMER TAXES – 2012
Jean Hoffman-Treasurer

Taxes are due on September 14th. The township office is not open on Friday the 14th, so you may pay taxes through the 17th without interest. 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.

If you would like a paid receipt, please enclose the entire tax bill with a self-addressed envelope. We will return the top portion of the bill stamped "PAID".

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 hour 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.

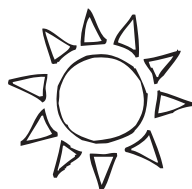
It is your responsibility to make sure your taxes are paid. Pay early to avoid any interest being added to your tax bill. You can check periodically on the Vergennes Township website to see if your taxes have been posted. The web page is usually updated every two weeks.

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. By State of Michigan standards, you must own and occupy your property prior to May 1st of a given year and it must be the only property for which you have filed. If you feel you qualify for a P.R.E., please contact our assessor.

Have a wonderful and safe summer.



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 1st through September 14th. The deferment period covers one year only, so you must re-apply each tax year.



HOW YOUR MILLAGE RATES ADD UP



SUMMER 2012

Lowell Area Voted Debt Retirement	3.50
Kent Intermediate Schools	4.6903
Grand Rapids Community College	1.7865
State Education Tax	6.00
Kent County Operating	4.2803
TOTAL SUMMER MILLAGE	20.2571

Non-Homestead	9.000
TOTAL NON-HOMESTEAD MILLAGE	29.2571

WINTER 2012-ESTIMATED

Lowell Area Voted Debt Retirement	3.50
Vergennes Township	.8672
Kent County(Jail & Senior)	1.1137
Kent County Library	.880
TOTAL WINTER MILLAGE	6.3609

Non-Homestead	9.000
TOTAL NON-HOMESTEAD MILLAGE	15.3609
Total Homestead for the full year	26.618
Total Non-Homestead for the full year	44.618

2012 SEV \$192,115,700

TAX \$171,089,014

COMMUNITY VISIONING PROJECT

The Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Lowell, Lowell Township and Vergennes Township, together with the Lowell Area School District are collaborating on a project that will create a document outlining a community vision for the greater Lowell community.

In the past, the City of Lowell, Lowell Township, Vergennes Township and Lowell Area Schools have had some very effective conversations and collaboration that have produced beneficial results such as:

- The High School project – 1990
- The Lowell Area Community Fund (enabled from a gift of Harold Englehardt) - 1997
- Lowell Area Recreational Authority - 2003
- Fire and Ambulance Building - 2005
- Fire and Emergency Services Authority - 2009

A steering committee has been formed that includes two members from the Lowell Area Chamber of Commerce, City of Lowell, Lowell Township, Vergennes Township, Lowell Area School District and two community members at large to examine how to continue to grow from the strengths of past projects. With the help of the Lowell Area Community Fund, this committee is seeking professional guidance from planning firms to enable the community as a whole to plan for and react to future opportunities to make the Lowell area an even better place to live. Some examples of the opportunities the committee has identified include:

- Business Development
- Trails - including hiking, biking and water trails
- Park and Recreation Development
- Transportation
- Public Facilities

In addition to the steering committee, an active group of leaders from various organizations are meeting monthly to discuss volunteer opportunities and specific and common needs/issues for their organizations. This group has been informally called the Lowell Community Partners.

It is anticipated that the consulting firm will provide facilitation, analysis, and other services to guide the community through appropriate steps toward creating a Community Vision and an Implementation Plan.

There will be many opportunities for community members to provide input and participate in this project. The consulting firm will facilitate and implement a number of methods designed to gain community input that will lead toward identifying key elements that will be included in a Community Vision for the Greater Lowell Community. The methods will include:

- Community Input Sessions (at least five public meetings)
- One-on-one interviews with identified community leaders (at least 25)
- Community Survey (on-line websites and e-blasts and local newspaper)

The goals of the project are many – they include: encouraging open communication and collaborative thinking within the community, keeping decision-makers informed, providing a guide to identify informed stakeholders, identifying and developing methods for measuring success, and defining how often and in what methods communication takes place.

It is expected that the project work will be complete by early next year. If you have comments or questions, please contact Clerk Mari Stone or Supervisor Tim Wittenbach for more information.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PROPERTY TAX

The formula is:

$$\text{TAXABLE VALUE} \times \text{MILLAGE RATE} = \text{TAX}$$

The taxable value of your property is determined by a formula and, in most cases, is limited by the rate of inflation. This number is calculated by the assessor and is reported to you on your assessment change notice which is mailed the end of February.

The millage rate is the total number of mills being levied divided by 1000. Millage rates are calculated in the spring for the summer collection and in the fall for the winter collection. Millage rates do vary from year to year due to a number of factors. Significant increases

in millage rates are the results of voter approval, while decreases are due to the expiration of a previously approved millage.

Here is an example: If your 2012 taxable value is \$61,911 and the 2012 millage rate is 26.618 mills, your 2012 total property tax bill can be estimated as follows:
\$61,911 X (26.618/1000) = \$1,647.90

Keep in mind that the method shown here will result in an estimate of your total tax for the entire year. The same method can be used to estimate your summer and winter bill separately. Just insert the summer millage rate to estimate your summer tax and insert the winter millage rate to estimate your winter tax.