

# 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 2015

**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*

Hello fellow Vergennes residents – I hope you are enjoying a wonderful season filled with all of your favorite summertime things to do. Here at the township hall we are busy with building permits and assessing field work – all summertime activities that are enhanced by the blue skies and sunshine we miss so much in the winter months. It's hard to be crabby in Michigan during the summer!

### **New Developments**

You may have noticed a SOLD sign on the property on the East side of Alden Nash between Vergennes and Forman. Of the original 120 acres, 98 have been rezoned from R-1 to R-2, which is consistent with the master plan. It has been proposed to be a single family development, with a minimum lot size of 17,000 square feet with 100 foot road frontage. According to the developer, the 112 home sites will likely be done in 3 or 4 phases, taking a total of 6 to 8 years to build out. There will be two boulevard entrances, one of which will be aligned with the Alden Nash West entrance that is on the other side of the street.

The Planning Commission has held a Public Hearing on the proposal, and will hold another soon regarding the Private Road system. In their discussion they noted that green-spaces and walking corridors are highly valued in our community, and that the Master Plan calls for future housing developments to incorporate and integrate these features. It was emphasized that the Master Plan was created with much community input, and the Planning Commission and Board will work to satisfy the desires of the residents. The most recent proposed layout includes a walking path and connections to the adjacent Cooper Woodland Preserve and Lowell Area Trailway.

You may recall that the land was originally owned by Peter Wege, and his LLC, Economicology. While he was alive, Mr. Wege had offered 20 of the acres to the community of Lowell for recreational purposes, and challenged us to develop

a plan for sustainable recreational facilities. Because of many different circumstances, this never came to fruition. However, when the original 120 acre parcel was sold, 20 acres was split off and now belongs to the Lowell Little League. Although they have not proposed any plans as yet, it is in their hands to develop the property into a facility they can be proud of.

### **2016 Elections**

Next year is a Presidential Election year, and I am already preparing for the elections we will be holding in 2016. There will be a Presidential Primary on March 8th, a Regular Primary in August and the General Election on November 8th. I am taking applications for poll workers, and if you are interested in performing this service for your community please let me know. I will be glad to send you an application and more information. It's a long day, 15 hours, but we do manage to have fun while getting the job done. And there is a check at the end of the night to go with the well deserved rest when you go home.

### **Assessing Reminder**

And finally, our Assessing Department has asked me to let our property owners know that they are working on Sections 1 to 11 (northern 2 miles of the township) this summer as part of our five year assessing update cycle. Owners in these sections have received a Property Review Questionnaire in the mail. The next steps involve reviewing drawings and updating photos. You may receive a visit from someone in our Assessing Department as they work to maintain accurate and complete records. They will have ID to show. Please feel free to call the office if you have any questions or concerns.

Have a wonderful summer, and I hope you will enjoy whatever it is you like to do here in beautiful Vergennes Township.

Mari Stone - Vergennes Township Clerk

## WEBSITE UPGRADE

The Vergennes Township Website has been upgraded in several areas over the last few months. We've made great progress toward providing open and accessible records for our residents about the information we are required to maintain. If you don't use the site yet, you might want to check out [HYPERLINK "http://www.vergennestwp.org"](http://www.vergennestwp.org) [www.vergennestwp.org](http://www.vergennestwp.org) to see what kind of information you have at your fingertips about your local government and its services. Besides the many links to local, county and state web sites, there is now enhanced information about taxes and assessing, and a new searchable tool for township minutes going back to 1997.

AccessMyGov.com is a hosting service for local units, and most municipalities in Kent County use the site. We have contracted to use them for access to all of our assessing and tax records. Some units have decided to charge a small fee for access in order to cover the hosting cost. Our Board decided that it was important for our residents to access their information at no charge. Need to know what date your mortgage company paid your tax bill out of your escrow account? Search your address or parcel number and your entire record comes up. Want to make sure your property is being assessed accurately? Enter your address at the top, then when the page comes up, click on your address and see

a building summary, assessed and taxable values, recorded legal description, sale history, and much more.

The other great feature we have added is Minutes-on-Demand, hosted by Ameriscan Imaging Services. Besides searchable Board, Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals minutes, there is a search function for our Zoning and Administrative Ordinances. We are not using the site for agendas yet, but plan to add them soon. Also on this page is an event calendar with all scheduled meetings for the year. You can send a question from this page, and even sign up for notices every time there is an update.

Last, at the bottom of the links on the left side of our Home Page, is a "master link" to other web resources in our community. Included here are recreational entities, surrounding municipalities, Kent District Library, and Access Kent, which is a most comprehensive site for all things Kent County. We hope you find these community links useful.

There are still a few items we plan to upgrade in the near future, but I think you will like these services available to you 24/7! If you think of others you'd like to see added, send me a note.

## HOW YOUR 2014 MILLAGE RATES ADDED UP

### SUMMER 2014

Lowell Area Voted Debt Retirement	3.50
LAS Bldg/Site	.50
Kent Intermediate School	4.6903
Grand Rapids Community College	1.7865
State Education Tax	6.00
Kent County Operating	4.2803
<b>TOTAL SUMMER MILLAGE</b>	<b>20.7571</b>
Non-Homestead	9.000
<b>TOTAL NON-HOMESTEAD MILLAGE</b>	<b>29.7571</b>

### WINTER 2014

Lowell Area Voted Debt Retirement	3.50
LAS Bldg/Site	.50
Vergennes Township	.8672
Kent County Jail	.7893
Kent County Seniors	.5000
Kent County Veterans	.0500
Kent County Library	.880
<b>TOTAL WINTER MILLAGE</b>	<b>7.0865</b>
Non-Homestead	9.000
<b>TOTAL NON-HOMESTEAD MILLAGE</b>	<b>16.865</b>

<b>Total Homestead for the full year</b>	<b>27.8436</b>
<b>Total Non-Homestead for the full year</b>	<b>45.8436</b>

## SUMMER TAXES – 2015

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 29th 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"

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.

## NOTARY SERVICES

The Township offers free Notary services to our residents. Jean Hoffman, Treasurer, and Janine Mork, Deputy Treasurer, are both Notaries. If you are wondering what notarization actually does, the Notary is simply certifying that the signature on the document is that of the identified person.

That is why you must show ID to the Notary, and the Notary must witness the signature. Should you need a document notarized, please call the township during office hours to make arrangements.

## BASIC SEPTIC MAINTENANCE SERVICES

*Follow this simple list of do's and don'ts to extend the life of your septic system and avoid costly problems.*

### DO:

- Have your septic tank inspected and pumped regularly. The Kent County Health Department recommends a frequency of 2-3 years depending on the size of your household, frequency of entertaining, and regular use of a garbage disposal. (Assume every 2-3 years for a typical family of four.) Pumping your septic tank is the single most important thing you can do to protect your system. If the buildup of solids in the tank gets too high and solids are pushed into the drainfield, this could clog and strain the system to the point where a new drainfield is necessary.
- Keep a detailed record of repairs, cleanings, inspections, and maintenance. Pass these on to the next homeowner.
- Learn the location of your septic system and drainfield. Keep a sketch handy for service visits. If your system has a flow diverter valve, learn its location and turn it once a year. Flow diverters can add many years to the life of your system.
- Conserve water to reduce the amount of wastewater that must be treated and filtered by your system. Doing laundry over several days puts less stress on your system.
- Repair any leaking faucets or toilets. To detect toilet leaks, add several drops of food dye to the toilet tank and see if the dye bleeds into the bowl.
- Divert down spouts and other surface water, such as from driveways and hillsides, away from your tank and drainfield. Excessive water burdens the drainfield.
- Keep your septic tank access lids accessible for inspections and cleaning.
- Install risers (access extensions between the tank access lid and ground level), if necessary.
- Take leftover hazardous household chemicals to your approved hazardous waste collection center for disposal. Use bleach, disinfectants and drain and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly.
- Grow grass above the drainfield to provide oxygen. Oxygenated bacteria (aerobic) accelerates waste conversion to liquid.
- To accelerate the growth of desirable aerobic bacteria we strongly recommend using Bio-Clean, a proven system additive that adds enzymes and bacteria that convert scum and waste to liquid. See our Products page for more information.

### DON'T:

- Never flush paper towels, newspaper, wrapping paper, rags, sanitary napkins, disposable diapers or sticks into the system.
- Never allow large, irregular, intermittent or constant volumes of clear water into the system as with a leaking toilet or faucet.
- Never allow discharge from water softeners to enter the system. Heavy salt content can harm essential bacteria and corrode the concrete tank.
- Don't allow anyone to drive or park over any part of the system. The area over the drainfield should be left undisturbed with only a mowed grass cover.
- Avoid planting anything over the drainfield except grass. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs may clog and damage your drain lines.
- Don't use a garbage disposal, or at least limit its usage. Disposals increase the solids burden to your tank by 50%, so more frequent cleaning is suggested.
- Don't use your toilet or drains as a trash can by dumping non-degradables down them. Also, don't poison your septic system and the groundwater by pouring harmful chemicals down the drain. Non-degradables bulk up your tank. Poisons can kill the beneficial bacteria that treat your wastewater.
- Non-degradables and poisons include: coffee grounds, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, cigarette butts, fats, grease or oil, paints, thinners, photographic solutions, antibiotics, dental floss, kitty litter, tampons, condoms, paper towels, varnishes, waste oils and pesticides, gasoline, oil, paint, paint thinner, pesticides, antifreeze, etc
- Don't use caustic drain openers for a clogged drain. Use boiling water or a snake to open clogs.
- Don't use excessive amounts of commercial bathroom cleaners. Use a mild detergent or baking soda.
- Don't make unauthorized repairs or enter a septic tank-- toxic gases from the tank can kill. If your system develops problems, get advice from your county health department or contact a local provider.
- Do not dispose of items that will destroy the natural digestion process of your septic system or overuse the drainfield with excessive water. If you adhere to these few simple rules, your septic system will prove to be a safe and economical onsite method for disposing of your home's wastewater.