

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

WINTER 2017

SUPERVISOR: TIM WITTENBACH
TREASURER: JEAN HOFFMAN
CLERK: HEATHER HOFFMAN
TRUSTEES: RICK GILLETT
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 Heather Hoffman, Vergennes Township Clerk

Happy Holidays! I can't believe winter is just around the corner and before we know it, county snow plows will once again be part of our daily commute. A lot has happened in our community since the summer 2017 newsletter. Many great ideas and comments were shared at the community open house, and many thanks have been heard from residents after learning of the retirement and resignation of the longest-serving township board member.

For me, 2017 has been an exciting year full of learning, growing, meeting new people and listening to residents who are passionate about this community. I look forward to even greater things and greater opportunities in 2018. I truly believe that open communication is the key to understanding each other. If you have any questions or comments about what is happening in the township, don't hesitate to give me a call. I believe that if we listen to each other with empathy and treat each other with kindness, great things will happen.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2018!
- Heather

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE – PROPOSED NEW TOWNSHIP HALL FACILITY

On November 20th, the Township Board held an open house for township residents to see preliminary concept plans of a new township hall that is proposed to be built on township-owned property located on Lincoln Lake Avenue.

The Board has been studying the future facility needs of the township for the past several years, and has determined that renovating or expanding at the current location on Bailey Drive would not be adequate or financially responsible. In 2007, the Board signed a land contract and purchased a 21-acre parcel located on the east side of Lincoln Lake Avenue, just south of McPherson for future township facilities. This is a beautiful site, with rolling, wooded slopes that overlooks a creek which flows to the Flat River. There is plenty of room for a building, adequate parking to accommodate voters from both of our precincts, and future space for a township park and/or other recreational opportunities.

This was a great evening to meet with those who came to walk through the various displays. The Board, office staff, and design architect were available to share information with residents, listen to their thoughts about the proposed plans and gather ideas that could be incorporated into the building project.

In case you missed this opportunity, there are several ways you can still share your thoughts and ideas. There is a yellow comment card included in the December tax-bill mailing that can be returned with your payment or dropped off in the drop box located alongside the township parking lot. There is also a link to the comment card on the township website at www.vergennestwp.org.



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RETIREMENT NEWS

Jean Hoffman has been the Vergennes Township Treasurer since 1994. Prior to that, she was elected Clerk in 1984, which makes her our longest standing Board member with 33 years of service to Vergennes Township. Jean and her husband Dan have decided to become official snowbirds. They plan to sell their home, enjoy the winter months in a warmer climate then return to the township for the rest of the year. As a result, Jean has decided to give her resignation to the Board effective December 18, 2017.

When Jean took office in 1984, the Township had no regular office hours. She and the former treasurer, Carol Nauta, established offices and set hours in the current building, which housed a big, oil burning furnace in the lower level, and a warehouse of miscellaneous and odd objects upstairs. Prior to that time, the Treasurer would collect payments and enter them by hand from their own home or while sitting in a loaned office at the State Savings Bank of Lowell! Projects initiated while Jean was the Clerk included the addition of a fireproof vault to store official township records (previously housed in the homes of former officials), and a handicapped-accessible restroom. She also saw the addition of office partitions in the lower level and a renovation of the upper level to

accommodate meetings and elections, electronic voting machines, multiple telephone lines, on-line tax reconciliation with the County, and countless other advances in technology. Needless to say, Jean has seen enormous change in township administration while sitting on the Board.

Jean would like to thank all of the people of Vergennes Township for the many friendships she established while working here, and for the faith and trust our residents placed in her for 33 years. She says she has been honored to serve, and she wishes everyone the best as she transitions into retirement.

A THANK YOU OPEN HOUSE

Please plan on attending an OPEN HOUSE to celebrate the retirement of two long-term, dedicated Vergennes Township board members, Jean Hoffman and Mari Stone. Collectively, they have 56 years of selfless service to the township! Their vision, dedication and hard work have left a lasting, positive impact in Vergennes. Watch our township Facebook page and website for specific date and time information.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR TOWNSHIP

Community Cleanup Day

What a huge success! Over one-hundred Vergennes Township residents took part in the Lowell area Community Cleanup Day which took place on Saturday, September 30th at the Kent County Fair Grounds. This Cleanup Day gave residents of the Lowell Area School District the opportunity to properly dispose of old electronics, unwanted tires, hazardous waste, metal and junk. It took a collaboration of many volunteers working together to execute this event. Even with the long lines, there were many happy people who utilized the opportunity to get rid of unwanted items. Over 400 cars came through the line which is close to DOUBLE the number from last year's event! Next year's event is scheduled for Saturday, September 29, 2018.

Beckwith Drive Verizon Cellular Tower

Where is the new cell tower? You may have heard about the new Verizon cellular tower that was approved to be constructed on Beckwith Drive. This tower will improve the spotty cellular service in Fallasburg Park, near the Flat River Valley and surrounding areas. Please know that the township has been in contact numerous times

with representatives of Verizon Cellular regarding the construction timeline of this tower, but as of the date of this letter, we have not been given further information. The zoning administrator is working to get answers.

Vergennes Township Signs the Opt-Out Resolution

The Vergennes Township Board discussed the new Medical Marijuana Facilities Licensing Act (MMFLA) regulations. The Board agreed that, at this time, there are too many unknowns and concerns with the new law and purposed regulations to allow these facilities in Vergennes Township. The new MMFLA law will take effect in December 2017. Although the township has opted-out, The Board agreed to continue to gather information about the new regulations and MMFLA law. The Board voted to sign the opt-out resolution -which tells any Medical Marijuana groups that Vergennes Township is opting to take a definitive position declaring at this time the township is not going to allow medical marijuana facilities under the MMFLA ("opt in"). This information can be found on the township website.

Continued on next page!

Vergennes Township Facebook Page

Vergennes Township has a new Facebook page! Social media is a popular form of communication and another way to increase exposure to residents and create more transparency in government. Please locate and 'Like'

our Facebook page by searching <https://www.facebook.com/vergennestownship>. The link above will get you to the correct Government Organization page that is maintained by the Clerk's office. Another way to find it is through a link on the township website.

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR TOWNSHIP TREASURER AND OTHER APPOINTMENTS

Vergennes Township is seeking applicants for the following positions:

- 1 Planning Commission -term ending 12/2020
 - 1 Planning Commission –to fill vacancy -term ending 12/2019
 - 1 Zoning Board of Appeals- term ending 12/2020
 - 1 Board of Review –Alternate- to fill vacancy –term ending 12/2019
- These positions are compensated per diem.



Application forms and a summary of job descriptions may be obtained on the township website listed below or at the township office located at 10381 Bailey Dr., Lowell, MI 49331. The office is open Monday and Wednesday from 9am to 3pm, and Thursday 9 am to noon. All applications are due Monday, December 11, 2017 at 3 p.m.

The Board will also hold a selection process to fill the vacancy of Township Treasurer. By law, they must select a person to serve as Treasurer within 45 days of the resignation date. That person will serve until the next General Election in November of 2018, at which time the electors will choose from valid candidates. The appointment will be an open process, with applications and interviews conducted. Interested parties will submit a resume with a cover letter summarizing their qualifications by December 11th at 3:00 pm. The Board will review applicants, select candidates, and conduct interviews. The new Treasurer will be appointed to serve in January. There is more information on the website for interested candidates at www.vergennestwp.org.

ROAD COMMISSION REPORT BY TIM WITTENBACH, SUPERVISOR

Greetings! I'm sure you've noticed that this summer was a busy one for Vergennes Township road repairs and maintenance. On Bailey, we had some much needed spot paving repairs. The Kent County Road Commission is also implementing a more aggressive chip seal program. In our township you will notice fresh chip seal portions on Parnell, Lally and Cumberland. In regard to dustlayer applied this last summer, 114,789 gallons were used. The township shares this cost with the Road Commission, and our share was \$8,035.23. This is about the same as in previous years.

On McPherson west of Lincoln Lake Avenue, a new box culvert was installed for the Page Creek crossing. Two other projects considered "minor construction" consisted of improvements to Alden Nash South of Bailey, and Downes St. from the Ada Township line east to Parnell Ave. Our cost share on these projects came to \$74,250.00. 3,410 tons of road millings were used to build up those gravel roads.

The Road Commission is proposing sealcoating projects for 4 sections of roadway in 2018. 1.) Fallasburg Park Drive from Lincoln Lake to McPherson; 2.) 2-Mile Road from Boynton to Murray Lake Avenue; 3.) 3-Mile Road from Lincoln Lake Avenue to Fallasburg Park Road; and 4.) Fallasburg Park Road from 3-Mile Road to McPherson Street. We will be receiving cost share figures in the next few months for these.

In closing, I'd like to thank the Kent County Road Commission for all it does to maintain the safety of our roads, including snowplowing and mowing along the edges. I would also like to thank all of our residents and businesses for your support of the township. As Supervisor, I hear so many compliments about our people and about the beauty of our township. I am truly humbled and proud to be able to represent all of us.



WINTER TAX REVIEW BY JEAN HOFFMAN

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year – Peace and Blessings this holiday season. The township office will be closed December 21 thru December 26. The last day to pay your tax bill in the office for the 2017 season will be Thursday, December 28th until noon.

Taxes are due February 14, 2018. Please mail early. **POSTMARKS ARE NOT ACCEPTED AS ON TIME PAYMENT.** We are not responsible for delays in the postal system. **Payments must be received at the township by the day they are due to avoid interest and penalties.** Please use the return envelope provided with your tax statements.

Remember that you can make partial payments for Summer and Winter through February 14th. You will then only have interest added to the unpaid balance. Payments received after February 14th must include the penalty and interest. State law prohibits the township from waiving these charges. You may pay summer and winter 2017 taxes at the township through February 28th. **Treasurer's Office will be open to accept payments on Wednesday, February 28th from 9-5. Any payments received after 5pm on February 28th and all other unpaid taxes will be turned over to the Kent County Treasurer on March 1, 2018.**

Make checks payable to: Vergennes Township Treasurer.

ONLINE PAYMENTS – must have the parcel number printed on them. Please allow 14 days for the payment to reach our office. Payments made through your Bank Bill Pay, **DO NOT** arrive at the township on the date you pay them so please allow enough time for payments to be **mailed** from your bank to the Township Office.

CHECKS – Please double check that your dollar amount (in numeric form) and your dollar amount (in written form) match. If you would like a receipt, include both parts of your tax bill with a self-addressed envelope. We will stamp it paid and return the top portion to you. Otherwise, just include the lower part of your bill with your check and your cancelled check is your receipt.

CASH – You can come into the Township Hall during business hours to pay by cash or check.

DROP BOX – You may use the convenience of our **NEW DRIVE-UP DROP BOX** by the flag pole. Your payment will be receipted on the next business day.
ABSOLUTELY NO CASH IN THE DROP BOX!



2017 WINTER ZONING UPDATE

The Zoning Ordinance was updated this year to allow one storage shed on lots without a dwelling on Murray Lake with setbacks and size restrictions. The swimming pool section will allow a choice of the new non-fall through covers or the traditional gates and fencing. The Flat River District section added more definitions, clarified sections and added language to mirror the State Natural River Ordinance. The Planning Commission is currently working on new language to allow senior housing in the country, updating the wireless communication section, updating the lot size definition and adding landscaping business as a use in the Commercial and Industrial Districts.

Call Jeanne Vandersloot, Zoning Administrator, for any questions or applications at 616-897-5671 or email to: zoning@vergennestwp.org

Website Resources

Be sure to visit the Township's website (www.vergennestwp.org) to get information on a variety of township services. Residents and applicants can save time, mailing, and driving for zoning and planning procedures by obtaining meeting schedules, meeting minutes, fee schedule and escrow policy, accessory building information and setbacks, application forms, zoning ordinance, other ordinances, public notices and Flat River information.