



NEWSLETTER

www.vergennestwp.org

69 Lincoln Lake Ave. NE., P.O. Box 208, Lowell, MI 49331 897-5671 Hours: M, W, – 9–3, Th – 9–Noon



UMMER 2023

SUPERVISOR:
TREASURER:
CLERK:
TRUSTEES:

TIM WITTENBACH
JANINE MORK
SHANTELL FORD
RICK GILLET
DUANE RASCH

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

CLERK'S CORNER

by Shantell Ford, Vergennes Township Clerk



Happy Summer everyone!

I love this time of year. Each season has its own blessing, and the stretch from Memorial Day to Independence Day is a time to reflect with thankfulness to those who have fought and died for our country, and those who boldly declared our Independence. The men who put their names to these words "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" were willing to give up their own lives, liberty, and personal happiness to ensure those things for future generations.

A lot has changed in the election world with the passage of 2022's Prop 2. While much remains unknown, the biggest change will be nine days of early voting. Early

in-precinct voting will begin the second Saturday before the election. Unfortunately, we still do not know what this will look like, but as legislation is enacted to make the changes in law, watch our website www.vergennestwp.org -> Elections (tab across the top) for updates! We will use the website, the township Facebook page, and the winter newsletter to get necessary information to you.

In this newsletter you will find helpful information related to the different offices here at the township, a PUPdate, cemetery information, safety information and free items from the Grand Valley Metro Council's 'BE SEEN' campaign, and a peek back to 1854 and the journey from Grand Rapids to Lowell as seen through one man's eyes.

Enjoy your summer, count your blessings, and stay safe on those adventures! ~ Shantell

HISTORICAL

"As I First Saw It, Lowell in 1854 by N. B. Blain

Written and printed in the Lowell Ledger on November 12, 1914

My first appearance in Lowell occurred on April 18th, 1854. We had been living in Grand Rapids a few years, but R. D. Winegar and Orson Peck moved from there to Lowell the fall before and were so well please with its prospects that they induced my father to buy forty acres of land there.

We left Grand Rapids April 17 and got as far as the Wooster farm in Vergennes (more recently known as the

Merriman farm) at night; remained there overnight and in the morning as soon as we could get our procession in marching order, said procession being made up of two teams under the supervision of Sherman Wooster and William Parker, we resumed our march to Lowell. After turning south at Fox's Corners, we soon came in sight of the residence of Doctor Richards, which is still standing where it then did. From there the road wound around through the woods and brought us out to the bank of Flat

River opposite the Indian settlement and a short distance south of the home of Lucas Robinson.”

This article shows a difference in travel before the creation of M21 in 1928. Travel from Grand Rapids took a more direct route to the east, passing right through Vergennes Township. This route described above travels to the Wooster farm, also known as the Merriman farm in 1914. Plat maps show us that this is the farm on the NW corner of the Vergennes and Parnell intersection. From there they traveled to Fox’s Corners, the intersection of Vergennes and Lincoln Lake Ave, and turned south. They soon came to the residence of Dr. Richards. He owned the NW quarter of section 35. This is the land where the J&H gas station is, the Fox’s Corner and St. Mary’s

cemeteries, the airport and land to the south. Though the house was standing in 1914 it no longer is today. From there they traveled to the bank of the Flat River, south of the Lucas Robinson home. This house would have been in the SW quarter of section 35.

The article continues and details the businesses in Lowell and includes fun details such as how exciting it was in 1854 to see the steamboat arrive at the Lowell landing and watching the Odawa dances in the village north of town, in Vergennes Township, across the river from Lucas Robinson. While Blain thought he was enlightening the people of 1914, since the letter was published in the newspaper, we still have this information today!

VERGENNES CEMETERIES

Spring is an important time in our cemeteries. The township maintains six cemeteries. The historic ones are Historic Bailey, Krum-Blanding, Fox’s Corners, and Fallas. The two active cemeteries are Alton and Bailey. Work begins with cleaning and mowing. Then volunteers flood the cemeteries placing flags for the veterans buried here. The veterans and their loved ones here are incredibly blessed! The Alton Cemetery flags were placed by the Lowell American Heritage Girls MI1208,

sponsored, and hosted by St. Patrick’s in Parnell. The historic Cemeteries and Bailey veteran flags were placed by Rob, Genevieve and Evie McDaniels and Michelle Kendall. Thank you to all these volunteers for the care, love, and appreciation these veterans receive!

Burial Rights in Alton and Bailey are available for purchase at the clerk’s office. Resident price is \$250.00. per grave. Each grave is allowed one full burial, one full and one cremains, or two cremains.



ASSESSING DEPARTMENT - FIELD REVIEWS

Hello Vergennes Township Residents.

My name is Cory Burns. I am the assessor for Vergennes Township. I will be conducting field reviews throughout the summer and fall months. Michigan Statute requires that all property be evaluated annually based on current market conditions. This evaluation requires inspections, which includes exterior verifications, measuring buildings and other structures on the property, taking current digital photos, verifying the buildings current physical

conditions, and reviewing the amenities present, and interviewing the property owners to determine bedrooms, baths, and type of basement, etc.

The State of Michigan has stated that 20% of the properties in a governmental unit be visited each year to review assessment record accuracy and to ensure that properties are being appraised and assessed at 50% of the market value. In efforts to continue our excellent standards, the Assessor’s office strives to enhance the

annual review process and meet the State of Michigan's expectations. The goal is that the Assessing office will review at least 20% a year of the Township, then every single property is visited at least once every 5 years.

I will have a picture ID, as well as business cards (upon request). If you are not home during the inspection, I will leave a paper hanger notifying you that I was on your property. If you have any questions, please contact me. I hope you all have a great year ahead.

Sincerely,
Cory A. Burns
Vergennes Township Assessor
69 Lincoln Lake Ave NE
Lowell, MI 49331
Monday 9 A.M. – 3 P.M.
Wednesday 9 A.M. – 3 P.M.
P: (616) 897-5671
Email: assessor@vergennestwp.org

FAREWELL ROWLAND!

On June 12, Rowland was returned to PAWS to continue his training toward becoming a service dog. He spent the last eleven or so months with me, hanging out at the township offices quite a bit. He is a quick learner, especially when there are treats to be had. Rowland will be at the PAWS facility for a week or two before heading off to the Carson City Prison for further training. Rowland the dog will be missed, but not his constant shed of golden fur left behind everywhere. Every time I vacuum, I will remember his sweet face. When I hear any updates on his whereabouts or future plans, I will let you know via

this newsletter.

I am going to take a break from foster puppies for a bit. My husband and I are going to do some travelling plus we need to visit our grandbaby in North Carolina more often. If you think you want to raise a pup, visit www.pawswithacause.org for more information.

Stay Pawsitive!
Janine

FROM THE TREASURER

If you have any questions about your property taxes, refer to the back of your tax bill. I have the most asked questions answered there. If you still need more information, feel free to call me during our office hours or email me at treasurer@vergennes.twp.org

I have a deferment application on the back of this newsletter. Read through Part 2 of the application to see if you qualify to defer your summer tax payments to the winter deadline of February 14, 2024, without interest. This form must be received in the township office no later than September 14 at 5pm. Contact me with any questions.

~Janine Mork, Treasurer
treasurer@vergennestwp.org

<p>PART 2: DEFERMENT INFORMATION</p> <p>I hereby request that the Treasurer of the above-noted municipality defer the due date of the summer taxes on the property identified above, without penalty or interest charges, until February 15 (payment must be received on or before February 14 to avoid penalty and interest) based on the following qualification:</p> <p>(Check 1 or 2 below to identify your basis for this application. Select one choice only.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1. Principal Residence: I certify that my gross household income for the preceding calendar year did not exceed \$40,000 and that I qualify for the deferment provided for in the General Property Tax Act under the classification marked below:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 62 years of age or older, including the unmarried surviving spouse of a person who was 62 years of age or older at the time of death</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Paraplegic, Hemiplegic, or Quadriplegic</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Eligible Serviceperson, Eligible Veteran, Eligible Widow or Widower</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Blind Person</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Totally and Permanently Disabled</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2. Agricultural Real Property: I certify that I own the above property, which is classified or used as agricultural real property, and that the gross receipts of agricultural or horticultural operations in the previous year (or the average gross receipts for such operations in the previous three years) are not less than my household income for the preceding calendar year or the combined household incomes in the previous year of the individual members of a limited liability company or partners of a partnership that owns the agricultural real property.</p>

NEW DEPUTY TREASURER

We have a new Deputy Treasurer in the office! Aleesha Raker joined us in February this year and has been assisting Janine with treasurer's duties. Aleesha grew up in Vergennes Township and is very familiar with the area and community. Outside of the office, she enjoys

playing board games and spending time outdoors with her husband and three young children. She is looking forward to interacting with the community more as she continues to learn her new role!

PLANNING AND ZONING

It has been a busy first half of the year for the Planning Commission in Vergennes Township. Industrial parcels on OE Bieri are quickly filling up as the township has approved facilities for contractor suites, an excavating company, and an electric company. A lot of building is happening there and only a few parcels remain undeveloped. The township also recently approved Harvest Meadows Phase 4, which is the final build out of the residential development off Alden Nash. Other interesting topics that have come before the Planning Commission include gravel operations, two private roads, and some additional facilities at a church.

Vergennes Township also has a home-based business ordinance, and the Township has received several inquiries over the past few months. While the ordinance is flexible, all home based business need to be registered, and generally should be conducted entirely indoors and not create much traffic or nuisance activity. Speaking of nuisance, there has also been an increase in complaints about junk and abandoned vehicles around the Township. The junk control ordinance is enforced, and citations may be issued for noncompliant properties. Please remember to finish up your spring cleaning.

~Ryan Carrigan, Planning and Zoning Administrator

GRAND VALLEY METRO COUNCIL SAFETY EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists all share our roadways in West Michigan. With pedestrians and bicyclists more likely to be seriously or fatally injured in a crash than motorists, GVMC is striving to educate all the users of our system on ways that they can be safe AND seen while using our roads. To help increase the visibility

of area bicyclists, GVMC is giving away bike lights for FREE to residents, organizations, and businesses in our region. These lights operate in two modes — continuous on and strobe — and clip over the front handlebars. These items are available at the township offices.

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS SIGN

Help first responders find your house in case of an emergency! Reflective signs can be ordered from the Fire Department at lowellfire.org for \$15.00. For all emergencies, please call 911!

REMEMBER!

For open burning a permit from the Fire Department is required! These can be received on their website — lowellfire.org.

FALLASBURG VILLAGE CELEBRATION

July 29th 11 a.m. till 5 p.m. at the Historic Village

Presented by the Fallasburg Historical Society, this event features old fashioned fun! There will be 3 stages with great music, car show with a rumble, antique tractor show, family fun and games, village & museum tours, great food at value prices, the pioneer trailer, demonstrations including blacksmith, weaving and more! Parking is only \$5.00. www.fallasburg.org

BETSY'S BENCH

On Saturday May 20, the board and office staff joined with Betsy Davidson's family and friends to reveal the bench that the board and staff had made from personal funds. It was a joy to honor Betsy and show how thankful we are for her work with the township in her business, but most importantly, all she has poured into our community.

