

# 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



## UMMER 2019

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

**TIM WITTENBACH**  
**JANINE MORK**  
**HEATHER HOFFMAN**  
**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 Heather Hoffman, Vergennes Township Clerk*

### **Hello and Happy Summer!**

I say my greeting with cheer, but it sure does not feel like we are in the middle of the summer months. I wish my greeting could imply that we have all been experiencing warm weather and a perfect growing season for our local farmers, but that is just not the case. Ah, Michigan, you again provide us with your unpredictability, and this year, better opportunities for bonfires with friends on cool crisp nights. I desperately long for days where I see nothing but blue skies, feel the warm sunshine, and can hide out under a patio umbrella on my back deck. Until then, I will enjoy my abnormally beautiful green grass and oversized sweatshirts. I will also practice thankfulness

for the lower than normal electric bill, and comfortable sleeping weather. Walking the trails through our community, and enjoying a treat with my family on the patio at any of the local ice cream shops is something that cool weather cannot keep me from. My hope is that, even with less than perfect summer weather, you each find many opportunities to enjoy these summer months in our awesome community and state.

Wishing you each a happy summer, big scoops of ice cream on your cone, and much health!

Heather

## MAY 7, 2019 ELECTION RECAP

On May 7, 2019, 849 of the 3554 registered Vergennes Township voters cast their ballot for the Special School Election.

600 yes-votes

249 no-votes

The Kent County Election Director informed us that our canvas of the election was completed with ZERO issues!

This is a big deal. Our Elections Inspectors do such a great job for the voters of our township, and I want to give them a shout-out and praise for a job well done!

We combined our two precincts into one location for this

election and the inspectors were as follows:

- Shantell Ford -Chairperson
- Rebekah Birmingham
- Kendra Ford
- Abby White
- Mary Anne White
- Michael Tummino

If you see any of these hard working people out and about, please thank them for their dedication to our township!

## BIG NEWS ON THE NEW TOWNSHIP HALL!

Vergennes Township Board approved and purchased a building that will become our new township hall!

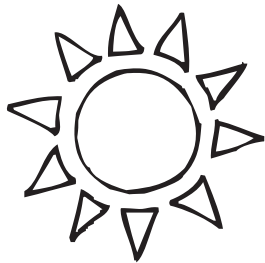
This 3100 square foot, brick building is located at 69 Lincoln Lake Avenue and was formerly known as Kingdom Hall. The purchase price was \$209,900. Preliminary plans for building renovation with an office space addition are underway. The cost to purchase, renovate, and add-on to this building will be hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars LESS than the previous plan to build a brand new hall. We are excited that this property

will provide the much-needed building upgrades and space needs for our growing community at a significant cost savings compared to the previous plan to build new. This is a win-win for our community!

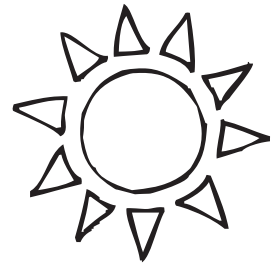
## BAILEY DRIVE ROAD PROJECT

This spring, the township board approved a 1.06 mile road work project on Bailey Drive from Parnell Avenue to Boynton Avenue. This project will include crushing, shaping and repaving Bailey Drive. The total cost of the project is \$314,000 and will be split evenly with the Kent

County Road Commission. The township's responsibility is \$157,000 to be paid in three equal payments through August 2020. The project will be scheduled soon. Watch the township Facebook page and website for further information.



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**  
**COMMUNITY CLEAN-UP DAY 2019**  
**SEPTEMBER 28TH 8 a.m. – 11 a.m.**  
**Cleanup AND Recycling**



Clean out your basements, garages and yards. Come early, plan ahead and be ready to practice a little patience as the community comes together to throw away and recycle unwanted items. Last year, over 400 residents waited in line for the opportunity to get rid of their junk. Volunteers from the community will again be helping to see that this morning runs as smoothly as possible. Community Clean-Up Day will take place on Saturday, September 28, 2019. You must bring proof that you live within the Lowell School District.

- Must show proof of residency – Lowell School District Only
- One Trailer load or pick-up full per household
- Metal Recycling available
- Hazardous Waste Items can be dropped off (please see list that will be posted to the Lowell Chamber of Commerce webpage as we get closer to the date)
- Electronics disposal available -FOR A FEE. (please check the Lowell Chamber of Commerce website at <https://www.discoverlowell.org/government/> for further details)
- Tire disposal available- no rims- absolutely no tractor tires – please check the Lowell Chamber of Commerce website for limit per household information.
- Gates close sharply at 11 a.m. – DO NOT BE LATE, PLEASE DO NOT DROP OFF ANY ITEMS AFTER THIS TIME

This is just a small list of details. Further rules and details will continue to be updated on the Lowell Chamber of Commerce's website and on the Vergennes Township website and Facebook page as we get closer to September 28th. Recycle information can be found at <http://www.recyclekent.org/>.

# GYPSY MOTH INFORMATION

Please see the following information about the Gypsy moth life cycle and ways that individual property owners can help to control Gypsy Moths. Vergennes Township does not have plans to spray for gypsy moths due to numerous factors which include: the high cost of aerial spraying, knowing there is a 50 percent chance the aerial spraying may not kill the moths -there is only a 50% success rate to kill only 50% of the moths, and the fact that spraying insecticide also kills beneficial insects like honey bee, ladybugs and praying mantis. It can also poison birds directly or indirectly.

## THE LIFE CYCLE OF A GYPSY MOTH

The Gypse moth life cycle starts off as larva then takes the form of a caterpillar. The larva hatch in the spring from eggs laid the previous summer. They crawl up trees and out on the limbs and start eating tree leaves. They start out small, but grow larger as they eat leaves. When they are small, they suspend from trees on gossamer strands that get blown by the wind -sometimes for miles. This is one way they can spread over large distances. The caterpillars will eat leaves for two full months before they are full grown and transform into the pupa stage then go through metamorphosis and turn into a moth. The flying moths are males. The females do not fly. After the female moth is fertilized, it will lay a mass of hundreds of eggs. The mass looks like a brown fibrous blob that will stick to where it is deposited until next spring when the gypsy moth larvae will hatch and attack the tree.

WHAT CAN PROPERTY OWNERS DO? One or more of the following may help:

- **Duct tape and Tanglefoot-**
  - Wrap 2 widths of duct tape about chest height from the ground. Then Tanglefoot, which is a very sticky substance, is smeared around the center of the duct tape. Gypsy moths trying to climb up the tree will not go past the sticky Tanglefoot substance and they will stack up. Property owners can then scrape them off into a jar where they can be destroyed and disposed of.
- **Burlap folded strips-**
  - Newly hatched gypsy moths feed day and night. When they grow to about  $\frac{3}{4}$ " they look for a good hiding place. In the early evening, go out and lift up the folds of burlap. Collect and destroy all the ones you find. This process needs to be repeated at least once every day.
- **Burlap strips sprayed with insecticide:**
  - Tie a 12' roll of burlap around the tree with sisal twine, then spray with the insecticide Deltamethrin. When the moth climbs up the tree, this insecticide gets on their feet and kills them.
- **Gypsy moth traps:**
  - Gypsy moth traps can be either purchased from various locations or homemade. Homemade traps are known to work a little better than purchased traps. There are homemade trap tutorials available online and on YouTube. When the gypsy moths reach the moth state, you can catch the males which are attracted to pheromone-type bait located inside the trap.
- **Search for and destroy egg masses:**
  - Around July, the female gypsy moths start laying egg masses. They lay them everywhere. Literally everywhere including but not limited to: tree trunks, under tree branches, on leaves, on garden hoses, under the air conditioner, under decking. Soon after laying their eggs, the female gypsy moth dies, but their eggs will hatch next spring if they are not found and destroyed.
- **Aid the spread of virus fatal to gypsy moths:**
  - Gypsy moths are susceptible to the nucleopolyhedrosis virus. Sometimes you will see sick or dead gypsy moth caterpillars hanging upside down from a tree branch stricken with this virus. Leave these caterpillars alone so that other caterpillars that are crawling near have the chance of catching this deadly virus. Often, a moist, rainy environment helps keep the Gypsy moth population lower and the virus is most prevalent.
- **Encourage birds to visit your property:**
  - There are 14 known bird species that prey on gypsy moths. These are: Bluejay, blackbird, catbird, black-capped chickadee, crow, grackle, red-winged blackbird, nuthatch, oriole, chipping sparrow, robin, tanager, vireo and woodpecker.
- **Hire a professional exterminator to spray from the ground:**
  - Although spraying from the ground may not reach all the leaves on the trees, it could help. However, spraying insecticide also kills beneficial insects like bees, ladybugs and praying mantis, and it can poison birds either directly or indirectly. Decisions to spray should take this into consideration.

## HOME BUSINESSES- information from the Zoning Administrator

Did you know that if you run a business out of your home, you must apply for a permit and receive approval? The zoning ordinance allows for various types of businesses that can be conducted within the home or using an accessory building. There are several types of regulated businesses. They include types that are completely within the home such as art, office work, architect, or within an accessory building such as woodworking and other types that are performed elsewhere like landscaping. Another type is renting out older barns for

storage of RV's, campers and boats. The application for a home business permit is on the website or is available at the township hall.

Call Jeanne Vandersloot, Zoning Administrator, for any questions or applications at 616-897-5671 or email to: [zoning@vergennestwp.org](mailto:zoning@vergennestwp.org) Be sure to visit the Township's website for all types of information, applications, minutes, notices, ordinances, etc. at: [www.vergennestwp.org](http://www.vergennestwp.org)

## ZONING UPDATE

The Zoning Ordinance is being updated this summer to add two new ordinance sections allowing for and regulating solar energy systems and fencing. Amendments to clarify and update several other ordinance sections include the

definition of structure, land alterations in the Flat River District, grade level section, tents and travel trailer section and removing the satellite dish antenna section.

## PROPERTY OWNERS WITH FLAT RIVER FRONTAGE

The Flat River is designated by the State of Michigan as a "Natural River". The purpose of a natural river designation is to preserve and enhance the area for water conservation, its free flowing condition, its fish, wildlife, boating, scenic, aesthetic, floodplain, ecologic, historic, and recreational values and uses. The Flat River Zoning District is designated as 300 feet out from and along the ordinary high water mark of the river. The first 25 feet from the ordinary high water mark is called the Natural Vegetation Strip. Setbacks for buildings and structures are 100 feet from the water's edge with an additional 50 feet if a bluff lot. This means that all structures including sheds, decks, pools, etc. should all be located at least 100 feet from the water's edge. The only exceptions are docks and boardwalks in the water and river access stairs down a hill to the water's edge which all require a specific permit from the Township. Stairs, pathways and docks to and from and at the water's edge can be up to 4 feet wide.

The State does not permit cleared areas for the storage of boats and docks and they should be stored above the 25-foot natural vegetative strip. If a public or private boat launch ramp is available, then any desired larger boats should be taken in and out of the water at those locations. There shall not be any land alterations on the face and crest of bluffs and between the crest of the bluff and the minimum building setback line except minor landscaping activities. Only dead, diseased, unsafe or fallen trees or poisonous plants may be removed in the protected 25-foot strip. Any requested removal of vegetation outside of the above requires Zoning Administrator approval. A small amount of pruning is allowed. Homes should be mostly screened from the river by the natural vegetation. The southern portion of the river beyond the covered bridge to the City limit is a slow no wake area for boats.

## FROM THE TREASURER'S OFFICE

Summer taxes are due September 16, 2019. They are normally due on the 14th but you get a couple extra days since the 14th falls on a weekend. I will be in the office Monday the 16th until 5pm to accept tax payments. I will also be checking the drop box at 5pm. Anything dropped after 5pm will be considered late and will have the 1% interest charge added to it. It will be posted as a partial payment.

If you are mailing in your payment, please allow 10 days for it to arrive in our office. We do not accept postmarks as on time payment.

Your tax payment can be left in the drop box after hours. To access it, drive up to the top parking lot, turn around, and pull up next to the box near the flagpole. You don't even have to leave your car! Please do not leave cash in the drop box. Cash is accepted in the office during regular office hours.

If your cancelled check is not enough, enclose the entire tax bill and I will send the top portion back to you with the date paid stamped on it.

If you are having difficulty making a full tax payment, partial payments can be made once you receive the bill. You can make monthly or weekly payments, or whatever works for you. If there is still a balance owing after the due date, interest will be charged on the balance due only. Anything owing after March 1st will be turned over to the county for collection.

We now accept credit/debit cards and e-checks as forms of payment for taxes, as well as building/zoning permits and cemetery fees. For taxes, you can pay online by going to our website, [www.vergennestwp.org](http://www.vergennestwp.org), click on assessing/tax info along the left of screen. This will take you to a new website, [www.Accessmygov.net](http://www.Accessmygov.net). Click on "pay now" and it will walk you through the process. Please note there is a charge for this convenience. 3% on credit/debit payments and \$3.00 for an e-check will be charged. This money goes directly to the credit card processor.

If your mortgage company pays your taxes, please check online about a week prior to the due date to make sure the payment has been made. If your bank uses a clearinghouse to make the payments, they usually don't get the money to us until the last week or two before they are due. It is ultimately your responsibility to make sure the taxes are paid timely.

PLEASE put your phone number on the tax bill or on your check. This makes it much easier to contact you if there is a problem with your payment. If I cannot reach you by phone, I need to use the postal service. The added time needed to contact you could be the difference between on-time payment or a late payment. This information is not kept on file in the township. Thanks for your assistance.