



Nelson Township News

Summer 2010

News you can use:

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- Road Q & A page 3.
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- If you missed the township clean-up days, it is not too late to recycle any electronic equipment. You can drop off your unwanted electronic items (minus TVs) at the township library during business hours. Most any thing that has a cord or uses batteries can be recycled (see the list of acceptable items posted on the township website under Ewaste Recycling Cleanup). These items can also be dropped off at the Rockford transfer station on 10 Mile Road across from Meijer. Just ask for the Ewaste drop box location.
- Residents who would like to have their US Flags properly retired (disposed of) should turn them into the township office. Members of Boy Scout Troop 222 will collect them and retire them.
- Change in Assessors days page 4

Township Website

Are you looking for township information? You can find it on our website at www.nelsontownship.org. This site is updated regularly with any new information and you can now get your property tax information 24/7.

Holiday Closings...

The Township and Village offices will be CLOSED

Monday September 6th

Thursday November 11th

Thursday November 25th

Monday December 27th - Thursday December 30th (Treasurer will be available on Wednesday December 29th from 9am - 5pm to collect taxes)

Nelson Township

2 E. Maple Street

Sand Lake 49343

Office Hours Monday-Thursday

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Telephone (616) 636-5332

Fax (616) 636-4452

Township Board Members

Supervisor: Glen Armstrong

Clerk: Laura Hoffman

Treasurer: Katy Austin

Trustees: Maureen Mahoney,
Tom Noreen

Assessor: Jason Rosenzweig

Zoning/Enforcement: Jerry Gross

Township Board Meeting

2nd Tuesday of each month- 7:00 pm

Village of Sand Lake

2 E. Maple Street

Sand Lake 49343

Office Hours: Monday-Thursday

9:30 am - 2:30 pm

Telephone (616) 636-8854

Fax (616) 636-4564

Clerk: Judy Howard

Treasurer: Brenda Arnold

Council Board Meeting

3rd Monday of each month

Council Members

President: Kirk Thielke

Trustees: Dave Dewey, Tonia Parkhurst,
Carol Simpson, Billi Jo Thielke,
Dave Tibbe, Roger Towsley

From Zoning & Enforcement...

Jerry Gross

Avoiding Neighbor problems with QCC

Why do our lives sometimes have to be complicated by those people representing us? Or why don't they do something about this? I am certain that all of us have uttered those words in one form or another at some time. The only thing that can be said in response to that is that most rules are generated by the concerns and desires of people who are faced with situations that can or are affecting them. The rules are to assist in controlling events and actions that are undesirable to some but are considered to be an individual right by another person. Within these rules a conflict brews between individual rights and the welfare and desires of the majority. Some of those conflicts can be avoided by asking the right Questions, by Communication and by Consideration.

Questions, ask them, don't assume that it is alright just because you want to do it. There may be some additional information or restrictions that you need to be aware of. And yes the asking of the questions could result in the denial of your being able to do what you want to do, but it is better to know this in advance than waiting until money, time and effort have been spent on the task.

Communication between yourself and anyone that may be affected by what you are doing is important. This would apply to anyone who is proposing to do anything that would be out of the normal scope of being a home owner. And remember that the noise level of what you are doing could affect people well beyond your next door neighbors.

Consideration should be used when determining what you are preparing to do, if it is permissible. Determine if there is the flexibility to do it in a manner that will least affect your neighbors and the surrounding area.

These three letters should also be applied by those who believe that their rights are being infringed upon. Ask question, is it acceptable. Communicate with the person that is causing the problem. Using consideration as to whether the problem is as large as you think it is or can it be something that can be accepted.

From the Clerk's office...

Laura Hoffman

East Nelson and Punches Cemetery Rules

1. Cemeteries are open only during daylight hours.
2. No vehicles shall be driven on other than established drives.
3. Please place refuse in receptacles provided.
4. Summer decorations must be removed by **November 15.**
5. Winter decorations must be removed by **April 1.**
6. The Township will remove decorations remaining after those dates.
7. No planting of permanent shrubbery, plants or trees.
8. Nelson Township reserves the right to trim or remove any planting or other materials.
9. For complete information regarding the cemetery please contact Nelson Township clerk at 616-636-5332.

Punches Cemetery activity does not warrant a refuse receptacle. Please dispose of your refuse properly.

Interested in becoming an Election Inspector?

Registered voters interested in serving as election inspectors must submit an election inspector application to Nelson Township Clerk. In addition to their name, address and date of birth, applicants must include their political party preference and qualifications to fill the position such as education or experience.

Qualifications for election inspectors must be a registered voter of the county. They cannot be a challenger, candidate, member of a candidate's immediate family, or a member of the local Board of Canvassers. Anyone convicted of a felony or an election crime may not serve.

The Nelson Township Clerk will be able to answer any questions about how to apply to become a precinct inspector. Why not consider helping your community and becoming more politically active by becoming a precinct inspector?

Notes from the Supervisor - Glen Armstrong

Road Questions and Answers

Our roads are one of the most important resources we use. They affect our lives on a daily basis. So who is driving the decisions on local road projects and maintenance?

Although the road may be located within a township, did you know that the township does not have authority over that road? Most residents do not realize that local roads, including construction and maintenance of these roads, are under the jurisdiction of the county where the road is located. Since the 1930s, townships have had little road authority, and they receive no transportation funding (Public Act 51 of 1951). However, over 95% of townships in Michigan *do* contribute money to the road commission in the county in which their township is situated. In fact, it is common for counties to strongly urge townships to contribute to roads at a high level of matching funds. About 10 years ago, many counties requested a 50-50 match from townships for construction, repair and maintenance of local roads. The Kent County Road Commission has set the cost splits for this coming year at 55% Township - 45% KCRC. It is a little better for the dust layer on gravel roads at 35% Township - 65% KCRC. During the past year, Nelson Township has spent \$57,264 on roads and matching funds with the Kent County Road Commission. This year we have budgeted \$46,000 to spend on graveling and dust layer.

Although the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 has provided significant funding for roads, that money is primarily being spent on federal highways and roads under state jurisdiction, rather than local roads. Meanwhile, transportation funding at the state level has not increased, and there has been a sharp decrease in state shared revenue to local units of government. The result? Local roads are being shortchanged.

While funding of roads at the local level is likely to be an ongoing issue for Michigan for some time to come, it is important for residents to be aware of the township's limited role in road projects and maintenance. Issues related to local roads are best addressed by the county road commission, which has the both the authority and responsibility to handle these matters. For more information, contact the Kent County Road Commission at (616)696-3160.

This spring, MDOT and the Kent County Road Commission did some work on 18 mile road east of the Pine Lake Road intersection. This construction was a result of the multiple accidents that have happened at this intersection. The main

objective was to lower the hill east of the intersection that hindered visibility to the corner. No Township funds were required for this construction; it was all funded by MDOT. I have asked that MDOT consider doing the same type of work on 17 mile road just east the of Meyers Lake Road intersection. It has a very similar problem with a hill obstructing the view, and has had many accidents as well.

Black Creek Drain.

Nelson Township along with Spencer Township filed an appeal to stop or limit the proposed work that the inter-county drain commission voted to do in Lincoln Lake and the Black Creek Drain at their December 2008 public meeting held in the Cedar Springs High School. The law only allows appeals of the decision within 10 days of the meeting, and this was our only opportunity to affect the proposed drain work.

After about a year of unsuccessfully trying to settle out of court with the drain commission, the appeal went before Judge Leiber on February 26th 2010, and the Judge denied our appeal, saying he did not want to substitute the courts opinion in place of the drain commission.

Our appeal was based on the matter of the proposed dredging in Lincoln Lake and the fact that Lincoln Lake is not in the Drain district. The townships still feel that the drain commission doing work outside the drain district and charging it to the drain district is wrong, but the Judge did not comment on this concern.

So as it stands now, the Drain commissioners can precede any way they want to and there is apparently nothing the townships can do about it, but we tried.

Village of Sand Lake Disincorporation

As you have probably already read or heard in the newspaper, there has been a petition filed to "Dis-Incorporate" the village. I have never heard of this before, and I am still waiting to hear of any village in Michigan that has done this before.

The decision to Dis-incorporate is scheduled be determined at the primary election in August, and only the village residents will vote on this proposal - not the Township residents. The Township has no say in the matter and cannot even decline the village becoming just a part of the township, should the vote pass. If the village is dis-incorporated, all its assets and liabilities are assumed by the township. Also if the proposal passes the streets of the village would transfer to the County and be maintained by them, because Townships cannot own roads. We will all have to wait to see what happens.

From the Assessor's Office...

Jason Rosenzweig

The Assessor's office will continue the process of digitally photographing each home and accessory building located in the township. The photographs are required by the state as part of the property record card system. Any person photographing buildings will have picture identification with them.

Also, in accordance with state guidelines stating that properties be re-inspected every five years, I am planning on visiting select homes in the Metes & Bounds description areas of the township. I will have identification and will provide it upon request. If you are not home when I visit, I will leave a letter explaining the reason for my visit and a pre-paid postcard you can fill out and send back.

If you plan on splitting your property, you must file a land division application with the assessor. Land division applications are available at the township hall or on the township website www.nelsontownship.org

Other forms available on the website include: Property Transfer Affidavit, Homeowner's Principle Residence Exemption Affidavit, & Request to Rescind Homeowner's Principle Residence Exemption.

Beginning the week of July 5, the Assessor's normal office hours will be Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 to 3:00

Treasurer's Tidbits...

Katy Austin

Nice to meet you...

In August of last year I was appointed as Nelson Township Treasurer after Kathy Reed retired. Kathy had been the Treasurer for many years and did a wonderful job, she is greatly missed.

I am a life long resident of Nelson Township and a graduate of Cedar Springs High School. My Husband Shawn and I have 2 children, Olivia is 7 and attends Cedar Trails Elementary, and Alaina is 4. I enjoy being a public servant and look forward to meeting you! Please call or email me at anytime if you have any questions.

Treasurer@Nelsontownship.org

New web site for Tax and Assessing information:

The Township has made it easier for you to access your Tax and Assessing information. On the home page of the Township website, www.nelsontownship.org, you'll see "Click here to view Assessing & Tax Information online." Simply "Click here for more information" and access your parcel information. You will be required to register in order to retrieve your information. You create your logon; the software creates your password and emails it to you. Once you have created an account, you simply click the "LOGIN" button in the upper right corner of the screen; enter your logon and password. You will be able to view tax payments with the ability to print the payment information to complete your IRS 1040, and other tax and assessing data. You can look at YOUR data free of charge. If you want to look at someone else's, it will cost you \$2.00 for each inquiry. The fee is charged by the software firm that developed this site, enabling Township residents' free usage.

Treasurer's Hours: Monday's & Wednesdays 9am - 3pm
September 14th 9am -5pm. Also by appointment.

Deferred Payments: For those who qualify for **Deferred Payment** of their **2010 Summer Taxes**, applications are now available at the Nelson Township Treasurer's office. Filing of this form is voluntary. However, your tax due date will not be extended unless it is certified each year with the Township Treasurer by September 14

Uncashed checks:

Do you have a refund check from the township? In December 2008, we issued a small refund to some residents for overpaid property taxes (Most checks were under \$2.00). Many of these checks have not been cashed and on August 1st 2010 will be turned over to the of State of Michigan Unclaimed Property to Escheats Division. That website is www.michigan.gov/treasury you can then click on unclaimed property.