

Summer Newsletter, 2010

Portland Township

773 E. Grand River/ PO Box 314

Portland, MI 48875

www.portlandtownship.org

Gerald Tiemann, Supervisor
517-526-2568 or 517-647-4270

Charlene Keilen, Clerk
517-647-6643

Leanne Simon, Treasure
517-647-2075

Julius Platte, Trustee
517-647-7161

Joseph Pung, Trustee
517-647-4877

Meetings

The Portland Township Board meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month, unless noted otherwise in the local paper. We meet at the township hall (entrance is located on the west side of the Emergency Services Building) at 7:00 p.m. In March and April, our meeting time changes to accommodate the Budget meeting and Annual meeting, so watch the local paper for those dates and times. All meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend.

From Supervisor Tiemann's Desk

In November 2008 I was elected to the Supervisor position of Portland Township. The Board is actively pursuing improvements to our Township.

There are 3 items I'd like to comment on; roads, bridges and our fire contract with the City of Portland. Currently we have approved 2 road projects for 2010. The intersection of Divine Highway and Marsalle Road will be rebuilt. We will be using limestone on this project. Limestone has been used for years on gravel roads and is proven to reduce maintenance and control dust. The other road project is the intersection of Friend Road and Ionia Road. It will be rebuilt to make it safer. We have budgeted more money this year for road projects. We have made several recommendations for other road projects to the Ionia County Road Commission and they will now review those recommendations and advise us of the cost and their ability to get them done this year or in 2011. As we did last year, all of our Township gravel roads will get at least two, double brine treatments this year to help control road dust.

Secondly, we're committed to having the closed Goodwin Road Bridge removed. Last year, we approved matching funds with the Road Commission, State of Michigan, MDOT and the Federal Government to remove the bridge in 2011. Unfortunately, all bridge projects in our County were cancelled for

2011. We asked the Road Commission to put the Goodwin and David Highway Bridges on the priority list for 2013.

An article in the May, 2010 Ionia Sentinel Standard stated the Road Commission did not include the Goodwin Road Bridge for 2013 but the David Highway Bridge was submitted for preventive maintenance.

The third item I'd like to address is the current fire contract the Township has with the City of Portland. Portland and Danby Townships are currently in negotiations with the City to form a true Municipal Fire Authority, which would give the Townships joint ownership in the current inventory of trucks and equipment. It would also give us a voice in the Portland Fire Department operations and future purchases. We have made several visits to surrounding communities that have this type of Authority and know how well they work. The Emergency Services Building in Portland is jointly owned and maintained by the three above-mentioned communities and our position is the Fire Department should be run the same way. The fire contract we currently use was set-up in 1984 and doesn't provide the Townships with any equity in new purchases or a voice in the Fire Department's operation and decision process, although we (Portland and Danby Townships) provide 2/3 of the money needed to operate the City of Portland Fire Department. The contract has been a source of concern for many years and past attempts to revise it have failed. In 2008 and 2009 we paid over \$160,000 to the City for fire protection. We had 24 fire runs. 11 of those fire runs were highway calls for non-residents of Portland Township. To continue to pay this amount to the City is unacceptable to us. We applaud the firefighters who work for the Portland Fire Department and this matter in no way reflects their outstanding performance. Our concern is the outdated and unfair contract. I encourage you to attend our Board meetings or to phone me if you have concerns or comments on any of the items I've mentioned.

Website

Check us out! Our website can be found at www.portlandtownship.org

News from the Assessor's Office

Beginning in May of 2010, the Assessor's office will be performing a complete reappraisal of Portland Township over the course of two years. This reappraisal will ensure accurate and uniform assessments throughout the Township. The assessor & her associates will be out photographing and measuring all structures on each property as well as gathering information from property owners if they are available for a short interview. Any inaccuracies to current record cards will be corrected during this process such as the following:

- Removing a building from the record card that is no longer on the property.
- Adding a building or other improvement that has never been on the record card.
- Correcting square footage of existing buildings or other land improvements.

You are not required to allow the assessor to inspect your property, but your record card and thus, your assessment may be inaccurate. The reappraisal would correct that situation. For more information, contact the Portland Township Assessor, Ann Thompson, at 616-642-6291 or email her at twpassessor@sbcglobal.net

Property Tax Reminder

Summer property taxes are due 9-14-2010 and penalties are placed on unpaid taxes starting 9-15-2010. Taxes should be mailed to 5481 Divine Highway, Portland, 48875 or a drop box is also available (your tax receipt will be mailed). Eligible residents should complete their application for deferment of summer taxes as soon as possible.

Tax information is always available online at www.ioniacounty.org and click on 'Online Services'.

Did you know you could pay your property taxes in installments, as long as the entire amount due is paid by 9-14-2010? Contact the treasurer if you'd like more information on this at 517-647-2075.

Notes from the Zoning Administrator

In 2006, the Portland Township Board adopted ordinances dealing with junk, scrap, trash, old building materials, unlicensed and non-running vehicles, noise, dangerous buildings and similar nuisances. If complaints are received or nuisances observed then letters are sent requesting compliance. Continued noncompliance may result in a ticket being issued. To keep property values up and keep the Township an attractive place to live, please take care of nuisances similar to the above on your property.

Before construction of any buildings, including farm buildings, decks, signs or in-ground pools, please contact the Zoning Administrator for a zoning permit application at 616-897-4242. Zoning construction application forms are available for pick up in a box at the west door of the Township Hall at the Emergency Services Building at 773 Grand River Ave. Applications and other information are available on the new website at www.portlandtownship.org. Commercial or Industrial building expansion or new businesses or new home developments must apply for a site plan review through the Planning Commission. Call the Zoning Administrator for questions and information.

The Township has recently adopted home business ordinances. There are two types and you have to be a resident at the property to apply for a home business permit. One type is a home occupation within a dwelling and/or an accessory building. This type is the typical home occupation such as music lessons, typing, crafts, office work, sewing, accounting and similar occupations. The second is a home-based business that is more commercial in nature, such as a machine shop or vehicle repair and is permitted by special use permit through the Planning Commission. A list of regulations must be met for approval. For further information, contact Jeanne Vandersloot, Zoning Administrator at 616-897-4242 or email her at zoningadmin@msn.com

Election News

The August Primary is being held August 3, 2010. The deadline is July 6th to register if you aren't already a registered voter. The November General Election is November 2, 2010 with a registration deadline of October 4th. Information concerning registration, absent voter applications, polling locations, etc is available on our website: www.portlandtownship.org.