



3848 VETERANS DRIVE / TRAVERSE CITY, MI 49684
(231) 941-1620 / FAX: (231) 941-1588
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SPRING 2015

Garfield

Charter Township

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

TOWNSHIP HOURS

Monday —Thursday
7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
CLOSED FRIDAYS

**** PLEASE NOTE ****

Tax payment receipts will only be sent upon request or if a self-addressed stamped envelope is included with payment.

ELECTED OFFICIALS

- CHUCK KORN.....SUPERVISOR
- LANIE MC MANUS.....CLERK
- JEANE BLOOD LAW.....TREASURER
- BOB FEATHERSTONE.....TRUSTEE
- DENISE SCHMUCKAL.....TRUSTEE
- KIT WILSON.....TRUSTEE
- MOLLY AGOSTINELLI.....TRUSTEE

STAFF

- LISA RITTER.....OFFICE COORDINATOR
- BETTY TEZAK.....DEPUTY CLERK
- CHLOE MACOMBER..DEPUTY TREASURER
- AMY DEHAAN.....ASSESSOR
- KRISTEN STEGER.....ASST. ASSESSOR
- SUE MUHA.....APPRAISER
- HILARY ALPERS.....ASSESSING CLERK
AND TREASURER'S ASSISTANT
- CARL STUDZINSKI.....BUILDING OFFICIAL
- RICH DERKS.....BUILDING INSPECTOR
- ROB LARREA.....PLANNING DIRECTOR
- BRIAN VANDENBRAND....DEP. PLANNER
- SARA KOPRIVA..ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
- THOM SCHMUCKAL.....ZONING CODE
ENFORCEMENT OFFICER
- JUDY BATTLE.....ADMIN. ASSISTANT
- BILL MOUSER.....FACILITIES MANAGER

CHANGES IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE



After 12 years of serving the residents of Garfield Township, Kay Schumacher retired at the end of January this year. She cared about her township, took pride in running elections, and was an influence on many. Kay plans on spending more time with her grandchildren and traveling to warm, sunny places. We are sad to see her go. She left an open Clerk position, as well as an open seat on the Town Board that were filled when the Town Board unanimously appointed Kay's Deputy Clerk, Lanie McManus.



Lanie served as Deputy Clerk for two years and was the most qualified candidate. She continues to help the residents of Garfield Township in her new role as Clerk and is dedicated to her new responsibilities. Lanie will complete the remainder of her appointed term and will be up for election to the position in 2016.

We would also like to welcome Betty Tezak to the Deputy Clerk position. Betty will be working alongside Lanie in the Clerk's Office and brings more than ten years of accounting skills and hands-on election experience to the job. Betty is the former Deputy Clerk of Whitewater Township in Grand Traverse County. Please stop in and say hello!



MAY 5TH ELECTION

Deteriorating Michigan roads are one aspect of an upcoming ballot for which Michigan voters will head to the polls May 5th and decide the issue concerning an increase in Michigan's state sales tax. The ballot seeks to increase the state sales tax up one percent to seven percent and the ballot also proposes a drop in the state fuel tax. The state legislature passed the ballot proposal in December 2014, thus creating the vote on May 5th.

To vote in the May election, you must be registered to vote by April 6th. Wondering where to cast your vote? If you have any questions about polling locations, Township Precincts, or whether or not you are registered to vote, please contact Lanie or Betty in the Clerk's Office at (231) 941-1620 to find out. You can also find a precinct map on our website, www.garfield-twp.com under Clerk.

FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Planning Commission has embarked on the development of a new Master Plan. This document will shape the long-term growth and development of the Township, and your input is important. What do you want to see? More growth? Less growth? Safer roads with better traffic management? Keep an eye out for your opportunity to be involved. We intend to offer a range of input methods.

Two new zoning ordinances, one for the Township and one specific to the GT Commons, are undergoing final review and adoption. Each is intended to be more readable, flexible, and beneficial to our residents and business owners than the current documents are.

2014 was another busy year for construction. The most noteworthy commercial approval was the Buffalo Ridge Center, a redevelopment of the outdated Horizon Mall, including construction of an IMAX theatre and a fresh grocer moving into the former theatre structure. A strong revival of industrial activity has also brought new life to the long-vacant Lear building, and former Brown Lumber property. Development has also resumed in a number of stalled residential subdivisions.

The Township is participating in the Grand Traverse regional housing task force, which is tasked with developing a toolset of methods to encourage a diverse, healthy mix of housing. Our region's lack of sufficient affordable housing is an ongoing issue. Though Garfield offers by far the greatest number of affordable homes, we also have the highest number of homeowners or renters in need of affordable housing. Looking for more? Please visit <http://www.garfield-twp.com/planning.asp> to view the annual Planning Department report.

Looking to buy or lease property for a business or residence? Before signing on the dotted line, please contact Planning or Zoning first to ensure that your intended use of the land is supported by zoning. We'll also let you know what the long range plan is for the surrounding area, so you'll know what to expect. We are happy to provide guidance in helping you to find the right site. Please give us a call at (231) 941-1620.

PARKS UPDATE

As discussed in the Winter Newsletter, hazardous tree removal work will begin at the Grand Traverse Commons this year. The successful bidder, Deering Tree Service, came in under budget and with a contract to remove each of the fall hazards - 383 individual trees to be removed and 50 trees which are in need of pruning. It is not expected that this work will address all of the dangers which were identified by our forester. This work will complete the lion's share of necessary tree cutting at the Commons, with occasional follow-up work in the coming years to address new problems as they emerge. Hikers will encounter clearly marked "Trail Closed" signs which will indicate that tree work is ongoing in that area. A trail map of the Commons is available on our website: www.garfield-twp.com under Parks & Recreation.

SAFETY TIPS FOR GARAGE CLEAN-UP

When the last of the snow has melted, the grass is green again, and the trees are in bloom. . . . it can only mean one thing—Spring Cleaning is upon us! In an effort to make this "Spring Cleanup" a fire-safe one, the Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department offers the following safety tips:



- Clean your garage of stored newspapers or other rubbish that can fuel a fire. Newspapers stored in a damp, warm place may ignite spontaneously.
- Keep outdoor debris or dead vegetation away from the house.
- Properly dispose of oily or greasy rags. If these items must be stored, they should be kept in labeled, sealed, metal containers.
- If you store gasoline, keep it outside your home in a shed or detached garage. Keep only small quantities in tightly sealed containers. Use gasoline only as a motor fuel—never as a cleaning agent.
- Always store paint and other flammable liquids in their original, labeled containers with tight-fitting lids. Always store them at least 18 inches from appliances, heaters, pilot lights and other sources of heat or flame.

NO CHARGE YARD WASTE PASS

From May 19 through June 9, 2015, Garfield Township residents can pick up a no charge yard waste pass at the Township Hall during regular business hours. A valid ID is required to verify Garfield Township residence status. The pass is good for one trip with a load of up to three (3) cubic yards of acceptable material brought to the GT County Keystone Brush Drop-Off Site located at 2471 N. Keystone Rd. Acceptable material for this pass includes: brush, branches (up to 12 inches in diameter) leaves and grass clippings. The no charge pass is only valid for dropping off acceptable material at the Brush Drop-Off site on the following dates: **May 26, May 28, May 30, June 2, June 4, June 6, and June 9, 2015.** Brush site hours are: Tuesdays: Noon - 7 pm, Thursdays and Saturdays: 9 am -3 pm. (2015 Season opening, Tues., April 7) For more info. please call us at (231) 941-1620.

FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

The property tax system was constitutionally instituted early in Michigan's Statehood history and provides funding for education and local government. This system relies on the determination of Fair Market Value. To maintain the integrity of the system, routine property visits are necessary. Visits may be made by any of three different agencies that provide a constitutional check-and-balance in the maintenance of our property tax system.

The local Assessor is responsible for making a value determination for each parcel every year. A mass appraisal system in which building values are based on a construction cost manual, and modified by similar sold properties, is used to accomplish this task. This requires an *outside* perimeter measurement of buildings. This mass appraisal system relies on property visits that accurately catalog the property's land and building attributes (record card review).

The County Equalization Department determines proper overall assessment levels for each unit in each class of property in the county. Equalization studies are used each year to make these determinations. These studies also require property visits, using sold properties, and/or Equalization appraisals on random samples selected each year. Value conclusions are made using the same cost manual and procedures that Assessors are required to use.

The State Tax Commission (STC) through the Assessment and Certification Division (ACD) monitors both the Assessor and the County Equalization Department throughout the year. Random property visits are conducted by ACD staff in the monitoring process that leads to the STC determination of State Equalized Value (SEV). Value conclusions are made using the same cost manual and procedures used by the Assessors and County Equalization Department.

These routine property visits by any of the agencies depend on the participation of the property owner. The property tax system relies on a three tiered check-and-balance process requiring routine property visits to maintain its integrity. Accurate cataloging of a property's land and building attributes on the property record card is beneficial to the property owner, and essential to the property tax system. You may opt out of these visits by sending a written or emailed request. Questions? Please call (231)941-1620.



2015 BOARD MEETINGS

- March—10th & 24th
- April—14th & 28th
- May—12th & 26th
- June—9th & 23rd
- July—8th & 22nd
- August—12th & 26th

All meetings begin promptly at 6:00 p.m. upstairs in the Township Hall. Meeting agendas, minutes and video can be viewed on the Township website.



Now accepting VISA, MasterCard, Discover & American Express!

Make your Tax Payments with credit card OR debit card by going online to the Township website: www.garfield-twp.com

All credit card or debit card payments are subject to a 3% convenience fee. Payment services provided by Point & Pay, LLC

HOLIDAY HOURS

Township offices will be closed for the observance of the following holidays:

- Memorial Day—May 25, 2015
- Independence Day—July 2, 2015
- Labor Day—Sept. 7, 2015
- Veterans Day—Nov. 11, 2015
- Thanksgiving Day—Nov. 26, 2015

PARK RESERVATIONS

It's not too early to book your park reservations for the Summer. Applications can be downloaded from our website or picked up from the reception desk at the Township Hall.