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(231) 941-1620 / FAX: (231) 941-1588
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SPRING 2019

Garfield

Charter Township

SERVING THE CITIZENS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

TOWNSHIP HOURS

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

HOLIDAY HOURS

Township offices will be closed for the observance of the following holidays:
Presidents' Day — Feb. 18th
Memorial Day — May 27th
Independence Day — July 4th
Labor Day — Sep. 2nd

ELECTED OFFICIALS

CHUCK KORN.....SUPERVISOR
JEANE BLOOD LAW.....TREASURER
LANIE McMANUS.....CLERK
MOLLY AGOSTINELLI.....TRUSTEE
STEVE DUELL.....TRUSTEE
DENISE SCHMUCKAL.....TRUSTEE
DAN WALTERS.....TRUSTEE

STAFF

HILARY ALPERS.....APPRaiser
JUSTIN BIGBEE.....APPRaiser
AMY L DeHAAN.....ASSESSOR
RICH DERKS.....BUILDING INSPECTOR
MICHAEL GREEN.....ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
KAREN LEAVER.....OFFICE COORDINATOR
CHLOE MACOMBER.....DEPUTY TREASURER
BILL MOUSER.....FACILITIES MANAGER
ERIK PERDONIK.....DEPUTY PLANNER
DOROTHY PETROSKY...BLDG. & LAND USE ASST.
THOM SCHMUCKAL.....CODE ENFORCEMENT
AMY SIMON.....ADMIN. ASSISTANT
CARL STUDZINSKI.....BUILDING OFFICIAL
JOHN SYCH.....PLANNING DIRECTOR
BETTY TEZAK.....DEPUTY CLERK

NEW PERSONAL PROPERTY RULES FOR 2019

Taxpayers are no longer required to annually file Form 5076 - Small Business Property Tax Exemption Claim Under MCL 211.9o in order to claim the exemption. However, all taxpayers **MUST** file in 2019 to claim the exemption. Once granted, the exemption will continue until the taxpayer no longer qualifies. At that point, taxpayers are required to file Rescission Form 5618 indicating they no longer qualify for the exemption AND a Personal Property Statement (Form L-4175) no later than February 20th of the year the property is no longer eligible. Failure to file Form 5618 will result in significant penalty and interest.

IMPORTANT: Form 5076 must be completely filled out, signed AND filed by February 20, 2019, or the exemption may be denied by the Assessor

Once filed, taxpayers will NOT be required to file this form annually. However, taxpayers must be able to provide evidence to support their exemption at the request of the Assessor. Assessors may audit the personal property records of businesses within their jurisdiction. It is important (and required by MCL 211.22) that taxpayers keep accurate personal property records.

Personal property forms are available in the Assessor's Office or online at:

www.garfield-twp.com/personalproperty.asp OR
https://www.michigan.gov/taxes/0,4676,7-238-43535_72736---,00.html

Taxpayers with questions about this or any other personal property reporting requirements are encouraged to call the Assessor's Office (231) 941-1620.

WELCOME NEW DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

We are pleased to announce John Sych joined our team in December as Director of Planning. His previous experience includes working as a Community Planner for Networks Northwest and serving 12 years as Planning Director for Grand Traverse County. Prior positions also include Planning Director for Kalamazoo County and a private consulting planner.

We are confident John will meet the challenges of our community and look for opportunities for greater successes. Stop in and say hello to John.



PLANNING

A new Master Plan for Garfield Township was adopted in 2018 to replace the 2007 plan. This puts the Township on firmer legal ground as planning and zoning decisions must be consistent with an up-to-date master plan under state law. In addition, the new Plan better reflects the policy priorities of Garfield Township residents today as expressed through the extensive community survey that underlies the Plan. The Plan is a general guide and leaves ample room for more specific sub-area and/or corridor plans to bring the goals and objectives closer to implementation.

The Planning Department was responsible for generating 125 Staff Reports in 2018 (compared to 133 in 2017 and 78 in 2016) for various boards, including the Township Board, Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission.

Conceptual reviews allow applicants to appear before the Planning Commission to gauge interest in a potential project before a full application is submitted. In 2018, there were five conceptual reviews.

In some specific cases, the Director of Planning can administratively approve projects provided that they meet all requirements of the Zoning Ordinance. In 2018, there were two administrative reviews.

The Planning Commission reviewed and approved numerous projects in 2018, which included Site Plan Reviews, Planned Unit Developments, and Special Use Permits. In 2018, there were nine project reviews.

The current Zoning Ordinance was established in 2015. From time to time, amendments are needed to better adjust the ordinance to community conditions. In 2018, there were three map amendments and three text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance.

The Planning Commission meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month and is responsible for reviewing development applications, preparing plans, and making recommendations to the Township Board on development applications and zoning amendments. We would like to recognize Gil Uithol for his service as he departs the Planning Commission and welcome Bob Fudge to the Commission.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The 2018-2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved by the State of Michigan in 2018 making the Township eligible for various forms of grant funding through 2023. The Parks and Recreation Commission is amending the plan in 2019 to include five sites that have been considered as potential new parkland.

In 2018, Staff submitted for a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application for the River East Recreation Area, located on North Keystone Road along the east banks of the Boardman River. The application was unsuccessful. Staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission will be reassessing its approach to improve the park.

All planned improvements are substantially complete at the Boardman Valley Nature Preserve, with just the striping on the pickleball courts and some site restoration outstanding. The contractor has assured the Township that the remaining items will be completed as soon as weather allows in spring 2019.

The Board of Trustees acted on the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendation to allow winter trail grooming at the Silver Lake Recreation Area for cross-country skiing. The walking path will continue to be plowed for winter walkers. Instead, the groomed path runs along the edges of the trail.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Construction activity in 2018 was robust to say the least. It may not have been a record year, but by any statistical measure, it was one of our busiest years since the Building Department was established in 1972. In fact, it was our 3rd best year ever based on value, best year since 2005, and an increase of 33% over a very productive and successful 2017. Construction remained steady throughout 2018, and concluded with a total construction value of approximately \$52 million. 2018 actually showed a slight increase again for single family homes. As always, commercial activity was the catalyst in construction value. During 2018, the Building Department reviewed plans for and issued 333 permits, while performing over 1,250 inspections.

In other news, the Insurance Services Office (ISO) recently evaluated our Building Department and rated us in the highest category for both commercial and residential. Staff is very proud of this assessment as this is not an easy distinction to achieve.

Construction activity in 2019 should be good again. However we will probably return to our historical average as a year like 2018 will be difficult to replicate. Regardless, we will continue to emphasize exceptional customer service, communication, and public relations in order to maintain cooperative relationships. As a reminder we have many free booklets available that may be applicable to your next building project. If you have any questions, please feel free to stop in and see us at anytime.

ZONING

Overall, permit activity in 2018 was slightly lower than 2014, 2016, and 2017, but higher than in 2012, 2013, and 2015. Accessory structures, commercial permits, single-family dwellings, multi-family housing, decks, and other residential additions were up from last year. Significant projects this year included the Ridges at 45 Apartments (Phase 3), Bedroom Company, Action Water Sports, Serra Toyota, Opperman Electric, Traverse Area Machining, Ashland Park/Traditions PUD and various commercial/industrial redevelopment projects throughout the township.

Total complaints received by this office in 2018 were 140, which is slightly more than the 136 complaints received in 2017. Throughout 2018, a total of 342 inspections were performed resulting in the issuance of 122 Information Letters, 57 Violation Letters, and 40 Civil Infraction tickets, compared to 140 Information letters, 82 Violation letters, and 35 Civil Infraction Tickets issued in 2017. Throughout 2018, 151 violations were resolved and 14 remain unresolved.

Last year there were 24 administrative site plans reviewed which are for new commercial construction and for commercial/industrial additions, down from 31 reviewed in 2017. The site plan reviews are to verify compliance with parking, setbacks, landscaping, lighting, and other portions of the Zoning Ordinance. There were 21 storm water reviews conducted for the Zoning Department related to commercial projects, down slightly from 23 conducted in 2017. The Zoning and Storm Water Ordinances require that all storm water must be maintained on the site and cannot run off onto adjacent sites.

The Zoning Board of Appeals only considered two cases in 2018, compared to six cases each in 2016 and 2017, four in 2015 and two in 2014. Of the two cases considered in 2018, one was an interpretation request and the other one was a variance request. Both requests were related and pertained to a single project. The purpose of the Zoning Board of Appeals is to consider all applications for interpretations, variances, and appeals and to take testimony and evidence as they may arise in the administration of the Zoning Ordinance.

Please feel free to contact our office prior to moving forward on any additions or alteration as a land use permit may be required. We are here to assist you!

FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Garfield Township's Assessor encourages its property owners to stop in and review their property records regularly. Doing so may reduce the need to appear before the Township's Board of Review for a valuation appeal. Assessing staff can help ensure that the records are accurate. If something is incorrect, those items can be corrected to reflect what is actually on the property. It is important to remember that more than 6,800 properties are valued annually - it is impossible to visit them all each year and to be 100% accurate, so it is important that taxpayers help.

Michigan's property tax system was instituted early in our history and provides funding for education and local government. The system relies on the determination of Fair Market Value. In order to maintain the system's integrity, routine property visits are necessary and are made by the three agencies charged with maintaining the property tax system.

The local Assessor determines the value of each parcel annually. To accomplish this, a mass appraisal system (based on a construction cost manual, modified by similar, sold properties) is used. The costs used to value buildings require exterior measurements of the buildings, and relies on property visits to accurately catalog the property's land and building attributes (record card review).

The County Equalization Department (CED) determines proper overall assessment levels for each unit in each property class within the county. Equalization studies are used to make these determinations, and also require property visits of sold properties and/or 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 Property Services Division (PSD) monitors both the Assessor and CED throughout the annual assessment cycle. PSD staff may make random property visits in the monitoring process, which leads to the STC determination of State Equalized Value (SEV). Value conclusions are made using the same cost manual and procedures used by Assessors and CED.

These routine property visits depend on property owner participation. The property tax system relies on a three-tiered check-and-balance process that requires these visits to maintain its integrity. As a property owner, you may choose whether to participate. Simply write or email us stating your request. We hope you will participate because accurately cataloging a property's land and building attributes for the record is beneficial to the property owner and essential to the property tax system.

As always, if you have questions, please do not hesitate to stop in or call us. We hope to see you soon to review your property record.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND CRIME PREVENTION

Garfield Township and the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office are dedicated to providing a safe community and building partnerships with residents, business owners, and those that visit our area.

The Sheriff's Office has designed community programs to promote conversation, education, and citizen participation. The programs additionally provide guidance in areas of personal safety, environmental security, online safety, and further demonstrate our agencies organizational capabilities.

If you have a residential community association or business organization that is interested in partnering with the Grand Traverse County Sheriff's Office with a goal to improved safety and proactively reduce crime and victimization, please contact GTSO Garfield Township Lieutenant Chris Barsheff at (office) 231-995-5044 or (email) cbarsheff@gtsheriff.org.

The Sheriff's Office would like to be part of any future meetings your association or organization has and we look forward to hearing from you. You can play a major role in our efforts to reduce crime in the community and improve overall quality of life. Thank you!

2018 A Year of Fire Tragedy for Michigan

We Michiganders know that our state has a way of standing out. We live in a *Mitten*, we drink *pop* while much of the nation drinks *soda*, we identify as *Yoopers* or *Trolls* and we implement our own traffic culture by performing a *Michigan Left*. However, Michigan also stood out in 2018 for having *126 fire deaths*, a 33% increase from 2017! Despite the many resources available in our state, we are still losing lives at an unsettling rate from residential fires. How many fire fatalities is too many for Michigan?

What do we know? We know that that 35% of these fire deaths happened overnight and that over 60% of them originated in the bedroom or living room. We also know that in Michigan, the leading cause of fire fatalities was smoking. However, a large number of fires also resulted from cooking and electrical issues. Finally, an overwhelming 47% of these fire fatalities were people ages 40-69. That means that those of you reading this newsletter likely fall in or very close to this age bracket.

So, we are taking this opportunity to challenge you. We are challenging you to take the following actions today:

- Have a safe place to extinguish smoking materials, such as a deep, heavy ashtray.
- Smoke outside.
- Do not smoke in bed or while lying on the couch or recliner. You could fall asleep.
- Do not leave the kitchen when cooking or a room where a space heater is being used.
- Do not wear loose fitting clothing, such as robes, when cooking.
- Move things that can burn away from the stove. This includes curtains, boxes, paper, wooden utensils and dishtowels.
- Only plug one heat producing appliance into an electrical outlet at a time.
- Keep all items a minimum of 3' away from any heating mechanism (fireplace, woodstove, space heater or radiator).
- Never use an extension cord with a heat-producing appliance.
- Don't overload extension cords or wall outlets.
- Use light bulbs that match the recommended wattage on the lamp or fixture.
- Install carbon monoxide alarms and test monthly.
- Check smoke **1** time a month, change the batteries every **6** months and replace the alarms every **10** years.

Again, how many fire fatalities is too many for Michigan? What if one of them was your family member? Let's work together to lower this number. Do you need help with smoke alarms or have other safety related questions? Please reach out to us!

Grand Traverse Metro Fire Dept. – Prevention Bureau



2019 Household Hazardous Waste Schedule

- May 9th 1:00pm to 7:00pm
- June 20th 1:00pm to 7:00pm
- August 8th 1:00pm to 7:00pm
- September 28th 9am to 2pm

Appointments are required for all HHW events and can be made by calling (231) 941-5555. Appointments will not be accepted until about one month before each event.

Brush Drop-Off Yard Waste Passes

Garfield Township will again be offering its residents a no-charge yard waste pass to help with your spring cleanup. As we approach spring, watch for our notice on our website for the dates the yard waste passes will be available.

The Silver Lake Recreation Area has three pavilions available for parties, birthdays, family reunions, graduation open houses, etc. for a nominal fee. It is not too early in the year to make your reservations for your upcoming events. Please call us at (231) 941-1620 for more information and to check on availability, or come into our office to complete your pavilion reservation.

The Township Board meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

The Planning Commission meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

The Zoning Board of Appeals meets on an as needed basis on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

The Parks and Recreation Commission meets four times a year.

All meetings take place at the Garfield Township Hall unless stated otherwise on the agenda.