

Torch Lake Township News - December 2007

TORCH LAKE TOWNSHIP, EASTPORT, MICHIGAN

NEW TOWNSHIP FACILITY IS PROGRESSING

Construction of the long-anticipated new facility housing Township offices, the Fire Department and the Emergency Medical Services began in early April 2007. Since then, construction on the project has moved forward, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. Comstock Construction is hoping to have the building totally enclosed by December so that work on the project can easily continue throughout the winter.

In the meantime, Board members have been reviewing proposals received from several sources including furniture vendors and voice, video and computer system vendors.

Many behind-the-scene decisions need to be made, for example the kinds of door hardware, light fixtures and restroom fixtures that are best suited for the new facility. Colors of exterior siding, windows and trim have also been determined. Interior color



schemes still need to be finalized and the grounds around the building must be prepared for landscaping in the spring. In true design-build fashion, it is a work in progress, changing weekly.

It is exciting to watch the project evolve into what is becoming a very handsome, functional building that will centralize a majority of Township services under one roof. As a reminder, the Board will continue to operate Fire Station #2 located on US 31 south of Creswell Road.

Hopefully, by May 1, 2008, all Township services will be transferred from the current Eastport facilities into the new building. This will be a big, but positive, change for residents and employees. A dedication ceremony will be scheduled after the move is completed. In the meantime, a committee of Upper Torch Lake Association members is gathering materials about our Township to place in a time capsule that will be put in a pillar by the main entrance of the new building.

COURT ALLOWS JANUARY 15, 2008 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

From the desk of Doris Leech, Township Clerk . . .

On Nov. 21, 2007, Michigan's Supreme Court ruled that a Presidential Primary election tentatively scheduled for January 15, 2008 could be held. This January 15th Primary will be the first election at which Township election officials will be required to enforce the election law requirement that all voters at the poll either show identification with a picture and name or sign an identity affidavit before a ballot will be issued to them. This may be annoying, especially if the election official happens to be a spouse or next-door neighbor, but please realize the election official does not have the option of making an exception to this "photo or affidavit" requirement. We trust we will have the cooperation of all of our voters. Absentee voters are not affected.

Since there will be separate ballots for Republicans and Democrats, absentee voters will have to specify which party ballot they want sent to them. Township voters who will need an absentee ballot may pick up an application at the Township office. For those residing elsewhere, a brief note mailed or faxed (599-2981) to me will suffice for an application, if it contains your name(s), township address, reason for absentee ballot, address where ballot(s) are to be mailed, party ballot(s) requested, and signature(s).

A reminder! Partisan and nonpartisan candidates for Township board offices, must file nominating petitions and Affidavit of Identity for the August 5, 2008 primary by May 13, 2008.

TREASURER'S REPORT Sharon Schultz

WINTER 2007 PROPERTY TAX BILLS TO BE MAILED:

Winter 2007 property tax bills were mailed out in late November. Payments can be made without penalty anytime between now and February 14, 2008. On March 1, 2008, any unpaid property taxes become the responsibility of the Antrim County Treasurer's office.

Please remember that during the past three years Antrim County taxes were shifted from a 100% winter collection to a 100% summer collection on your tax bills. As a result, your Summer 2007 tax bills contained 100% of the "county" tax for the first time. Because of the shift to a summer collection of this tax, no Antrim County taxes will appear on your Winter 2007 tax bills.

Another change will take place in 2008 for Torch Lake Township taxpayers whose property is located in the Central Lake School district. Starting with the Summer 2008 tax bills, 100% of Central Lake's school property taxes will be collected in the summer collection rather than in the winter. I'm hoping this information will reach all affected taxpayers, so please help pass the word around to others. As in the past, Char-Em ISD property taxes will still appear on your

Winter 2008 bill; this is no change from past practice.

IT'S TIME TO GET YOUR DOG LICENSES:

I'll be selling Dog Licenses through February 29, 2008. After this date, the license fees double and they must be purchased at the Antrim County offices. So, please make sure you have a current license for each of your dogs. In order to purchase a license you will need to show a current rabies certificate. One (1) and three (3) year licenses are available depending upon the expiration date on your dog's current rabies certificate.

One (1) year license fees, if purchased by Feb. 29, 2008, are :

Unsexed dogs: \$5.00; Male/Female: \$8.00

Three (3) year licenses fees, if purchased by Feb. 29, 2008, are :

Unsexed dogs: \$12.00; Male/Female: \$21.00

These dog license fees double beginning March 1, 2008, so purchase your licenses early. I'm available evenings and weekends and am just a phone call away. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any

EMS STUDY COMMITTEE REVIEWS AMBULANCE SERVICE OPTIONS

In August 2007, the Township Board established a committee to research area ambulance services and to develop recommendations for the Board to consider. Members of the committee are: Char Lundy (Chair); David McDermid (Co-chair); Becky Norris, Bill Laakko and Jim Gainey.

Group members were asked to gather information about several ambulance-related matters including: (1) levels of EMS services provided; (2) training practices; (3) operational costs; (4) financial resources; (5) personnel recruitment and retention; and, (6) budget information. Based upon the committee's findings, its members will make recommendations to the Board concerning



ambulance services that reflect the desires and interests of Township residents.

Committee members have been meeting at 10:00 AM at the Township Hall on most Mondays and the meetings are open to the public. Meeting minutes are available at the Township Office for anyone interested in reading them.

The committee continues to gather information from several sources and it is likely that it will take 3-4 more months to finalize and forward its recommendations to the Board. This is a timely and important study as the results will likely influence the future kinds of ambulance services offered here in Torch Lake Township.



INTERESTED IN RUNNING FOR TOWNSHIP OFFICE IN 2008?

All Township elected positions will be open to interested, qualified candidates next year: Supervisor; Clerk; Treasurer; and, two Trustee positions. These positions have four-year terms. Good candidates will be needed. The current Supervisor and Clerk will not be running for re-election in the November 2008 election. General responsibilities associated with each of these positions include, but are not limited to:

SUPERVISOR:

- Serves as the Township’s spokesperson
- Addresses the needs of citizens and property owners
- Organizes and moderates meetings
- Votes on matters before the Board
- Calls special meetings of the Board
- Provides for property assessment services
- Serves as Secretary to the Board of Review
- Transacts Township’s legal business
- Develops budget proposals
- Appoints Planning Commission and ZBA members
- Serves on the Township Election Commission
- Supervises Township employees
- Implements Township policy and ordinances

CLERK:

- Secures Township records, books and papers
- Retains certificates of oaths of office
- Accounts for all funds, crediting and debiting them using proper receipts and warrants drawn by the Treasurer
- Maintains detailed accounting records
- Maintains records of Township assets, liabilities, fund equities, revenues and expenditures for each Township fund
- Maintains records of Township contracts, resolutions, ordinances, and policies
- Administers all elections and chairs the Township Election Commission
- Registers voters and maintains such records
- Records and secures Board meeting minutes
- Posts meeting and hearing notices
- Administers Township cemetery records
- Responds to requests for public information
- Prepares financial records for audit
- Appoints a Deputy Clerk

TREASURER:

- Serves as Township’s tax collecting agent
- Records all income, receipts and payments
- Deposits receipts and invests funds
- Maintains uniform accounting system
- Reports status of each Township fund
- Pays out funds on order of the Board in coordination with the Clerk
- Prepares financial records for audit
- Furnishes a bond to the Township
- Serves on Township Election Commission
- Issues dog licenses, landfill coupons, boat trailer stickers and accounts for launch fees
- Appoints a Deputy Treasurer

TRUSTEES (2 positions):

- Oversee Township finances
- Work to build trust in Township operations
- Assigned no specific duties by law
- Participate in deliberations and decisions
- Investigate issues for the Township Board
- Accept additional duties as requested by the Board

IMPORTANT 2008 TOWNSHIP ELECTION DATES:

4:00 PM, Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Partisan and non-partisan candidates must file nominating petitions and an Affidavit of Identity for the August 2008 primary election.

4:00 PM, Thursday July 17, 2008

Candidates without political party affiliation must file qualifying petitions for November 2008 general election.

Tuesday, August 5, 2008

State Primary Election

Tuesday, November 4, 2008

State General Election

A good source for election information is the Michigan Secretary of State’s website: www.michigan.gov/sos

General requirements for elected office are that a candidate be a US citizen, be a registered voter, and be a township resident for 30 days.

Computer skills such as word processing, data base management, e-mail, internet research, and use of software applications are a real asset to anyone seeking these elective offices.




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Fax: (231) 599-2981
Website: www.torchlaketownship.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



. . . . **BOARD INFORMATIONAL BRIEFS**

TORCH BAY NATURE PRESERVE AUTHORITY

Township resident Jerry Klinefelter has been appointed by the Board to serve on the TBNP Authority as its member-at-large. Also appointed to serve on the TBNP Authority was Mike Okma who will serve as the representative of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy. The TBNP Authority monitors implementation of the Master Plan established for the nature preserve.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Township resident Jerry Kulka has been appointed by the Board to serve on the Audit Committee. Jerry will join Township resident Wally Juall and Board Trustees Alan Martel and George Parker as members of this group. Jerry's appointment fills the vacancy created by the resignation of former resident, Bob McLeod.

SALARY COMPENSATION COMMITTEE

Dale Thiel, Township resident, has been appointed as a member of the Board's Salary Compensation Committee. Dale's appointment fills a vacancy created by the resignation of Tom Stillings from this committee. Dale will join Township residents Dick Saul and Wally Juall in fulfilling the responsibilities of this committee.

DECEMBER 2007 BOARD OF REVIEW

The Board of Review will meet at the Township Hall at 9:30 AM on Tuesday, December 11, 2007. It will review any clerical errors or mutual mistakes of fact on property assessments and consider homestead or agricultural exemptions for this or the prior year. It may also grant poverty or hardship exemptions to qualified individuals. Contact Assessor Pat Suboski regarding questions.

