



Laketown Calendar

May

- 3 - Election Day
- 4 - Board Workshop, 4:00 p.m.
- 4 - Planning Commission
- 11 - Township Board
- 18 - Parks
- 25 - ZBA
- 30 - Memorial Day; Office Closed

June

- 1 - Board Workshop, 4:00 p.m.
- 1 - Planning Commission
- 8 - Township Board
- 15 - Parks and Recreation
- 22 - ZBA

July

- 2 - Pancake Breakfast
- 4 - Independence Day; Office Closed
- 6 - Board Workshop, 4:00 p.m.
- 6 - Planning Commission
- 13 - Township Board
- 20 - Parks and Recreation
- 27 - ZBA

All meetings at 7:00 p.m. at the township hall unless otherwise noted

Terry Hofmeyer, Laketown Township Supervisor

What's Necessary In Laketown Township?

Long before I was born and at the height of the "Great Depression" my grandparents owned and lived on a forty acre parcel of farm land on 61st Street in Laketown Township. Life on the farm back then was not easy and from family conversations I suspect that if they didn't grow it, raise it or make it, they probably didn't have it. Electric lines were not constructed in almost all of the township, roads to town were more sand than gravel and most outings, other than those at the Graafschap Christian Reformed Church, were probably limited to family gatherings and the annual county fair. Telephones were almost unheard of and the very few farms that had small "in-house" electric generators could light up the kitchen and perhaps a single bulb in the barn.

Fast forward some eighty years from the old farm to today and you'll find that things have changed - in some very dramatic ways. Electric service, either from Consumer's Energy or the city's Board of Public Works, supply energy to every corner of the township. Streets have been improved and paved and many miles of non-motorized pathways offer safety and enjoyment to our resident walkers and bicycle riders. We have bountiful and beautiful public recreation areas as well as a qualified and well trained fire

department offering fire protection and emergency medical services to every parcel of land and home in the township.

All of these things are now considered both needed and necessary for our quality of life in Laketown Township, even though many were not available during my grandparent's time on the farm.

I want to talk to you about another thing that appears to be a necessity for each of us and the continued quality of life within our township. Limited areas of our township, mainly along the north and south borders, have access to cable television and the internet, but the majority of the township remains un-serviced. Township residents have appeared before your board citing the facts that for every family with students, for every family operating a home-based business, for every family conducting on-line banking/financial transactions, for every family wishing to stay connected with friends and family, and for every family seeking options to access data or "streaming" for movies - reliable and affordable high speed internet access is in fact a necessary utility.

The township board has taken action to place a bond proposal on the May 3rd election ballot to provide fiber optic high speed internet

access to every property and home within the township. This system would be township owned and has the capability of providing high speed internet service at an economical and competitive price that the township can control. The cost to provide underground fiber optic cable is projected to be approximately 1.66 mills over a fifteen year period. I am aware that a group of township residents have formed an informational committee to provide detailed information on costs, services and time schedule to allow you to make an informed decision on May 3rd.

Clair DeMull Award Goes to Tammy Bloomfield

We thank Tammy Bloomfield for her dedication to the Felt Estate.

Congratulations on the Clair DeMull Volunteer of the Year Award!



Clerk's Corner *Clerk & Deputy Clerk Wendy VanHuis & Jenifer French*

Election May 3, 2016

There will be an election Tuesday, May 3rd in all of the precincts in Laketown Township. Precinct 1, 2, and 3 will be voting on the Laketown Township Fiber Optic Bond Proposal (see article in this newsletter), and Precinct 2 (Hamilton School District) will also be voting on a Hamilton Community School District Bonding Proposal.

Polls will be open on Election Day, Tuesday, May 3, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Absentee Ballots can be obtained at

the Township office during regular business hours M-F 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Precinct 1 (Holland School District) & Precinct 3 (Saugatuck School District) vote at the Laketown Township Hall

Precinct 2 (Hamilton School District) vote at the Graafschap Fire Station

If you are not registered, note that the last day to register for the May 3rd, 2016 Election is by 5:00 p.m. Monday, April 4.

laketown gig - Fiber Optic Internet to the Homes and Businesses of Laketown Township

On December 9, 2015 the township board approved a contract with Yates Engineering Services Michigan to study fiber optic internet system options for Laketown Township. Yates is an engineering firm from southern Indiana that has extensive experience in building fiber to the home (FTTH) projects. The first report from Yates was received at the end of January 2016. It provides us with options for the various types of fiber optic systems to consider as well as cost estimates for constructing the system. The estimated cost to construct the fiber optic system, including costs of bond issuance, is \$8,680,000. The system would be built almost entirely underground using as little aerial construction as possible. This will improve the reliability of the system during inclement weather. A copy of the Yates study can be found on www.laketowntwp.org.

Constructing a fiber optic system will require voter approval of a proposal to issue bonds to pay for the construction of the system. The township board rescheduled its regular February meeting and met on February 8 to meet a deadline for submitting bond proposal language to the county. The board reaffirmed the decision to hold an election for the fiber optic bond proposal at its March 9 meeting. **The election will be held on May 3, 2016.** The proposal language is included.

If this proposal is approved by the voters of Laketown Township, the board would next consider a contract for engineering services to design and construct the system. The system design would take approximately four months. This would be followed by one month for bidding the construction of the system. After selecting a construction contractor

Fiber Optic Bond Proposal

Shall the Township of Laketown, County of Allegan, Michigan, borrow the principal sum of not to exceed Eight Million Six Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$8,680,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds, in one or more series, payable in not to exceed sixteen (16) years from the date of issue of each series, for the purpose of paying the cost to acquire, construct, furnish, and equip capital improvements consisting generally of a fiber optic infrastructure to provide internet service in the Township, including fiber optic backbone, service lines, necessary electronics, rights-of-way, appurtenances and attachments thereto?

YES
NO

If approved, the estimated millage to be levied in 2016 is 0.7341 mill (\$0.7341 per \$1,000 of taxable value) and the estimated simple average annual millage rate required to retire the bonds is 1.6572 mills (\$1.6572 per \$1,000 of taxable value).

the actual construction of the system would take four to seven months, largely dependent on weather. The process to bid and select an internet service provider (ISP) to operate the system can take place simultaneously. We expect to be able to include price controls, quality of service standards, 24-hour help desk, and similar items in this bidding. It is possible the entire system could be up and running at this time next year, spring of

2017.

The system would have a base level of service of 100-120 mbps (megabytes per second), with higher speeds up to and exceeding one gig (1000 mbps) available. The actual monthly cost for this service will not be known until the bid process, but we expect it would be very competitive. Connecting to the internet system and paying the monthly service charges would be optional. Township residents and property owners will not be required to connect.

This year's March Board of Review is over and the assessing roll for 2016 has been sent to the Allegan County Equalization Department for their review. We have two new members on our Board of Review. Welcome to Kevin Stoike and Richard Swanson. They along with acting Chair Bob Jaskulski, and Township Supervisor Terry Hofmeyer addressed the concerns and questions of 23 taxpayers that came in or sent written appeals. Thank you all for your work in reviewing citizen concerns.

This chart shows a comparison to last year.

2015 Comparison to 2016 Roll

New Construction (assessed amount added to roll): \$6,659,300 (\$4,711,600 last year)

(All construction including additions, barns/garages, decks/porches, etc)

Note: 26 new single-family homes (20 last year, 23 the year before) have an average value (according to value claimed on the permits) of \$449,794 compared to \$457,018 last year.

	2015	2016	% Change	Last Year
SEV	\$467,037,400	\$496,717,500	6.35%	3.53%
Taxable	\$357,048,228	\$367,247,948	2.86%	3.70%

County Ratios And Their Effect By Class

Class	Ratio	% Change (to 50%)	% Change-2015	% Change - 2014
Agricultural	44.55	12.23%	(-1.75%)	10.50%
Commercial	51.44	(-2.80)	5.80	(-9.58%)
Industrial	48.84	2.38%	(-4.65%)	6.52%
Residential	46.99	6.41%	3.07%	0.10%
Developmental	59.84	(-16.44%)	(-14.51%)	18.85%

One other item: If you have just built a new home or recently purchased an existing home, please check to be sure you have applied for the Principal Residence Exemption (PRE). The deadlines for applying for the PRE have been changed from May 1st to June 1st which will apply the exemption for the entire year. A second deadline of November 1st has been established and will apply the PRE for the winter bill only. Also, if you've moved from a home that was your Principal Residence and that home is on the market and not rented, you can apply for a Conditional Rescind and still get the tax break for up to three years. The Conditional Rescind needs to be applied for each year that you wish to claim it. The Principal Residence Exemption form is located on the Forms page of the Laketown website, www.laketowntwp.org or, of course, is available at the township office.



UPCOMING Events at The Felt Estate

SPRING FASHION SHOW

Something Old ~ Something New

The Felt Estate will host a fashion show Saturday, May 7 - the day before Mother's Day! So, call your Mom, your sisters, your daughters, and your friends and invite them to attend this fun Spring Garden Party and Fashion Show featuring Something Old ~ Something New. This will give you a look at vintage dresses (different dresses from the last show) - and the dresses of today.



The event will be held in our new tent west of the mansion. With a catered lunch, spring teas, and a vintage wedding theme - this will be a stunning, fun fashion event you'll remember for years to come.

Tickets are \$40.00 per person; or \$300 for a table of 8. (\$20 of each ticket purchase is a donation to the Felt Estate - and you will receive a gift letter for tax purposes.) Tickets for the



Felt Estate Summer Tours

Tours: Begin May 8, 2016 and end September 5, 2016

Tours are every Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Mondays are **FREE** to Seniors (62+)

Prices:

Adults: \$12

Seniors (62+) and Students: \$10

Children 12 and under: FREE

Dates and Times are subject to change please visit www.feltmansion.org or call 616.335.8982



Spring Garden Party will go on sale online April 1. Visit www.feltmansion.org for tickets.

Treasurer's Trove

Laketown Township Treasurer, Gary Dewey



What a pleasant winter we had this year. I prefer warm weather and this winter pleased me greatly. However, as a scientist and biologist I wonder how this mild winter affects plants, birds, mammals, etc.

We completed winter tax collection, distribution, and settled with the county on March 21, 2016. We had a little higher tax delinquency rate this year and these are turned over to the county. Any unpaid taxes must now be paid to the Allegan County Treasurer. Please contact the county treasurer office at (269) 673-0260 for current pay-off amounts and mailing address.

Reminders:

- Hardship exemptions and tax deferment requests need to be applied for each year. Applications are available at the township office or online at www.laketowntwp.org.

- Summer tax bills will be mailed the first week of July and will be due on Wednesday, September 14, 2016. Remember that postmarks are not

honored as payment date. All payments must be received by the due date to be considered as prompt and on-time payment.

I love living in Laketown and my passion for public service continues. We continue to grow and with growth there are many concerns that we have. Please share your concerns with staff and members of all our boards. I always appreciate input and concerns and seek answers that keep the common good in focus.

Gibson Cemetery

If you would like to place a flag over the Memorial Day weekend on the grave site of a veteran who is buried in the Gibson Cemetery, there are flags available at the township hall. You may pick one up during regular office hours. The township will remove the flags on the Tuesday following Memorial Day. We wish to honor all veterans, so if you are unable to place a flag yourself, our sexton will place the flag for you upon request to the township.



The Township is responsible for periodic mowing; however, this is not a fully manicured cemetery. We wish to show respect to each family, and ask that you help us care for our country cemetery by limiting and removing personal items in a timely manner. Spring is a great time to do this.

I would like to start this newsletter with a few safety tips from the National Fire Protection Association,

Important spring cleaning home fire safety tips from the NFPA:

Fact: Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half.

Did you know that roughly half of home fire deaths result from fires reported between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m., when most people are asleep?

Ensure smoke alarms are installed inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.

Test them at least once a month by pushing the test button. Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm “chirps,” warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.

Fact: The leading cause of home clothes dryer fires is failure to clean them.

Clean the lint filter before or after each load of laundry.

Remove lint that has collected around the drum.

Keep the area around your dryer clear of things that can burn, like boxes, cleaning supplies and clothing.

Fact: Most cooking fires in the home involve the stovetop. Keep anything that can catch fire — oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains — away from your stovetop.

Always stay in the kitchen when frying on the stovetop.

Fact: Extension cord fires outnumbered fires beginning with permanent or detachable power cords by two-to-one. Check electrical cords to make sure they are not running across doorways or under carpets. Extension cords are intended for temporary use.

Have a qualified electrician add more receptacle outlets so you don't have to use extension cords.

For more fire safety tips, visit www.nfpa.org/safetytips.

As the weather warms and we start to clean up the mess outdoors that Old Man Winter has left us, please remember the rules for burning that are in place. The burning ordinance can be found on-line. Contact the Township Office during normal business hours to obtain a burn permit and after hours contact one of fire officers that were listed in the last newsletter.

Mark your calendars now for the annual Pancake Breakfast – Saturday, July 2! Have a safe and enjoyable spring.

See You in The Parks

Michelle Sall

Dog parks, bathrooms and trail improvements were some of the hot topics at the most recent Parks meeting. Improvements and recreational opportunities being considered this year include investigating options for a dog park, changing the old Township Hall building to a high use park and converting it into restrooms, renovating the historic Huyser home, providing a picnic shelter at the Shore Acres park, and improving walkways at Farview.

In addition, a pole barn located at Shore Acres is in need of being removed. If you are a township resident and interested in having the barn, please contact Al Meshkin at the office to make arrangements for its removal.



We have renewed the contract for maintenance at the beach which includes clearing sand from the steps Memorial Day through Labor Day.

If you would like to use a park to hold a family picnic, use the softball field, or plan an outdoor event, we have a free park use reservation form. Please check our website or contact the office for the application form.

We hope you were able to enjoy some of the activities provided by our partnership with the Outdoor Discovery Center (ODC) this past winter.

Upcoming ODC activities include:

Knee-deep in a wetland (Farview) Fri., April 22

Spring wildflowers of Sanctuary Woods, Sat., May 14

Little explorers (Wolters Woods), Sat., June 4

Wetland discovery (Farview), Tues., June 9

Hike by the light of the moon (Huyser) Sat., June 18

These events are free and registration is required. You may pre-register or find out more about these events by contacting the ODC at 616-393-9453.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a parks survey. Please consider completing and returning the form, or submitting your responses online -

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QTXST86>.

Your input helps us determine goals and projects for each year. Feel free to attend a Parks meeting held the third Wednesday of every month at 7 pm, or call with any comments or suggestions you may have.

Laketown Township
4338 Beeline Road
Holland, Michigan 49423
Phone: (616) 335-3050
Fax: (616) 335-5459
www.laketowntwp.org

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Laketown Township Board

Township Office - (616) 335-3050

Supervisor - Terry Hofmeyer

Treasurer - Gary Dewey

Clerk - Wendy Van Huis

Trustee - Linda Howell

Trustee - Ed Stielstra

Planning Commission Chair - Bob Cook

Zoning Board of Appeals Chair - David Weishaar

Parks and Recreation Chair - Michelle Sall

Township Staff

Manager - Al Meshkin

Assessor - Paul Smith

Administrative Assistants: Kathy Stoike, Charlene Fields, Jenifer French, Diane Ybarra, Staci Veldt

Facilities Operations - Dan Williams

Graafschap Fire Department - (616) 396-4060

Building Inspector - Al Ellingsen - (269) 214-2382

Mechanical & Plumbing Inspector - Bob Modreske
(616) 477-4940

Electrical Inspector - Gordon Bosch - (616) 396-1448

Allegan County Directory

County Commissioner -

Dean Kapenga - (616) 218-2599

Animal Control - (269) 673-0519

Central Dispatch - (269) 673-3899

County Clerk - (269) 673-0450

Drain Commissioner - (269) 673-0440

Health Department - (269) 673-5411

Register of Deeds - (269) 673-0390

Road Commission - (269) 673-2184

Senior & Veterans Services - 877-673-5333

County Treasurer - (269) 673-0260

Streets Lights - contact Consumers Energy 800- 477-5050 or email at customer@consumers.engery.com

State Representative - Mary Whiteford (517) 373-0836

State Senator Tonya Schuitmaker (517) 373-0793

U.S. Congressman - Fred Upton - (269) 982-1986