A Message from the Supervisor
by Linda Howell

On March 6, 2019, I received the honor of being appointed to follow Terry Hofmeyer as your Township Supervisor. I want to thank Terry for his many years of service and his wife Ruth for her understanding and support of him in this role and the large time commitment it meant away from home and family. Terry set a very high standard for me to follow and I wish him well in retirement.

Some have asked me why I applied for this job. Simply put – Laketown is home. It’s about giving back; putting in the effort to keep Laketown the place people want to live, and where they can and do prosper. It’s about community and being proud of our Township, our home. I was born and grew up on the south side of Holland, spending early years across the street from Laketown at Lakeview Elementary. I've been a Laketown resident since I moved back in 1993, and have had an active involvement in township affairs since 2006 on the Parks and Recreation Commission, then Planning Commission in 2008, and joining the Board in 2014.

Laketown is unique. It is a residential township that is part rural with large parcels and agriculture; part suburban subdivisions; a dramatic mix of household incomes; part new residents and part families that have been here for generations; part Holland, part Saugatuck, and part of three different public school districts. Add all those parts together and you get Laketown – and only Laketown.

I believe the Board must take a holistic approach to the Township’s future, focusing on quality of life for all residents. That focus must be guided by financial caution (our budget is healthy and stable); anticipated financial trends; long-term planning; distinguishing between required services and desired services; sustainability of proposed projects; potential liabilities; and most importantly, public health, safety and welfare, all the while listening to the residents’ comments, concerns, and hopefully, compliments.

My primary goal is to protect our quality of life by maintaining fiscal stability and working on long-term strategic planning.

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Treasurer’s Trove
by Gary Dewey, Treasurer

I love Laketown! My wife and I have lived in Laketown since 1974 and reared our family here. I have been an Allegan County resident for 68 years. Laketown and all of West Michigan is a special place to live with special generous people. Our township has a lot of natural area and we need to preserve as much as we can. As a biologist and naturalist, I observe many plants, animals, birds and even fish, frogs, toads and other nature things. On my Sunday drive I always attempt to observe three new nature items and I’m rarely disappointed. Get out and enjoy your special township.

Taxes for the calendar year 2018 have been collected and tax distribution and our final settlement with the Allegan County treasurer was on March 20, 2019. We had a low delinquency rate again this year. All unpaid taxes as of March 1, 2019 were turned over to the county for collection. Please contact the Allegan County Treasurer at 269-673-0260 for current payoff amounts and mailing address. Summer tax bills will be mailed the first week of July and will be due September 16, 2019. Please remember that postmarks are not honored as payment date. All payment must be received by September 16th to be considered on time. We are always thankful for prompt payment!

Hardship exemptions are granted by the Board of Review and must be applied for each year. Tax deferments must be applied for both summer and winter season, and each year since they are not renewable. Applications are available at the township office or online at www.laketowntwp.org.

Herrick Library News
by Andrea Goodell

April is the Month of the Young Child, and Herrick District Library is celebrating with international music and dance events for children, teens and their families.

The 123 Andrés Family Concert – 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Saturday, April 20, at Herrick District Library, 300 S. River Ave., Holland – will engage children and families with dance moves, humor, and singable, danceable tunes for kids of all ages.

Ugandan musician and dance instructor Samuel Nalangira will lead three workshops for kids, teens and families. His Teen Dance Workshop will introduce teens (12 to 18 years old) to traditional African instruments – many of which he made himself – and traditional African dance 4-5 p.m. Friday, April 26, in the Library’s Hazel B. Hayes Auditorium, 300 S. River Ave. Nalangira’s Family Drum Workshop will be 11 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 27, at the Holland Township Fire Station No. 1, 131 Riley St. His Kids Dance Workshop (for kids 6-11 years old) will be 2 p.m. that day in the Herrick District Library Hazel B. Hayes Auditorium, 300 S. River Ave.

Howell, continued from front page.

The Planning Commission is working on an update to the Master Plan. That process included gathering input, questions, concerns, and desires from residents through multiple meetings to reach agreement on future land use. A general consensus will help reinforce the tie that binds us all to Laketown and support the community identity and cohesiveness that is key to our shared future success and prosperity.

Planning done right and done well takes time and effort. Thank you to all the residents that have participated in the Master Plan process and the members on the Planning Commission for their attention to detail. I hope we can count on everyone to continue to be a part of the process of shaping our future. Please watch for more updates on the finalization of the Master Plan.

Once the Master Plan is finished, I would like to see the Board use it as a basis for a new, longer term strategic plan that goes beyond land use and zoning. If we can agree on what we want the Township to look like in the future, it will help to build that cohesive community where we not only can but want to look out for our neighbors and our common future.


**SPECIAL ELECTION MAY 7, 2019 - SAMPLE BALLOT ENCLOSED**

There will be an election on Tuesday May 7th for residents in Precinct 1 (Holland Public School District) and Precinct 3 (Saugatuck Public School District).

Precinct 1: Holland Area Community Swimming Pool Authority Bond Proposal. See sample ballot.

Precinct 2: NO ELECTION.

Precinct 3: Saugatuck Public Schools Bonding Proposal. See sample ballot.

Please remember to vote May 7th at the Township Hall, from 7 am – 8 pm. You can obtain an absentee ballot prior to the election online or from the Township Hall during regular business hours (M-F 7:30 am – 5 pm).

**VOTER REGISTRATION CHANGES – STATEWIDE BALLOT PROPOSAL 18-3**

With the passage of statewide ballot proposal 18-3 in November 2018, the following is for reference to the voter registration process.

**AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION**

When eligible citizens who are not already registered to vote complete a driver’s license or personal identification card transaction, they will be automatically registered to vote unless they affirmatively decline.

**DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE**

Voters may register by mail or online up to 15 days prior to an election. Voters may also register in person with their local clerk up to and including Election Day. A voter registering in the final 14 days, including Election Day, will need to show proof of residency in addition to proof of identity (or an ID that proves both). Proof of residency must include the applicant’s name and current address. Examples include: current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck, government check, other government document. Please note: By law, voters must be 30-day residents of a jurisdiction to be qualified to vote in the jurisdiction. In addition, those same registrants can request an absentee ballot at the time of registration. Important note: same-day registrants have the option to vote an Absentee Voter ballot in the clerk’s office or vote in their precinct on Election Day.

**NO REASON APPLICATION FOR ABSENTEE VOTING**

Voters no longer need to give a reason to receive an Absentee Voter ballot. A registered voter may now request an Absentee Voter ballot simply by submitting a signed request, application, or note to the local clerk.

**KEY POINTS**

- The last day to register with the local clerk in any manner other than in-person is 15 days prior to the election (April 22, 2019).
- In-person registration at the local clerk’s office with proof of residency is allowed prior to the election through 8 p.m. on Election Day.
- The last day a voter may request an absent voter ballot via First Class mail is now 5 p.m. the Friday prior to Election Day.
- The time frame to obtain an emergency absent voter ballot begins at 5 p.m. the Friday prior to Election Day through 4 p.m. on Election Day.
- Weekend Hours – Section G also requires the local clerk’s office to be open at least eight hours on the weekend prior to an election. We will be open Saturday, May 4, 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**FAQ’s:**

Is cable hook-up available in Laketown?
Charter Communications is available in the northern part of the township. Fiber will soon be available throughout the township offered through Comcast. Contact these companies for further information.

Where do I get a dog license?
A dog license is available through Allegan County and you may complete the application process by mail. Licenses are not available from the Township Office although you may pick up an application for one there. See the Dog License Application Form on the forms page on our website.

Where do I vote:
This depends on which of the three precincts in which you live. See Voter and Election Information on our website.

When is the next Township Board meeting:
The Township Board meets the second Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Township Office.

Whom do I call for a burn permit?
Call the Township Office on the day you are going to burn. You will receive verbal approval unless weather and dryness conditions prohibit safe burning. If you live in a subdivision in Laketown Township, you may burn on odd days only. There is no fee for a burn permit.

How can I reserve a gazebo at a park or the softball diamond?
Park gazebos and the softball diamond may be reserved free of charge. Call the office for a Parks Use Application form or visit our website.
Felt Mansion News
by Patty Meyer

Another winter is passed, and we are gearing up for the new season at the Felt Estate.

The first of our Spring self-guided tours begins in May. We start with Tulip Time Tours from May 5 - May 9, 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. These are self-guided tours where guests may explore the Felt Mansion and grounds at their own pace.

Next, we have our summer self-guided tours from Memorial Day through Labor Day. These are (most) Sundays - Wednesdays from 1:00 - 5:00 p.m. Occasionally, a tour is cancelled due to a rental event. Always check the online calendar at www.feltmansion.org.

And, of course, summer brings our Thursdays at the Felt Summer Concert Series. We have a great line-up of performers this year. (Check out the poster!) Food service begins at 6:00 p.m. and music begins promptly at 7:00 pm. Concerts typically last 1.5-2 hours.

Also, this year we will have two food vendors at each concert. This should alleviate problems we had in the past with long lines. Our new vendors include Parliament Pizza, YoChef, D&D Gluten Free, Salt of the Earth, Crepes by the Lakes, and Silver Star Cafe.

We want to thank our corporate sponsors who make our concert series possible. They include: Comcast, Fenn Valley Vineyards, New Holland Brewing Company, Dickinson Wright, Chemical Bank, Global Concepts, and IHS Distributing. Many thanks. Because of you, dreams come true.

Parks Activity

Clean up is under way at Huyser Farm Park with the anticipated demolition of the green house located at the corner of the property. The old Town Hall will be moved to this location for future potential use as restrooms and a meeting place for educational purposes.

The Parks and Recreation Commission welcomes long time resident Ellen Fitch to the Board, who is filling a vacancy from Michelle Sall.

As a reminder, we ask that visitors respect park boundaries and help keep the parks clean by removing trash. Dogs on leashes are allowed at all Township parks except the beach. Please clean up after your pet.
For the year 2018 Graafschap Fire Department responded to a total of 673 calls for service, this was an 11% increase over 2017. We responded to 495 calls in Laketown Township, 135 calls in Fillmore Township and we assisted our neighboring fire departments 43 times.

Our busiest days in 2018 were Saturday followed by Monday and the busiest times of the day were 9am – 10am and 3pm – 5pm.

Graafschap Fire Department is one of seven partners in a Live Fire Training Facility currently under construction in Saugatuck Township. To build a facility where we can learn about live fire behavior and train on the many aspects of firefighting would be very difficult to do on our own, but with the collaboration of seven fire departments and the support of governing boards it is a reality and should be completed this spring.

We recently collaborated with Holland Fire Department on the purchase of a portable message board (PMB). This purchase will enhance the safety of firefighters, police officers, ambulance personnel and wrecker operators as we work accidents or fire scenes on local roads and highways. The PMB will provide advance warning to the traveling public with stored or custom messages that can easily be changed when needed. The purchase of the PMB was made possible with a grant we received from MIOSHA and generous donations from Allegan County Emergency Management, K&R Towing, Reliable Towing, and Pro Vision Transport. The PMB will also be available to all area fire departments upon request.

As part of our Community Risk Reduction Program, we are still offering smoke and carbon monoxide alarm installs, along with Home Safety Surveys where we will do an audit of your home looking for potential issues and offer suggestions for improved safety. Call 616.396.4060 to schedule a visit.

Please remember to call for a burn permit if you are going to burn brush or sticks while cleaning your yard or property.

Have a SAFE enjoyable spring.

~ July 4th Pancake Breakfast Reminder ~

Mark your calendars for Thursday, July 4, for the annual Graafshap Fire Department Pancake Breakfast, 6 a.m. - 10 a.m. at the Fire Hall, 4534 60th St. See you there!

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2019 DeMull Award Recipient Wayne VanOmmen

On Wednesday, March 13 Chief DenBleyker presented Firefighter Wayne VanOmmen with the DeMull Volunteer of the Year award.

Wayne spent countless hours over the year above and beyond his regular duties helping with events, projects, and activities which included installing smoke alarms, training new fire department members and more.

Congratulations and thank you!
We Support:

*Looking for a volunteer opportunity for yourself, family, club or company team? Call the Township Office for a list of opportunities in the Adopt-A-Park program.

*Dogs on leashes are allowed at all township parks except the beach. Please be courteous and clean up after your pet.

*A public horseback riding trail is available at Farview Park.

Book Nook...
Donated by the Holland Rotary Club, a “Book Nook” was recently installed at the front entrance of the Township Office. Books are free and visitors are welcome to select and donate books to the cause.

LAKETOWN TOWNSHIP
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https://outdoordiscovery.org/