

Charter Township of Brighton

Volume II, Issue 4

Winter 2006

Township 101

There is often confusion regarding the scope of services provided by the Township and other local government agencies. Let's start at the beginning to identify who does what.

Brighton Township was created in 1837 by spinning off the northern half of Green Oak Township into what we now know as Brighton Township. At the time of its creation, Brighton Township was a "general law" township gaining its authority to operate from State law. State law still forms the basis for how the township works today. In 2001, Brighton Township became a "charter" township. The structure and responsibilities remain much the same under both township structures.

Townships have three main functions: assessing property for purposes of taxation; conducting elections for all levels of government; and collecting property taxes. Townships may take on other services but these are the basic services. Let's look at how townships perform these functions.

Supervisor

The township supervisor is the head assessing officer. Because this function is very technical and requires advanced, specialized education many larger townships employ professional assessors to assist the supervisor in performing these duties. In our township, the supervisor serves as the chief department administrator overseeing a full-time professional assessing staff.

The supervisor also serves as the "Chairman of the Board" chairing township board meetings. Generally the supervisor will be the first person people talk to regarding new issues involving the township along with the township manager.

Manager

The supervisor is normally the person responsible for creation of the township's annual budget which is subject to full Board approval. However in Brighton Township and in accordance with the Charter Township Act, that responsibility has been assigned to the township manager. The manager serves as the chief operating officer overseeing day-to-day operations including the budget, personnel, and public infrastructure projects.

Clerk

The clerk is responsible for conducting all elections. Prior to election consolidation, township clerks were only responsible for the gubernatorial and presidential primary and general elections and the occasional special elections. Under election consolidation, the township clerk is responsible for these elections plus all school elections. Brighton Township is home to four school districts so the elections for each school district are conducted through the local clerk's office. Currently, our local school districts have opted to hold annual elections each May.

In addition to elections, the clerk is responsible for all township records. These records include meeting agendas, notices, and minutes for all township meetings; contracts; cemetery records; local ordinances and master plans. The clerk also serves as the Freedom of Information coordinator for the township.

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Mark your calendar!

**2007 Yard Waste
Clean-up Days**

**May 12th
November 10th**

**8:00 AM—Noon
Township Hall
4363 Buno Road**

**2007 Large Item
Clean-up Day**

**June 2nd
8:30 AM—12:30 PM
Fire Hall at Old 23 & Hyne**

Township 101 (continued from Page 1)

The clerk also assumes the duty of handling the Accounts Payables, Payroll and General Ledger functions. Since the township is run much like a business, there is a checks-and-balances system between the manager and/or supervisor (Budgeting) and the treasurer (Banking and Tax Collection).

TREASURER

The treasurer is responsible for collecting property taxes. Tax bills are mailed semi-annually (Winter and Summer) by the treasurer. The treasurer collects the taxes on behalf of all taxing units that receive revenue from property taxes. Those taxing units include, but may not be limited to, the local school district, intermediate school district, county, fire authority, ambulance services, park authority, and special assessment collections. Upon receipt, the funds are deposited into a checking account relative to the specific collection purpose. The treasurer then forwards the appropriate share of the collected tax monies to the associated taxing unit. Taxes that remain unpaid after the due date are forwarded to the County who essentially "buys them" by sending money back to the township for those unpaid taxes. The County then holds the lien on that property until the debt is settled.

Besides property tax collection, the treasurer is responsible for the township banking. The General Fund, used for running the day-to-day operations of the township, is perhaps the largest account. It is on that account that the clerk prepares the warrants, or checks, to pay the township's bills. Upon Board approval of non-reoccurring expenses, the treasurer co-signs the checks certifying that the funds are available in the account to cover the

amount of the check. This further serves as a check-and-balance for funding dispersals.

There are many funds and accounts besides the General Fund maintained by the treasurer. They include special assessment funds, enterprise funds, and investment funds. The treasurer must keep the money constantly invested to get the best rate of return while at the same time enough money must be kept available to meet the current cash flow needs.

TRUSTEES

There are four Trustees, who, with the Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer, complete the Board of Trustees. Since our township population is more than 5000 people we are entitled to have four trustees. (2000 census population was 17,673; 2006 estimated population is 18,991).

In addition to serving on the Board of Trustees, the trustees often serve as liaisons to various township commissions including the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, Lakes Committee, Roads Committee, and the Utilities Committee. They also serve on other committees such as the Brighton Area Fire Authority, Livingston Community Water Authority, and SELCRA to name a few.

This is just scratching the surface of what goes on within Township Hall. More in the next edition.

Notice of Assessment, Taxable Valuation and Classification

Change Notices are scheduled to be mailed the last week in February, 2007. On the notice you will find your 2007 assessed and taxable values and property classification (agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, personal). It will also indicate the Principal Residence Exemption Percentage. Please look over this form carefully to make sure that you understand it. The taxable value on the form will be used when calculating the 2007 taxes. If you feel the information is incorrect and you wish to appeal, please follow the instructions on the form to schedule an appointment with our Board of Review. If you have any questions please contact the Assessor's Office at (810) 229-0558.



New 211 Phone Service Goes On-line November 1

The long-awaited launch of the 211 phone service took place on November 1st. The arrival of 2-1-1 will give area residents the ability to dial 2-1-1 to receive health and human service referrals 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by simply dialing the 3-digit number. The new system streamlines access to resources for all Livingston County residents. The service will make it easier for those in need to find the right services. It will also serve as a resource to match potential volunteers with organizations in need of assistance.

Don't Feed the Ducks ... Or the Mold

If you travel throughout the community chances are you may see a sign that says "Do not feed the ducks". Inside your home, you should be reminded to "not feed the mold".

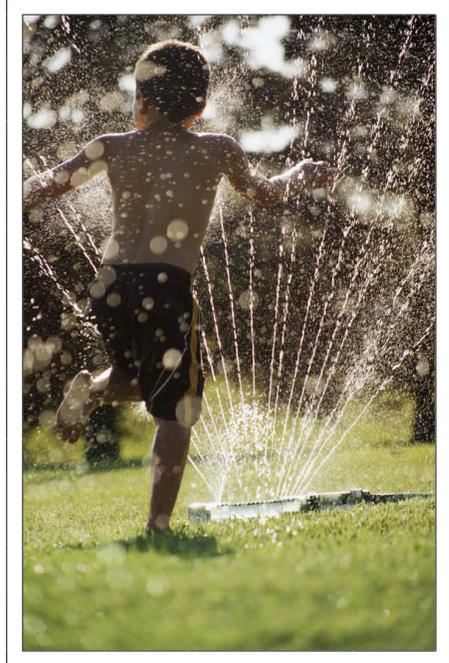
Mold needs moisture, warmth and a food source to grow. If mold is allowed to grow, it can create a catalyst for health-related problems in your home. A food source for mold is high levels of moisture in wood, paper, and organic fabric fibers. You can reduce or eliminate and "starve" mold out of your home by eliminating the source. Here are some simple ideas:

- Keep your heating and air conditioning drain lines clean.
- Bath fans, kitchen fans, vent fans and clothes dryer vents should all be directed to the outside.
- Fix roof leaks, wall cracks, and any openings that may allow moisture to feed mold.
- Paint all exposed exterior wood. Repair and replace exterior caulking.
- Make sure that windows and siding are not damaged and are free of leaks.
- Maintain proper levels of humidity in your home. (About 40 percent during the heating season and 60 percent during the cooling season).

Regular maintenance of the easy-to-overlook items could save you costly repairs later on. Additional information can be found at www.moldtips.com or www.nahb.org. Brochures with additional information are available in the Building Department at Township Hall.

Simple Steps to Save Water

When we over-water our lawns, the excess water carries pollution into storm drains and ditches that lead directly to our rivers and lakes.



In fact, did you know that each of us uses 77 gallons of water a day?

What can **you** do? Follow the tips below for simple ways **you** can save water.

1. **Water wisely.** Generally, your lawn needs about an inch of water a week. Over-watering lawns results in shallow-rooted plants that are less tolerant of heat and drought, and more prone to disease. Avoid over-watering by using a rain gauge and watering only when necessary, instead of on a fixed schedule.
2. **Improve your aim.** Adjust your sprinklers to water only your lawn and plants — not your driveway, sidewalk, or street.
3. **Use mulch.** Place a thick layer of mulch (e.g. four inches) around trees and plants. This helps retain water, reduce weeds, and minimize the need for pesticides.
4. **Sweep it.** Clean sidewalks and driveways with a broom, instead of a hose. You'll save water and keep unwanted pollutants out of the storm drain.
5. **Put rainwater to work.** Use rainwater to water your plants. Direct downspouts toward your plants and green areas or collect water with rain barrels for use later.
6. **Mow high.** Make your lawn cheaper and easier to maintain by mowing (three inches is recommended). Longer grass has deeper roots and requires less water.

Our Water.

Our Future.

Ours to Protect.

Charter Township of Brighton

4363 Buno Road
Brighton, MI 48114
Phone: (810) 229.0550
Fax: (810) 229.1778

Election Results Available

Election Results are available through the township's website at www.brightontwp.com. Click on the election results link for detailed information on the November 7, 2006 general election.

Holiday Hours

Township offices will be closed on the following days in observance of the Christmas and New Year holidays:

Monday, December 25th
Tuesday, December 26th
Friday, December 29th
Monday, January 1st

Have You Paid Your Summer Tax Bill?

Please check this out. If you are not sure, contact the Treasurer's office at (810) 229-0556. Remember all taxes (*summer & winter*) are due 2/28/2007. On March 1st they will go to the County for collection.

Please forward newsletter comments to:
clerk@brightontwp.com or
david.murphy@brightontwp.com

Please be sure to add "newsletter" in the subject line

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

www.brightontwp.com

SUPERVISOR

H.E. "Bud" Prine
bud.prine@brightontwp.com
(810) 229-0550

CLERK

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TREASURER

Geri Harmon
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(810) 229-0556

TRUSTEES**

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Tim Winship
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MANAGER

david.murphy@brightontwp.com
(810) 229-0550

*Regular Meeting Days and Times**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
1st & 3rd Mondays of every month at 7:00 PM

PLANNING COMMISSION
2nd and 4th Mondays of every month at 7:00 PM

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS
4th Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM

**Meetings are subject to change. Contact the Clerk's office for more information.*

***Phone messages may be left at (810) 229-0550 for all trustees.*