Vergennes Township

A Place Where People Like to Live

www.vergennestwp.org

69 Lincoln Lake Ave. NE., P.O. Box 208, Lowell, MI 49331 897-5671 Hours: M, W, – 9–3, Th – 9–Noon

SUMMER 2022

SUPERVISOR:	**TIM WITTENBACH**
TREASURER:	**JANINE MORK**
CLERK:	**SHANTELL FORD**
TRUSTEES:	**RICK GILLETT**
	DUANE RASCH

Township Board Meetings are held the third Monday of every month at 7:00 P.M. in the Township Hall.
Planning Commission Meetings are held quarterly at 7:00 P.M. in the Township Hall.

CLERK'S CORNER

by Shantell Ford, Vergennes Township Clerk

Welcome to summer in Vergennes Township!
Great things are happening here! Spring was exciting, watching the flowers, trees, and bushes bloom, and now we are on to the heat and humidity of summer! The old townhall/grange building has sold and will be renovated into a private residence. The Fallasburg Historical Society is busy planning a celebration (details elsewhere in newsletter)! Fallasburg Park and the trails are busy places. If you are a biker or walker/runner, we have safety items at the hall provided by the Grand Valley Metro Council's #BESEEN campaign. Please stop in and pick up a neon reflective belt, or little personal lights. Wherever your summer plans may take you, be careful and have fun!

Blessings ~ Shantell

FALLASBURG VILLAGE CELEBRATION!

www.fallasburg.org

Did you know that there is an historic village on the other side of the Fallasburg Covered Bridge? Did you know the village is listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

If you do know that is great! If not, you are about to find out!!

We invite you to the Fallasburg Village Celebration, in the village from noon to 8 PM July 30.

Fun for the whole family!! At the celebration enjoy music by Eli Roe, Bruce Mathew's Band, Hawks and Owls, and the Easy Idle String Band! The music runs all day with a square dance closing out the evening! Additionally, enjoy family activities, old fashioned games, historic village tours, food is available or bring a picnic, the Pioneer Barn, antique cars, various demonstrations including a blacksmith and lots of quality vendors! Something for everyone! Make it a family fun day!

All of the pioneer era buildings will be open for tours including our gem of a schoolhouse. Additionally, we'll be continuing our celebration of our Fallasburg Covered Bridge's big sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary!

What is a better way to spend a beautiful summer Saturday in July?

COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAY!

Mark your calendars for September 24, from 8 – 11 am! Changes this year include, no tires will be accepted and there will be document shredding on site.

SUMMER ZONING UPDATE

enjoying time on our lakes and river. Please be reminded that all docks are required to be seasonal in nature, are to be placed 10 feet from neighboring property lines, and are required to be removed by December 15th. Additionally, boat cradles and watercraft are required to be two feet from property lines.

On the beautiful Flat River please remember that the natural river overlay district was extended from 300 feet to 400 feet from the river's edge this past year. Within that overlay all structures are required to be 100 feet from the high water mark and substantial landscaping or land alteration is prohibited. Additionally, no removal of trees, cutting grass, shrubs, or other natural habitat is allowed. Lastly, the natural river overlay also includes 50 foot bluff setbacks, where alterations and landscaping are not allowed.

The township also continues to receive a number of [illegible] Please be reminded that in residential zoning district farm animal permits are required and all structures that house animals are required to be 75 feet from property lines.

If you have any questions on the mentioned topics, or any other related zoning issues, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at zoning@vergennestwp.org. Thank you and have a wonderful summer.

Ryan Carrigan ~ Zoning and Planning Administrator

ELECTION NEWS

Redistricting – Districts have changed! You should have received a new Voter ID card in the mail. (This is for your information, they do not need to be returned to the township.) Precincts have not changed, and both precincts vote at 69 Lincoln Lake Ave NE. The new districts for Vergennes Township are – U.S. Congressional: #02, State Senate: #18, State Representative: #90, and County Commissioner: #03.

Elections –

- This year there are two elections in Vergennes Township. The first is a primary election on August 2. The second is the general election on November 8.
- For every election - the polls are open from 7 am until 8 pm. Absent voters have until 8 pm to turn in your absentee ballot to the clerk's office.
- There is a locked drop box that is in the parking lot, by the flag pole. This drop box is under 24 hour surveillance and can be used for application and ballot return.
- Any registered voter interested in working as an election inspector is welcome to turn in an application! The application can be found at www.vergennestwp.org under "Elections".
- Did you know that for EVERY election all the tabulators are tested? The public notice for the public test will be published in the Lowell Ledger, The public notice for the public test will be published in the Lowell Ledger, at www.vergennestwp.org and in the display case outside the township office doors.
- What is a permanent absent voter list? Though not required, Vergennes Township is one of many municipalities that maintain a permanent absent voter list. Being on this list ensures that you will automatically be sent an absentee ballot application for each election. For every ballot, whether it is absentee or in person on election day, every ballot has an application. This is required in Michigan and proves that the ballot was requested by the voter and leaves a paper trail for balance and accountability. To be placed on the permanent absent voter list simply email clerk@vergennestwp.org or call 616-897-5671. If you receive an absentee ballot application in the mail from our office, or from a political party or from anywhere but do not wish to vote absentee, simply disregard it!

Primary election reminders!

- Please don't forget that in a primary election you may vote in one party section only. The ballot will contain a section for each of the two large parties. Stay in your lane! If you vote for more than one party in the partisan section, the partisan section of the ballot will be rejected at the tabulator. This is especially important for absentee voters to remember!
- If you make a mistake, both in the precinct or by absentee, the ballot can be spoiled and a new ballot issued.

FROM THE TREASURER, JANINE MORK

Summer taxes are due Wednesday September 14, 2022. The treasurer will be in the office until 5 pm to collect taxes. Any payments received by 5 pm on the 14th, either in office, drop box or in the mail, will be considered on time. Payments received after that should add **1%** to the balance owed.

PLEASE, review your check to make sure the amount is correct, both in the box and written words. Any errors will result in a delay posting your payment. If it happens close to the due date, your payment may be considered late and will have a 1% charge added to the amount due.

If you mail your taxes via USPS, allow at least **14 days** for the payment to arrive in the Township office. Postmarks are not accepted as an "on time" payment. This means it should be in the mail by the 1st of September. **It is recommended** that you drop your check off in the township drop box or bring it into the office during open hours.

Credit/debit cards or e-checks are accepted to pay taxes. There is a fee which goes directly to the administering company. The Township only gets the tax amount. This option is available online, in office or on the phone.

If you choose an online bill pay option through your bank, please be aware that those payments are mailed to us via USPS. It is not an ACH transaction that is electronically transferred. Allow extra time (14 days) for your payment to get to our office.

Partial payments can be made toward your tax bill through February 28, 2023. Anything owing after that will be turned over to Kent County for collection. Any interest or penalties will be accrued on the unpaid balance only.

If your mortgage company is paying your taxes through an escrow account, you will receive white, information only, bill in the mail. Follow up at least a week before the due date to ensure the bill was paid. This allows time to correct any errors or omissions. It is ultimately **YOUR** responsibility to make sure the taxes are paid timely. You can check for payment through the website, www.Vergennestwp.org. The mortgage companies send payments within two weeks of the due date.

Add your phone number to the remittance part of the bill. This makes it so much easier to contact you if there is an issue with your payment. This information is not kept on file in the Township.

Any taxes remaining unpaid on March 1, 2023, will be turned over to the Kent County Treasurer for collection.

HISTORICAL VERGENNES

The intersection of Vergennes and Lincoln Lake has seen many changes over the years and is currently in a state of change. This sketch is from the 1876 Kent County Plat book, showing the residence of M.J. King. This is also the location of the work camp set up in 1928 to house the workers being used to build M21. This beautiful home is still standing today.

LINUS UPDATE

I have a final update on Linus, the PAWS puppy that hung out in the township offices last year. He had passed all his tests and was being evaluated as an assistance dog for someone. Unfortunately, the right match could not be made so PAWS contacted one of their partners to see if he could be career changed. He matched up with the Electronic Detection program. From PAWS:

"Electronic Detection dogs detect the presence of electronic devices such as computers, cell phones, and external hard drives, often hidden, which store digital evidence and photos. This evidence is used to aid investigators in the areas of child pornography, human trafficking terrorism, and white-collar crime. Our partner trains the dog for several months, then potential handlers come to their facility to be matched with the dogs; then together they complete team training."

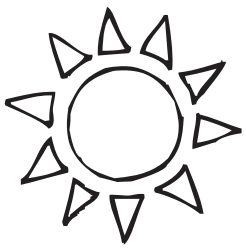
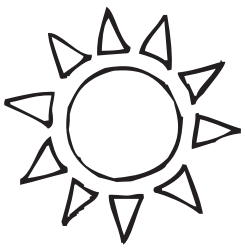
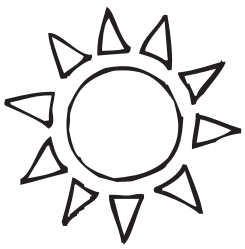
I am happy to report that Linus and his handler graduated from detection school on Friday, May 27, 2022. I was unable to attend the ceremony but have been promised pictures and more information. I was hoping to have something in time to put in this newsletter, but sadly, I don't. I can say that Linus will now be known as "Stretch", in honor of a fallen motorcycle Sheriff who was a member of the department for which his handler works. Stretch and his handler will be working in Monroe County, MI.

Stay Pawsitive!

Janine

TOWNSHIP CEMETERIES

The township now has two active cemeteries that are available for sales of burial rights. Township resident cost is $250.00 per grave, and non resident price is $500.00. They are the Bailey Cemetery and the Alton Cemetery. Historic township cemeteries include; Historic Bailey, Krum-Blanding (previously named Yerkes Cemetery), Fox's Corners, Fallas Cemetery and the Goodsell Cemetery.

HONORING VETERANS

Each year flags are placed at the flags of veterans in the township cemeteries. It is always done by volunteers. This year we would like to say a huge THANK YOU to Heather Ransom, the McDaniels family, Annalise Ebaugh and all of the girls and families from the American Heritage Girls of St Patrick's School. We appreciate all of your time and work!!