

Bengal Township News

June
2009

Clinton County, Michigan

www.bengaltownship.org

Wind Turbines

In October, 2008, Steve Arwood of Forest Hill, LLC, came before the Bengal Township Board during a regular board meeting to inform the township that they were applying for a zoning variance with Clinton County to erect a wind data gathering tower in the Township. The purpose of the tower was solely to collect data on wind speeds and frequency at various elevations to determine the feasibility of erecting a wind turbine. The board did not object to him applying for the variance. A large number of residents attended the April 8, 2009, Board Meeting. Some expressed concern about the size of turbines, their appearance, shadow flicker, noise, and the effect on property values. Dan Leonard from Community Development, and Monica Jensen from Forest Hill, LLC, were also at the meeting and were able to answer questions. The issue of wind turbines is primarily under the jurisdiction of the Clinton County Zoning Board and the Bengal Township Board does not have the authority to approve or disapprove wind turbines.

2009 Road Maintenance Schedule

- Chloride 49.59 miles of gravel roads, 3 separate applications. First application using 38% chloride on high traffic roads and mineral well brine on other roads. The second application will be using 38% chloride on all roads. A third application will depend on the effectiveness of the first two applications.
- Asphalt overband on:
Parks Rd. from Francis to east twp. line (3 mi)
- Sealcoat on:
Parks Road from Francis to Waucousta (2 mi)
Lowell from M-21 to Walker (1 mi)
- Brush spray on various roads.
- Gravel on:
Grove Road from Centerline to Parks (2 mi)
Lowell Road from Centerline to Parks (2 mi)
Bauer Road from Dexter Trail to Taft Rd. (1 mi)
Forest Hill Road from Parks to Townsend (1 mi)
Taft Road from Francis to Forest Hill Road (1 mi)
Walker Road from Lowell to Airport (2 mi)

New Township Hall

In February, 2009, the Bengal Township Building Committee met with Tom Motz Homes of DeWitt, MI along with Ross Pope of the Clinton County RESA Building Trades Program. Mr. Pope indicated the Building Trades Program is looking for a building project for the 2009-10 school year. Mr. Pope also indicated that he work with Tom Motz Homes building license on previous housing projects. The Committee was sold on the idea of saving labor costs when using RESA students working with reputable contractors, as they have done on past projects. After reviewing the Motz proposal, the Board approved hiring Motz Homes to develop a township hall design and a site plan. As of this newsletter, the Board has approved the site plan and township hall design. The Building Committee also recommended to the Board Members to construct a trail to the proposed Ionia-Clinton-Shiawassee Rail Trail that connects with the township property.

Current Township Hall

The Bengal Township Building Committee recommended to the Township Board to not move the current township hall to the new site. The Committee felt it was not only costly to move, but it will require upkeep and maintenance. The current hall does not fit into the new hall site plan. The Building Committee recommended and the Board approved selling the building to the highest bidder. The bid will include moving the building off site as well as removing the foundation and gravel as well as backfilling and grading. The Board will announce when bids will be accepted.

Supervisor
Eric Mohnke
224-9479

Treasurer
Judith Huhn
224-3518

Clerk
Arleita Schafer
224-2565

Trustee
Marilyn Irrer
224-7685

Trustee
Steve Mahoney
224-4361

Township Assessor
Greg Armbrustmacher
593-3279



Summer Tax Bill

Summer taxes are always due July 1 to September 14, 2009. See tax bill for interest and penalty for past due taxes.

Taxes are payable by mail or you may pay in person on Monday, September 14, 2009 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at 8650 W. Centerline Road, St. Johns or at other times by calling 224-3518 to make an appointment. You may also deposit your check in the locked drop-box on the porch on the east side of the house. **Please do not put cash in the drop-box.**

Save the top portion of your bill with your canceled check. **Receipts will be sent only upon specific request of the taxpayer.**

Deferment of Summer Taxes

Certain taxpayers can apply to have their summer property taxes deferred until February 15, 2010. In general, there are two ways to qualify for this deferment: 1) having a gross household income of \$40,000 and falling into an exemption classification or 2) owning an agricultural or horticultural operation for which gross receipts are not less than household income.

Deferment forms will be enclosed with the tax bill for all who deferred last year. If you qualify and wish to defer for the first time, please call the treasurer at 224-3518 for an application. Applications may be downloaded from the Michigan Department of Treasury at www.michigan.gov/treasury. All the requirements are listed on the website as well as on the application form

If you are planning to vacate our great township this winter before December 2009, be sure you pass along your forwarding address to our Township Treasurer.

Home Values Fall, But Taxes Rise?

This may be old news to some, but it's worth repeating.

When our state Legislature passed Proposal A in 1994, the Legislature did not anticipate the current economy and declining property values. Until 2007, Proposal A worked as designed, limiting increase of taxes to the rate of inflation. There had been a steady market in the real estate market, which typically was more substantial than the rate of inflation, thus "capping" tax increases to the rate of inflation.

When property values started to decline in 2007, the rate of inflation was 2.3%. Overall, property values continued to decline in 2008, but with the current state of the economy, the inflation rate is 4.4%. Proposal A limits the increase to a 5% maximum. For more information on how the inflation rate is calculated, go to the State of Michigan Treasury website at www.michigan.gov/propertytaxestimator and click on Consumer Price Level Memo and FAQ's.

Increased property tax, with declining property values is a difficult concept to grasp. Neither local assessors, treasurers nor Boards of Review can change the law. Any changes to Proposal A Legislation to address the declining real estate market in relation to property taxes, would involve a constitutional amendment and a vote of the people. A joint resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives in January that would freeze property taxes for homes declining in value. A similar proposal did not proceed beyond the House last year.

The Bengal Township Board wishes everyone a safe and fun filled summer season!