

The Profile

VOLUME XXXII NUMBER 2

FEBRUARY 2007

On December 18, the Plainfield Township Board approved an ordinance creating the Plainfield Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority, which is often referred to as the "CIA" or "PACIA." On January 8, the Board appointed Cheryl Scales, Steve VanVliet, Tom Makarewicz, Art Sturgis, Jayne Dykema, Bob Litzan, and George Meek to serve as members of the PACIA Board of Directors.

The PACIA is charged with the responsibility to develop and implement long term public improvement projects within the Plainfield Corridor, such as streetscape and sidewalk improvements, to revitalize and stimulate economic development within the Corridor.

Grand Rapids Township has also established a PACIA. Officials from both Plainfield and Grand Rapids have been working closely to create a partner-

Plainfield Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority Created

ship for the revitalization of Plainfield Avenue. We intend that the two PACIA boards will work together on a joint development plan to help improve a large portion of Plainfield Avenue in both townships, which is a vital commercial area of this community, and the two boards will be meeting in the coming months to establish such a relationship.

Right now, Plainfield Township receives about \$171,000 in annual property tax payments from the area within the Plainfield Avenue CIA District (152 properties) based on the 3.29 mills the Township levies. The PACIA will "capture" any *additional* property tax revenue from this area for the next twenty years – but the property tax revenue increase based on increased property values would also be captured from Kent County, Grand Rapids Community

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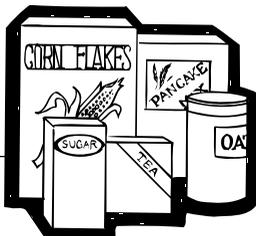


CIA Created *from page 1*

College, and Kent District Library millages – tripling the amount of money that Plainfield Township will “capture” to be used by PACIA for certain long term improvement projects within the Plainfield Avenue Corridor. These other taxing districts may, however, decide not to allow this to happen, and they may make the decision not to allow capture of their *additional* tax revenue by “opting out” of the PACIA. We hope to persuade them to participate in the PACIA by limiting the life of the PACIA, demonstrating the value and importance of the CIA Development Plan’s public improvements, and sharing some of the “dividends” that will be generated by the success of this program.

A copy of the *Development Plan and Tax Increment Financing Plan* will be available at the Township Hall and on the Township’s website (www.plainfieldchartertp.org) in the coming weeks. The meetings of the CIA board are open to the public and will be posted at the Township Hall, 6161 Belmont Avenue NE. If you have any questions concerning this, please contact Supervisor George Meek or me at 363-8466.

Robert C. Homan, Township Manager



Commodity Distribution

Commodities will be distributed to qualified low-income persons on these dates:

March 1, 2007 • June 7, 2007 • September 6, 2007 • December 6, 2007

To qualify, you must reside between 4 Mile Road and 10 Mile Road. Distribution is at 6156 Belmont Avenue NE, directly across from the Township Offices. Hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

New families wishing to qualify, call Jim or Peg Granzotto at 784-5249, or come to the distribution site on the above dates. Bring your Social Security card for each member of your family with income statements.

Run a Mile for a Child

On Saturday, March 24, 2007, the Plainfield Fire Department along with the Spectrum Health Regional Burn Center are hosting the 4th annual “Run a Mile for a Child” 5K Run/Walk Race. Last year there were approximately 200 participants and we are hoping to have 300 this year. This is a fund raising event, with last year’s race raising \$3,000 for the Burn Center. Proceeds help to support services provided to burn survivors and educational efforts to prevent burns.

For the non-runner, there will be a pancake breakfast starting at 8:00 a.m., with donations going towards the same cause. Both events will be held at the Plainfield Township Office Complex. Registration for the race will be held at the Township Office (6161 Belmont Avenue NE), and the pancake breakfast will be held at Fire Station #1 (6145 Belmont Avenue NE).

The cost of the run/walk race is \$25.00. Race participants will receive a long-sleeve t-shirt. You can pick up a registration form at either of the fire stations or the Township Offices, register online at www.plainfieldchartertp.org or www.classicrace.com/races, or register the day of the race starting at 7:30 a.m. For more run/walk race information, or possible sponsorship opportunities, please contact Assistant Fire Chief Steve McKellar at 361-2895.

If you haven't, slow down when you are going through historic downtown Comstock Park after dark and take a look at the new parking lot behind the Comstock Park Library! It took maybe five years to get from "Hey, wouldn't it be a good idea to..." to actually getting it done. While getting this project done is a reward in itself, thanks go to the Comstock Park DDA for funding half the cost of this much needed improvement, with Plainfield Township paying for the other half. Encouragement and cooperation from the KDL library organization and the Kent County Parks Department was very necessary to make this happen. Prein and Newhof was the project engineer, and Team Excavators was the contractor. Now we have about three dozen additional parking spots available not only to the library users but also park users and downtown business users.

The DDA was also responsible for the improved West River Drive downtown sidewalk and streetscape project about four years ago. That organization is also accumulating funds for big improvements to the unfinished White Pine Trail spur from 5th 3rd Ball Park to Woodland Paving on Millcreek Avenue. Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the Norfolk-Southern Railroad Company cooperation in selling the property and allowing the project to be built is still needed to make this a reality. The DDA continues to work on this, as it has for more than eight years. We may see some breakthroughs this year. The local newspapers might become aware of this story and let their readers know when something happens, so stay tuned.

The Comstock Park Downtown Development Authority was created by Plainfield Township in 1993 and has been able to accomplish a number of good things for Comstock Park over the years. With scant notice or thanks, a number of business community persons serving on the DDA Board of Directors have volunteered many hours over the past fourteen years to im-

prove this part of the community. These individuals will continue to persevere through red tape and other difficulties to help Comstock Park become a better place to work, conduct business and enjoy leisure time. The Township Board intended and desired that private property owners would see the publicly funded improvements and be motivated to make their own investments in upgrading their property. We have seen some (think Mill Creek Tavern, DuBric Industries, Vitale's, and Five Star Realty) property owners who have done just that, and we hope that further improvements will encourage others.

The DDA is funded by *tax increment financing*, where the taxes on the increased value of property in the DDA district are captured by the DDA to use to carry out projects that

are in the DDA's "Development Plan." Right now, the DDA receives about \$180,000 per year and has been accumulating that money to pay for the "big" projects coming up without having to borrow.

The DDA Board meets at 8:00 a.m. in the conference room of the Comstock Park Public Schools administrative offices at 101 School Street on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. You can get contact information by calling the Township Clerk's or Manager's Offices at 364-8466.

New Lighted Parking Lot Behind C.P. Library (and other news about the Comstock Park DDA)



FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

Summer tax information on your winter tax bill...

The Treasurer's Office receives many telephone calls each year from taxpayers who are working on their Federal Income tax, and they want to know how much their summer taxes were because they misplaced the summer bill. For the last several years, the winter bill states how much your summer tax was. Using the winter bill will save you time.

Freely access your assessing and tax information...

If you have access to a computer, you can access your property's assessing and tax information. This information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on the Township's web site, www.plainfieldchartertp.org. On the left side of the home page is a box called \\Quick Link\\. Navigate down that until you find 'Property Info'. By clicking that link you will go to the database that has current and prior years tax information along with assessments, a sketch of your building and a photo. If you have trouble accessing this web site or the information feel free to call me. You can also access most of this information via telephone by dialing 800-846-8725 and entering the code for Plainfield Charter Township which is 4110.

Pay your taxes easier...

Automatic debit payment has been available for several years and is working very nicely. If you haven't used this and would be interested,

please call (616) 726-8891 for further information. The plan will require you to sign an approval form. You will be able to pay your taxes automatically from your financial institution to the Township. No stamps! No late penalty fees! No lost mail!

Please remember when you change your financial institution or accounts, you **MUST** let us know so we will withdraw your payment from the proper account.

Dog licenses...

You can purchase or renew dog licenses until March 1. All dogs must be licensed if 4 months of age or older. If the dog is spayed/neutered, in order to receive the discount, **proof of altering** is required. For first time licensing, a rabies vaccination is required. At the time of renewing the license, an active rabies vaccination is required. To be eligible for the senior discount, you must be at least 62.

Tax collections...

Once again the tax collection was very effective. Thanks to your efforts to make it easier for my staff, we collected nearly \$39 million for the local schools, Grand Rapids Community College, Intermediate Schools, State Education Tax, Kent County General, Seniors, Jail, District Library, and the Township. Of the total taxes collected, 9% goes to Plainfield Township.

Jim Stover, Treasurer

Township Phone Numbers Left Out of the Phone Book!

Inadvertently, Plainfield Township phone numbers were left out of the 2007 telephone directory. You may wish to cut out the phone number list on page 12 of this PROFILE and post it on your bulletin board, fridge, or inside your directory. Phone numbers are also listed on the Township's website at plainfieldchartertp.org.



Message from the Supervisor

If you have been following my articles in the previous PROFILES, you realize I'm quite concerned about **safety**. Safety affects all of us every day

of our lives in many ways. My article for this PROFILE is again on safety in a little different form.

On a daily basis, I'm in a position to observe Plainfield Charter Township's Fire Department in action, responding to all types of emergencies. For the year 2006, the Township's fire department responded to over 2100 calls. Of those 2100 calls, more than 50% were medical emergencies. Think about it. Over 1000 calls were medical related and one of those calls could

have been you, a family member or a loved one. **All** responses are important, but certain medical calls could be a matter of life or death in a matter of minutes or a few seconds. My point in this article for safety has to do with traffic and giving the emergency equipment the right-of-way. Daily, I observe drivers ignoring the flashing lights and sirens of the responding emergency vehicles, causing delays of seconds or minutes and ultimately making a serious matter become more serious or perhaps even deadly.

Again... **think about it**. A driver's reluctance to yield the right-of-way will probably never hurt them, but what about the person at the destination of the emergency vehicle? By properly yielding, you could be saving a life. Please respect all emergency vehicles. The life you help save could be a family member, a neighbor or a stranger.

Thank you and have a SAFE 2007.

George Meek

Master Plan Being Developed

Plainfield Township has been in the process of developing a new Master Plan which is an important document that the Planning Commission, Township Board, and landowners use as a guide for growth and development decisions. This document also represents a foundation policy statement about what a community is, what its residents value and what those residents and businesses hope the community will become. The Master Plan is currently in draft form and the Township will

be hosting opportunities for the public to provide comments and questions before considering approval of the Plan. A date for the public hearing has not been scheduled yet; however, when a date has been chosen the meeting will be advertised on the Township's web page and in *The Grand Rapids Press*. We anticipate the public hearing will take place in March or April.

Bill Fischer

Community Development Director

It may seem like many months since the General Election was conducted, however, there are many people who like to review the statistics of such an event. On the next page is a table showing voter turnout in each precinct and the township as one unit. Probably one of the most interesting aspects of this report is in the column in which absent voter turnout is listed. I am very pleased to report that more than 3,300 people voted absentee; 15% of the overall turnout. I believe all the voters who waited in line are grateful to those 3,300 people for reducing the wait by voting absentee.

I am a Clerk who has endorsed "No Reason AV", which translates into every voter being afforded the opportunity to vote absentee, regardless of his or her age or whether or not they will be out of the community on Election Day. Clerks from around the State of Michigan have worked for many years, to no avail, to have the legislature remove the restrictions for voting absentee. We will continue with these efforts and I hope to be able to report to you soon that the legislation has passed.

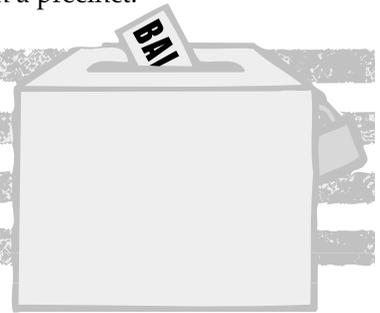
Why is "No Reason AV" important? At the present time, a precinct must be established for every 2,999 voters or less. In Plainfield Charter Township, since we have more than 22,000 registered voters, we must establish at least 8 precincts. In order to spread the work, reduce the lines, and provide locations in all areas of the township, we have 11 precincts. If "No Reason AV" was approved by the legislature, the number of voters per precinct could be increased to perhaps 5,000, which would mean that Plainfield Charter Township would only need 5 precincts. This, of course, assumes that many voters would choose to vote absentee.

Some readers may never have voted absentee so here are just a few interesting facts:

- The ballot is exactly the same as you would complete in the precinct.

- You can request an AV ballot 45 days before the election and vote it at your leisure. It **MUST** be returned by Election Day to be counted.
- Regardless of the weather, your health, family commitments, or unusual events that might deter you from going to a polling place on one specific date and time, you have your ballot and can vote in the privacy of your home.
- The same tabulation equipment is used to count absent voter ballots as the ballots that are issued in a precinct.

November 2006 General Election Information



The absent voter ballots are opened under specific rules promulgated by the Michigan Department of State - Elections Division. The rules specifically outline the process of verifying the name of the voter and then separating the ballot from the voter's identity. For the 2006 General Election, three teams, each consisting of four election inspectors, subscribed to an oath to specifically follow the state laws regarding the processing of the absent voter ballots. They opened more than 3,300 envelopes and fed the ballots into the same tabulation equipment that is located in each precinct.

Thank you to the 3,300 residents who voted absentee in November 2006. Let's more than double that number in 2008! If we keep working on absent voter balloting, we could be one of the first communities in Michigan without any people in line on an election day!! If you have any questions, please call me at 364-8466 between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

*Susan L. Morrow, MMC
Plainfield Charter Township Clerk*

Tabulation and Percentage of Turnout • General Election • November 7, 2006

Pct	# of registered voters	# who voted in person	% who voted in person	# who voted AV	% who voted AV	Total # who voted in precincts	Total % of turnout by precinct
1	2142	1281	59.8	299	13.9	1580	73.8
2	2025	1089	53.7	249	12.3	1338	66.0
3	1933	854	44.1	272	14.0	1126	58.3
4	2218	1101	49.6	317	14.3	1418	63.9
5	1940	1006	51.8	335	17.5	1341	69.1
6	2206	1086	49.2	439	19.9	1525	69.1
7	1939	1009	52.0	322	16.6	1331	68.6
8	2493	1337	53.6	377	15.1	1714	68.7
9	2267	1246	54.9	221	10	1467	64.7
10	1512	855	56.5	269	17.8	1124	74.3
11	1639	976	59.5	288	17.6	1264	77.1
	22,314	11,840	53.0	3,388	15.2	15,228	68.50

Wanted: Lifesavers - No Previous Experience Necessary!

What if you could give the world's most precious gift without spending a penny... would you do it? If the answer is "yes," contact Kathy or Jeff at 364-8466 to sign up to donate at Plainfield Charter Township's blood drive on Friday, March 9, 2007, from 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. in the board room, located at 6161 Belmont Avenue NE. One out of every ten hospital patients will need blood. More than 4.5 million Americans would die each year without blood transfusions. But surprisingly few people know where our hospitals get the blood they need. Across America, 50% of the blood supply is collected by members of America's Blood Centers, a network of independent, nonprofit community blood centers including Michigan Community Blood Centers - Grand Valley, which provides 100% of the blood supply for all hospitals in Kent County.

More than 140 pints of blood must be donated every day year-round to care for patients in Kent and Barry County hospitals! It costs you just a little bit of time to give a pint of blood – and that pint of blood may give life to several people: most blood is separated into components (red cells, plasma, platelets, for example)

and each component can be transfused separately to meet specific needs. Every 3 seconds someone new is in need of blood, and 1 in every 3 people will need blood at some point in their life.

General requirements to donate:

Any healthy person 17 or older
Weigh 110 pounds or more

General donation information:

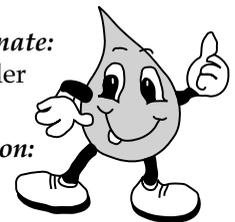
Drink well and eat well before donating
Donating blood takes 7-10 minutes; the entire donation process takes less than an hour
Donors are eligible to donate blood every 56 days (8 weeks)

Donors must bring ID in order to donate:

- One (1) photo ID (Drivers license, state ID card, passport, US military ID, etc. *or*
- Two (2) pieces of non-photo ID (credit card, bankcard, blood donor card, etc.)

Please give life by signing up to donate on March 9 by contacting Kathy or Jeff at 364-8466.

*Appointments are not required, but donors with appointments will take priority! Walk-ins are welcome.



There will be something new underfoot at both branches this summer: new carpeting. Both branches are tentatively planning to close for installation: the Plainfield branch from Monday, May 7 through Sunday, May 13, and the Comstock Park branch the following week. When we reopen, stop in at both libraries to see our new looks!

Let it Snow Reading Club for Adults. You have until March 31 to play KDL Bingo! Win by reading books in various categories. One bingo on your card gets your name in bi-weekly drawings for \$20 gift certificates. Two bingos earn you a beautiful large red tote bag. Register at any KDL Branch Library to participate.

2007 One Book, One County. Have you heard about the book everyone is reading together, *October Sky* by Homer Hickam? If you would like to join a lively discussion of this thought-provoking title, join us at the Plainfield Library on Thursday, March 8 at 1 p.m. The author himself will appear at Forest Hills Fine Arts Center on Thursday, March 29 at 7 p.m. Parking and admission are free. Pick up your copy of the book at your nearest KDL branch.

New Databases

KDL is providing two new databases for library cardholders! *CultureGrams* provides up-to-date cultural and statistical information on countries and states. *World Book Online* presents an electronic version of the World Book Encyclopedia. To use these great sources of information go to www.kdl.org and choose "Online Databases".

Watch for these upcoming special programs, and please join us! If you like, you may register online for programs listed on the Calendar of Events by clicking on the individual program. A registration form will be displayed if the program is open. If you supply your email address, you will be sent an email reminder of the program. Stop in or call the library for specific times, or check the events calendar on the KDL Homepage (www.kdl.org).

For Young Children and Families

Spring Babytime, Laptime and Storytime programs: week of April 2-26. (Registration required).

Babytime – One-on-one rhymes for babies and their parents.

Plainfield – Wednesdays, 11:00 a.m. for 4 weeks

Comstock Park – Thursdays, 1:00 p.m., 4 weeks

Laptime – Stories, music and rhymes for babies, toddlers and their parents.

Plainfield – Thursdays, 9:45 and 10:45 a.m.

Comstock Park – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.

Storytime – Stories and crafts for ages 3-6 years.

Plainfield – Thursdays, 9:45 and 10:45 a.m.

Comstock Park – Mondays, 10:30 a.m.

Pajama Storytime – Stories and nighttime fun for the whole family.

Plainfield – April Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.

Comstock Park – Monday, May 7, 6:30 p.m.

Other programs for children include ...

Snowballs, Snowballs – Join us for snow stories, crafts, songs and fun – and decorate your own snowman. Ages 6 and under.

Comstock Park – Monday, March 5, 10:30 a.m.

PLAINFIELD BRANCH HOURS

2650 5-Mile Road NE • Phone: 647-3930

Mon. through Thurs. 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Friday, Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

(during the school year only)

COMSTOCK PARK BRANCH HOURS

3943 West River Drive • Phone: 647-3860

Monday 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Wednesday 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Thursday 12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Friday, Saturday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

All KDL branches will be closed on Presidents' Day, Monday, Feb. 19, for a staff in-service.

Arthur and Friends – At this fun-filled event, we'll share stories, games, songs, and crafts all about Arthur! Ages 6 and up. Registration required.

Plainfield – Saturday, April 1, 10:00 a.m.

Star Wars – May the force be with you as you become a Jedi knight and make your own light saber. Ages 6 and older.

Plainfield – Monday, April 2, 10:00 a.m.

Comstock Park – Thursday, April 12, 6:30 p.m.

Spring Crafts – Catch spring fever at the library! Make a nature journal, a flower frame, or a frog bookmark. For all ages; registration is limited.

Plainfield – Tuesday, April 3, 10:00 a.m.

Comstock Park – Tuesday, April 3, 3:00 p.m.

Perfect Pet for Me – Bring your special stuffed animal to the library for storytime; let everyone make a new friend! Ages 6 and under.

Comstock Park – Monday, April 30, 10:30 a.m.

Family Sunday Series at the Plainfield Branch – 2 p.m. every Sunday in April (except Easter Day)

April 1 – The Flying Aces with their spectacular Frisbee skills

April 15 – Gordon Russ and his crazy cast of animals will take you on a "Magical Mystery Tour" loaded with comedy, magic, and audience participation

April 22 – Tuba Tales, entertainment with music and exciting stories

April 29 – Master Arts Traveling Street Theatre performing folk and fairy tales

Looking far ahead, we are gearing up for the 2007 children's Summer Reading Club beginning June 11, with a mystery theme. Programs include magician Joel Tacy, Candle-making, a visit from Naturally Wild, Bubbleology, and more.

For teens interested in volunteering at the library this summer: Applications can be picked up at the libraries after May 1. Contact Comstock Park or Plainfield branch libraries for specific information.

For Adults

Monthly Book Discussions – You are warmly welcomed to join our "no-pressure" Thursday book discussion groups, where you can relax and talk about books with other avid readers.

Plainfield – 2nd Thursday of month, 1 p.m.

Comstock Park – 4th Thursday of month, 7 p.m.

Trinidad: Its Land and Its People – Enjoy a nature travelogue with local naturalist and popular personality, Mary Jane Dockeray, presented by the Friends of the Plainfield Library. The \$5 charge includes lunch (reserved seating), or it's \$1 without lunch.

Plainfield – Friday, March 23, 12:30 p.m.

Introduction to Digital Photography

Plainfield – Monday, March 26, 6:30 p.m.

Comstock Park – Monday, April 23, 6:30 p.m.

Genealogy for Beginners – Learn how to trace your ancestors using KDL's electronic resources.

Comstock Park – Tuesday, April 10, 6:30 p.m.

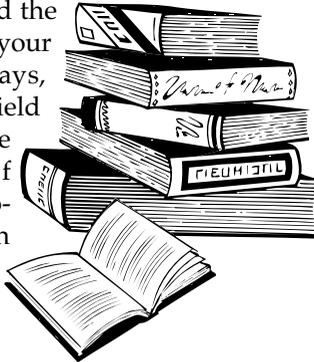
Plainfield – Saturday, April 21, 10:30 a.m.

Friends to Host

Used Book Sale & More

The Friends of the Plainfield Library will host a **Used Book Sale** from Friday, March 16 through Monday, March 19.

A Bag of Books Sale will take place on Sunday and Monday. A wide variety of fiction, non-fiction, children's and adult titles will be available for purchase and the proceeds will benefit your community. As always, Friends of the Plainfield Library appreciate your donations of books for their ongoing book sales, which help to supplement operations at the Plainfield Branch.



Plan to spend the whole day at the Plainfield Library Friends' **Scrap-Booking "Crop and Swap"** program on Saturday, April 28, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The cost is \$6.00 for lunch and snacks. Call Sharon at 784-7062 or Denise at 647-2247 to register. Call early so you can reserve table space to sit with your friends.

Also, Plainfield Library Friends are sponsoring a **Home Business Expo** on Saturday, May 19 from 9:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. This is a free event for the public. For information about registering and promoting your home business at this event, call Sharon at 784-7062.

The Friends of the Plainfield Library is incorporated as a 501 c (3) tax exempt, non-profit group with a membership of around one hundred individuals and families. Please consider joining the Friends as an easy way to be involved in your community and library. The Plainfield Township Library is greatly thankful for the tremendous support of the Friends and its core of active volunteers who work so hard to organize fundraising events such as book sales for the benefit of the library.

FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

Assessment Audit, Appointments

On June 29, 2006, the State Tax Commission conducted a random audit of the practices of the Assessing Department at Plainfield Charter Township. The purpose of the audit was to make sure Plainfield's assessing practices complied with the guidelines and rules of the State Tax Commission and the General Property Tax Law of the State of Michigan.

Items such as sales studies, mapping, new construction and conducting Board of Reviews were reviewed. A representative from the State Tax Commission performed a random field inspection of sample properties to make sure we were accurate and consistent. We were found to be 100% compliant. Plainfield Charter Township is proud to have such a qualified and competent Assessing Department who work hard to maintain fairness and equity in the valuation of properties. It should also be noted that very few audits that are conducted receive 100%. The next time you stop by our counter for assistance, please congratulate and thank the staff for their hard work and a job well done.

In mid-February we will be mailing the **Assessment Change Notices**. The notices will have the dates and times for the Board of Review, which meets March 12 and 13. Appointments must be made by March 12. We anticipate another active year for appointments, so please call early in order for us to plan to accommodate everyone. We are seeing fewer sales and a slowdown in property values. Some areas of the township will see a decrease in their assessments while others may increase. Please be aware even though your assessment may **decrease** your taxable value may still **increase** until it meets the assessed value.

Thank You to Mid-Decade

Census Participants

Although the township's efforts to document a 10% increase in its population since 2000 fell short (we could only prove a 9.8% increase), I am very grateful to all the residents of Plainfield Charter Township who participated by answering the questions from the census enumerators. Thank you also to all the enumerators, to Kathy Timmerman who managed the records, and to Bob Matthews who served as Chief Enumerator. If the township had been able to prove an increase of 10% or more it would have qualified for an additional payment from State Shared Revenue Fund of approximately \$200,000 a year for three years. All the records associated with this project have been shredded.

Thank you again for your assistance. Perhaps we will try it again in 2017!

*Susan L. Morrow, MMC
Plainfield Charter Township Clerk*

Hyser Rivers Museum Is Open...

The Hyser Rivers Museum, located at 6440 West River Road NE in Belmont, is open the first Sunday of each month from 2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Special tours for out-of-town guests, school groups, scout groups, etc., can be arranged by calling the Township office at (616) 364-8466. This historical home, built in 1850, contains many items of antiquity. Come visit and enjoy its history.

Kristin May Be Calling You...

I have been intrigued by surveys, especially surveys done by telephoning people. Telephone surveys – those done to get our opinions – are one of the few allowed “invasions” of our telephone privacy. We get telephone calls asking us about products, TV watching, political candidates, and maybe about more interesting and more important things. I’m letting you know about a small survey that I think fits the category of “more important things.” I have been working with a Calvin College student, named Kristin, about doing a survey for one of her sociology classes. She wants to understand and analyze what Plainfield Township residents think about where they live, why they chose to live here, some of the pluses and minuses of living here, and what people think needs to improve. I say, “Fine!” Go do that, Kristin.



Telephone surveys, if done properly, can produce what are called “statistically valid” results that can be relied upon as being representative of a much larger group. Kristin’s challenge is to design a survey that will produce reliable results. She will be calling perhaps a few hundred people – a very small percentage of the entire population. I think that her efforts are worthy of our cooperation and will prove useful to her and to Plainfield Township. On her behalf, I am asking those who read this and are contacted by Kristin to give her a few minutes of your time and to assist her in her project – as opposed to simply dismissing her as we might when other “surveyors” call us when we are doing more important things. We will appreciate your hospitality and cooperation in Kristin’s endeavor.

*Robert C. Homan
Township Manager*

Another Sewer Rate Adjustment Needed

Sewer customers of Plainfield Township will see a 20% increase in sewer rates reflected on their quarterly bills beginning May 1. This is the second step of a planned 20%-20%-10% series of sewer rate adjustments needed to support the North Kent Sewer Authority's new Clean Water Plant now being constructed near Coit Avenue. Obviously, increased sewer rates and increased prices on anything over which one has no control – electricity, gas, cable TV, gasoline, etc. – are very unpopular, so an explanation is in order.

Plainfield sewer customers should know that significant increases would have already happened over the past several years if the North Kent communities had not declined to accept the City of Grand Rapids' "new deal" back in 1999. The price of independence and much better treatment of our wastewater is the cost of building and operating our own Clean Water Plant. A part of that cost, the *interest* on Plainfield Township's share of the \$48 million bond issue to build the plant, is nearly \$1,000,000 in this year's \$4,000,000. This is the first year this item is in the Sewer Fund budget. In 2009, we will be paying *principal* on that borrowing, too. At the risk of belaboring the point, sewer customers will be paying to their own local government increased sewer user fees nearly equal to what they would be paying to Grand Rapids if we had joined about a dozen other communities in acceding to Grand Rapids' new "Partnership" plan that really changed things forever – and, perhaps, for good.

What is the impact? The average residential sewer customer will pay an additional \$13.12 per quarter; that is \$4.37 per month. The *increase* is related directly to the decision to build and operate the new NKSA Clean Water Plant, but the *total* quarterly sewer bills pay for much more than that. As a continuation of a series of articles featuring the various functions and

departments of Plainfield Township, I will be explaining the details of operating our sewer system in future PROFILES. For purposes of this article, readers should understand that a system of hundreds of miles of sewer collector pipes (many more than 35 years old), thousands of manholes, and 18 pumping stations need maintenance, inspection, repairs, electricity, parts, and the attention of many people. We flush our toilets and clear our sinks without giving it much thought, but a well-functioning sewer system doesn't just happen.

The Township Board asks for your understanding and your confidence in them as they make difficult-but-necessary decisions on your behalf to keep things moving forward for the public good.



PLAINFIELD CHARTER TOWNSHIP

General Information:	364-8466
Assessing:	726-8880
Building Inspections:	364-1190
Building & Grounds:	363-9399
Fire Info & Permits:	361-2895
Libraries:	
Comstock Park	647-3860
Plainfield	647-3930
Parks:	363-9399
Planning Services:	726-8899
Treasurer:	726-8891
Utility Billing:	726-8885
Water Department:	363-9660
Water Emergencies:	257-8021

FIRE EMERGENCIES: 911

The Office of Accounting

Water, Planning, Building Inspection, Assessing, Buildings and Grounds, Fire and Rescue. These are the departments that I have described in previous PROFILE articles. These important services of Plainfield Township have at least one thing in common: there is a high degree of interaction between those providing the services and the general public. The featured department in this issue of the PROFILE is the Township's Accounting Office. Although there is a very high degree of interaction between our Utility Billing staff and our thousands of water and sewer customers, much of the work being done is internal to our organization. In many ways, we all depend on the work being done by Accounting and its management.

Warren Smith, who has been our Accounting Manager for the past four years, heads the department. In a previous accounting life, Warren worked many years for the Holland Board of Public Works, where "utilities" also included a municipal electricity provider. Our part time Accountant and payroll administrator is Kendra Cook, who has been with us for over seven years. Kathy Ensley has been doing our accounts payable and invoicing on a part time basis for more than two years. Shirley Pasco has led Utility Billing for more than seven years, and Jackie Haberman has worked with

her on a part time basis for about three years. All of these employees take their jobs seriously and are very skilled and dependable.

Sending out 4,000 water and sewer bills each month, dealing with new construction, changing account information and doing final meter readings for closed accounts, and going through the most demanding of all job duties relating to delinquent accounts and shut-offs are impressive experience credentials for our Utility Billing staff. I find myself appreciating their work more and more as I interact with and assist them in dealing with difficult and complex issues.

Because of the nature of their work, these employees do not get the credit they deserve, so this is an opportunity to express respect and appreciation for what they accomplish routinely. They have thousands of opportunities to "get it right" and just as many to get it wrong. In jobs where accuracy is of paramount importance, "getting it wrong" is rather unusual. If you have the occasion to interact with them, you will find them helpful, knowledgeable, and pleasant to work with. Our organization depends on these people, and they have earned our respect and trust.

Robert C. Homan, Township Manager

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left to right: Kendra Cook, Warren Smith, Shirley Pasco, Kathy Ensley, Jackie Haberman.



PLAINFIELD FD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Central Dispatch. Those two words have garnered much media attention recently and I have been quoted in several of the articles. Due to my association with the issue, both in the media and in the “real world,” I’d like to review what we currently do, what we could do, and why it may be impossible to accomplish. I should say that I have been on two committees from the start of this last attempt to develop a Central Dispatch and I was on Muskegon County’s Dispatch Executive Board for two years prior to moving to Plainfield, so I have a pretty good feel for the issue.

How we are currently dispatched –

If you call from a landline (wired telephone), the call is directed to the 911-call center (Public Safety Answering Point – PSAP) for that area. The dispatchers then have the name of the phone subscriber, their phone number and address. The call-taker determines what the emergency is, and if it is fire related, the fire department is typically dispatched immediately. If it is a medical emergency, you are transferred to one of the ambulance company dispatchers who then determines what the problem is and then prioritizes the call. Once the ambulance dispatcher makes the prioritization, it can be dispatched by the Kent County Sheriff Department. We are dispatched as well as the ambulance because Kent County is a two-tiered system that relies on the municipality to send responders to stabilize the patient until the ambulance arrives.

If you call from a cellular phone, the call typically goes to the Michigan State Police Post or

Grand Rapids Dispatch, although occasionally you may get routed to someone on the other side of the state. The dispatcher may have your name, phone number, and a general idea of where you are. They will transfer you to the appropriate PSAP where the process begins as indicated above.

How we could be dispatched –

There are several issues with developing a new Central Dispatch.

- **The current number of dispatch centers.** We could function well with two centers capable of supporting the other in an emergency. This would allow there to be two separate locations where calls are routed as well as eliminate the need to depend on a much smaller out-of-county center for emergency backup. Such a need doesn’t occur often but it probably would occur during a weather-related emergency when a higher number of calls occurs. If Kent County had two centers that used the same dispatching software (CAD), interacting together, there would be few delays in transferring calls. Logically, each center would handle all calls within a given boundary, eliminating the problems of different dispatch centers for police and fire.

- **Radio frequencies.** There are currently many different dispatch frequencies for Police, Fire and EMS in Kent County. This number could be reduced and the frequencies not used for dispatching could become tactical frequencies for use at emergencies. Or we could move to the next generation of radio communications and develop an 700 or 800-megahertz system which would be very expensive.

• **How could we fund Central Dispatch?**

Potential options include:

- A. A countywide assessment (tax) that spread the cost equally over the entire county.
- B. An assessment on each community that spreads the cost over the municipalities availing themselves of the service.
- C. A telephone surcharge levied on the phone bill of all phones in Kent County.
- D. A combination of B and C.

• **Who would be in charge?** Who would make operational decisions? Would compromise be necessary on some issues? The police and fire departments like to be in control because they

are literally in a life and death business, but it has been my experience that it isn't the life and death issues where we disagree. It is the small stuff such as who would respond to barking dogs? By compromise and a little open mindedness those types of problems can be settled.

We need a way for the first responders to be dispatched first. A Central Dispatch would allow that by dispatching everyone at the same time. Let's hope that we can find a solution to this problem in the near future, before the dispatch problems of the recent past fade from our memories.

David Peterson

YOU'RE INVITED TO A PASSPORT PARTY!

Two special dates in 2007 to choose from:

Saturday, February 17 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. • Saturday, March 17 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Plainfield Charter Township Offices, 6161 Belmont Avenue NE, (616) 364-8466

FEES: All passport fees are the same nationwide.

- A separate check to the **U.S. Department of State:**
\$67 if you are 16 years or older
\$52 if you are under 16
- A separate check or cash to **Plainfield Charter Township:**
\$30 per application
\$8 per set of 2 photographs (if we take them)

Sorry, credit cards cannot be taken for payment.

Certified Birth Certificate or previously issued valid Passport, or Certificate of Naturalization required in addition to Drivers License or State ID. Applicants under 14 years of age must have *both natural parents* present and both parents' drivers license information (see Web site for exceptions). All applicants, including children, must be present for application to be executed.

**For details on everything you need to apply, visit:
www.plainfieldchartertp.org/pctpassport.htm**

REMINDER:

As of **1/23/2007**, ALL air and sea travel to ALL foreign countries, cluding Canada and Mexico, now requires a U.S. Passport.

As of **12/31/2007**, ALL travel outside the USA will require a U.S. Passport.

Passports applications are also accepted Monday thru Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Township Offices.

NO appointment is necessary!



Clearing Sidewalks of Snow and Ice

We have just been reintroduced to snow and ice again after a freak of nature had us thinking that global warming has struck us here in ways unheard of. Now that the snow has been accumulating, people are asking why Plainfield Township does not require that sidewalks be cleared. Why not? The reason is that enforcement would be difficult, time-consuming, would not produce immediate results, and would be inevitably difficult or overbearing on people who are not physically able to clear the sidewalks or cannot afford to have it done for them. To be considerate, however, residents and business owners should clear sidewalks adjacent to their property. There are many places in our Township where children must walk to school. Clearing snow from sidewalks adjacent to your property along walking routes to schools should be

considered a “civic duty.” Please think of those kids when it snows, and please do the right thing – *especially* along busy roads.

The Township’s Sidewalk Ordinance does prohibit “obstructing” sidewalks. In the winter-time, many property owners – especially businesses – plow their driveways and parking lots in a manner that piles up snow that obstructs sidewalks. Although snowplow drivers probably do this for ease and convenience, it is a *bad* thing. When citizens see this happening, they should bring it to the plow truck driver’s attention or the business owner’s attention. Voluntary cooperation is preferred. Give a break to school children and other pedestrians who must use the sidewalks in this weather ...please.

Robert C. Homan
Township Manager

Plainfield Charter Township

TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 364-8466

TOWNSHIP BOARD

George Meek, Supervisor
Susan Morrow, Clerk
James Stover, Treasurer
Rebecca Borek, Trustee
Jack Hagedorn, Trustee
Robert Heindrichs, Trustee
William Parris, Trustee



MANAGER

Robert Homan

TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETINGS

7:30 p.m.
First and Third Mondays

www.painfieldchartertp.org

The Profile

Plainfield Charter Township
6161 Belmont NE
Belmont, MI 49306

PRESORTED
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US POSTAGE
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