

The Profile

VOLUME XXXII NUMBER 1

NOVEMBER 2006

This is another PROFILE article featuring one of the operating departments of Plainfield Township. Please check our website “plainfieldchartertwp.org” to view more details about the various departments and how they fit into our organizational structure. Although not saving it for last, I am introducing the Buildings and Grounds Department somewhat down the list of the eleven departments or offices that comprise the Plainfield Township organization.

We might think that this department may not deserve top billing or status as important as, say, the Fire Department or the Water Department. After all, “How does the Buildings and Grounds Department serve me?” B&G may not seem as exciting or sophisticated as some of the other, more high profile, functions of Township government, but let me tell you that our organization AND the public would notice it in a hurry if they closed up shop or somehow disappeared for a week or two.

The Buildings and Grounds Department Who Are Those Guys?



The very real people who are in the background and doing all of the work that is needed to keep facilities running, looking spiffy, and provisioned with everything from furnace filters to toilet paper never get enough credit for simply doing their jobs. Unfortunately, they do get criticized when something breaks down, when something is “missed,” and when circumstances beyond their control make it impossible to keep up or get the job done. In a weird sort of way, criticism for these things is a compliment, because noticing things missed or things not looking right are the *exception*. The “rule,” the standard, the expectation is that things typically do look spiffy, well-taken-care-of, and functional. Sure, screw-ups happen, but they are the exception. And remember, just like the fire department, the libraries, and the police, a municipal operation can only do as much as resources made available to them will allow.

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Buildings and Grounds Department *from page 1*

What do these guys do? Township Hall, the “old” township hall, Buildings and Grounds headquarters, Senior Citizens Center (old DW Richardson School), Hyser House Museum, Plainfield Library, Comstock Park Library, the grounds and landscaping around these buildings and the Water Department buildings, tanks, and pump stations, Fire Stations, Versluis Park, DNR Park, Ambrose Park, White Pine Trail, Northgate Park, Airway Park, Dean Lake Park, Holtman park, three “Entering Plainfield Township” signs and landscaping, 150 trash barrels throughout the Township once or twice weekly, snow blowing and shoveling, parking lot and entryway salting, plumbing, heating, lighting, sprinkling systems, and other maintenance – and just about any other job that someone wants done “right now.” Oh, and let me not forget the monumental job of keeping the Township’s cemeteries mowed, weed whipped, leaves picked up, graves dug, foundations poured, visitors assisted, and junk removed. These are the things that would come to a grinding halt if B&G workers weren’t there.

Who, then, are these guys? Ron Walker has been in charge of all this since 1989. His lieutenant, Dennis Hatchew, has been doing his dedicated work since 1994. Cathy Beattie handles all the office work. Four full time maintenance workers (in order of seniority) Chuck Barr, Dennis Moore, Richard Hatchew, and Steve Quillan are on the front lines day in and day out. They each have their special skills and their routine assignments. They don’t have much time to sit around. I know; I’ve watched them for over ten years, and I know their leaders have watched them (and worked with them) for much longer. During the summer growing season, we have between eight and twelve seasonal workers who mow and trim and pick things up from early morning until mid-afternoon. They mow in rain and shine, hot and cold, nice and ugly weather. I am proud of all these people and what they do for us — and not too proud to say so.

Robert C. Homan, Township Manager

left to right: Richard Hatchew, Dennis Hatchew, Cathy Beattie, Chuck Barr, Dennis Moore and Ron Walker. Not pictured: Steve Quillan.

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Absent Voter Ballots Available

Absent voter ballots for the General Election to be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2006, are now available, either in person, by requesting by telephone or in writing, during regular business hours from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm Monday thru Friday until Friday, November 3, 2006. The township offices will also be open from 8:00 am until 2:00 pm on Saturday, November 4, 2006 to issue absent voter ballots only.

Anyone over the age of 60, or physically unable to attend the polls or anyone who expects to be out of the community on Election Day, may vote absentee. The absent voter ballot is identical to the ballot used in the precincts on Election Day. In order to reduce lines and speed the processing of ballots in the precincts, I encourage anyone who is eligible, to vote by absent voter ballot. Questions regarding absent voter ballots should be directed to the Clerk's office, (616) 364-8466 or visiting the township website: www.plainfieldchartertp.org.

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



Sample Ballots

Sample ballots for the General Election to be held on Tuesday, November 7, 2006 are available at the Township Offices, 6161 Belmont Avenue NE, Belmont, during regular business hours from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday thru Friday. A sample ballot is also available by visiting the township website: www.plainfieldchartertp.org.

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

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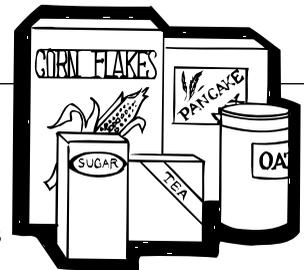
Commodity Distribution

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

- December 7, 2006
- March 1, 2007
- June 7, 2007
- September 6, 2007

To qualify you must reside between 4 Mile Road and 10 Mile Road. Distribution is at 6156 Belmont Avenue, located across from the Plainfield Township Offices. Hours are 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

New families wishing to qualify may call Jim or Peg Granzotto at 784-5249, or come to our distribution site on the above dates. You will need to bring your Social Security card and an income statement.



All-In-One Wireless Broadband Internet Access

Progress to Date

As I reported in the June PROFILE, All-In-One Wireless has a long-term agreement with Plainfield Charter Township to provide Wireless Internet access to Plainfield Township businesses and residents along with other potential customers through use of equipment located on Township owned water storage tanks. Mr. Jason Smith, All-In-One's President, has been working diligently since May to acquire and install the wireless equipment along with engineering and test performance in order to fulfill Plainfield Township requirements. As anticipated, All-In-One has encountered technical challenges during the set-up phase and this has slowed their ability to respond positively to potential customers inquiring about service. These technical issues mainly affect residents in the Rockford, Belmont, and Comstock Park areas.

Mr. Smith has consistently explained to me that he wishes to provide quality and reliable service to his customers, so he has opted to forego immediate connections that might experience significant downtime or breaks in service. However, once he determines that reliable service can be provided, he will endeavor to connect customers requesting service. His company expects to handle a large backlog of requests in the near future, and encourages those who have inquired previously and have not yet acquired service to contact them again for an update in their area. You may direct your questions and inquiries to sales@aiow.net preferably, or you may call their office between 9am and 5pm at 616-531-1538.

Plainfield Township has had five of its buildings connected and made operational for the past few weeks without any problems. We are pleased with the results.

Robert C. Homan, Township Manager



Anonymous Letters and Voicemails

Why do people do this?

Occasionally, I receive anonymous letters and phone calls. Like spitting out stale chewing gum and hoping I'll step on it, the anonymous callers or note writers may get some personal satisfaction in behaving this way, but I think they are simply wasting their time. Apparently, these nameless and faceless people are not interested in a reply, an explanation, or a discussion. I have no idea why. Are they afraid? We at Plainfield Township are not in the businesses of retaliating or punishing someone who criticizes or questions what we say or do. I am at a loss to imagine how we could do that anyway. Those who do not share our views or do not agree with Plainfield Township's policies and actions should not be afraid to express themselves. If there is a problem, an apparent wrongdoing, a shortcoming, or an issue within Plainfield Township's jurisdiction needing attention, we are willing to listen and to discuss it. Anonymous messages? — My policy is to IGNORE them. If a citizen has a question, a concern, or something to say, please give us an opportunity to respond.

Robert C. Homan, Township Manager



Message from the Supervisor

I have a couple of topics to share with you in this issue of the *Profile*. In the June 2006 edition, I wrote about and encouraged “safety” in view of the

two major road improvements going on simultaneously; the Northland Bridge project and the West River Drive road widening project. When you read this article, the West River Drive road project will be completed and the Northland Bridge project will be nearing completion and all traffic flow should be back to normal soon. I want to thank all of the drivers who used these project areas in a safe and respectful manner. There was a lot of inconvenience on everyone’s part, but the improve-

ments will be well worth the interruptions.

I was elected Township Supervisor almost two years ago and we are fast approaching another general election on November 7, 2006. Over the past two years of being in office, I have become aware of the talent and expertise within the framework of all governments with not only the hired employees, but also with the elected officials. I concur with some of the constituents that not all elected officials are sympathetic to the peoples’ needs. However, we do have some very good ones and that to me represents that the majority of voters are informed, concerned, and making the effort to vote.

With the election a short time away, I’m asking the voters of Plainfield Charter Township to ask questions, be informed, and vote on November 7, 2006 for the candidates you feel will do the best job for everyone concerned.

Thank you and I hope you and your loved ones have a safe and secure holiday season.

George K. Meek, Supervisor

Snow will be here soon enough!!!

Is your snowplow company licensed?

Plainfield Charter Township requires all snowplow companies to obtain a license for each snowplow vehicle that operates within the Township. This is a uncommon practice for municipalities in Michigan. Plainfield Charter Township Licensing Ordinance #475 - Chapter X states, “No person shall engage in the



business of moving, removing or plowing snow upon public or private property within the Township without first having obtained a license.”

Licenses can be obtained by calling the Clerk’s Office at 616-364-8466, or by stopping at the Township Offices during regular business hours, 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, and requesting an application. Applications can also be obtained by using the following link: www.plainfieldchartertp.org

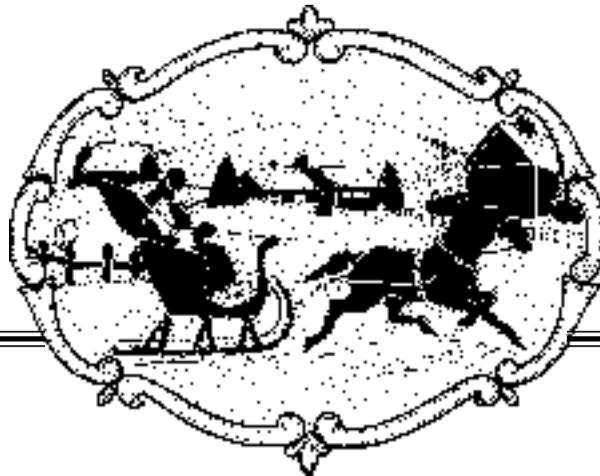
Assessments May Decrease

Preliminary information obtained from our sales studies is suggesting some assessments will decrease for 2007. All arm's length sales transactions between April 1, 2004 and March 31, 2006 are compared with assessments to determine if they are at the required 50% of market value. If the assessments decrease, it will not mean an automatic decrease in taxable value and taxes. The taxable value is a calculation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or 5% whichever is less and

is also subject to additions from field inspections and new construction. The taxable value may never be higher than the assessed value.

When you receive your assessment notice in February, please review it and if you have questions, call our office at (616) 726-8880. We will be happy to go over the values and answer your questions.

Judith LaFave, Assessor



Hyser Rivers Museum to Hold An Old Fashioned Christmas Craft Day

The Hyser Rivers Museum Historical Committee will be holding their annual *An Old Fashion Christmas Craft Day* on December 3, 2006, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Guests can make-and-take a Christmas ornament and light refreshments will be served. Please RSVP for this event by calling (616) 364-8466.

To arrange special visits for school children or out of town guests, or to schedule a special event, please contact Plainfield Township Hall at (616) 364-8466. You will be put in touch with a member of the Historical Committee.

Please come and visit the Museum! It is open Sundays from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Step back in time for the afternoon.

Census to Count Residents of Plainfield Charter Township

A mid-decade census is being conducted in Plainfield Charter Township. The purpose of conducting a mid-decade census is for the township to qualify for additional revenue from the State of Michigan. In order to qualify, Plainfield Charter Township will need to show a population increase of 10% or more over the 2000 census figure of 30,154. All enumerators (census workers) are wearing photo identification and have a certified copy of their appointment as an enumerator for this project by the Michigan Secretary of State.

Enumerators are asking for the names of all people who lived at each address within the township on August 24, 2006 (Census Day). No other information (income, ethnicity, or other personal data) is being collected. **This is specifically a count of the number of people living in the township.**

Please cooperate with the enumerators by responding in person or by returning the callback form in the prepaid envelope left at your residence. This project must be completed by November 24, 2006.

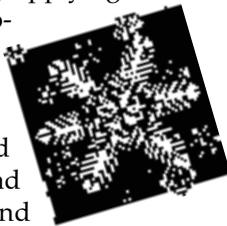
Thank you for your assistance. Please contact me at (616) 364-8466, or email me at morrows@plainfieldchartertp.org, with any comments or concerns.

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

A Citizen's Guide to Cold Weather Practices

Winter means mounds of snow to shovel and layers of ice to remove from our sidewalks and driveways.

We often make the job easier by applying deicers like salt, but besides sodium chloride, many deicers also contain chemicals like cyanide. When ice melts, the salts and chemicals dissolve and flow into street drains that lead directly to nearby streams and lakes, endangering aquatic life. By following a few tips, you can reduce your salt use and prevent water pollution.



1. Try an alternative.

Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) was developed as a deicing alternative because it has fewer adverse environmental impacts than salt and doesn't cause corrosion. Although CMA is more expensive than rock salt, it is recommended for environmentally sensitive areas.

2. Reduce your salt use.

By limiting the amount of salt you use on sidewalks and driveways, you can reduce the amount of polluted snow melt washing into waterways.

3. Use that shovel!

The most important step in deicing is to physically remove as much ice as possible before applying salt. Use a shovel to break up the ice before you add another layer of salt to your sidewalk. Adding more salt without removing what has melted can result in over-application, meaning more salt and chemicals end up in nearby streams and lakes. You can also reduce salt use by limiting access to your home to one entrance. For every doorway that is not used, there will be less salt running into the catch basin in your street, and ultimately the Grand River.

Public Computer Upgrade 2006

This year KDL provided brand new computer hardware and several new software products for its customers. In addition to the regular Microsoft Office menu, you now have available Windows Media Player, Quick Time, Sonic RecordNow!, Real Player and Picasa 2, among other products. The new equipment supports a variety of media devices including floppy discs, CD's, various sized media cards and USB flash drives.

RFID - Radio Frequency Identification – It's HERE!

KDL has installed this new customer-friendly technology in all 18 of its branches, enabling library staff to check in and out several books at once using highly sensitive tags that have been placed in all library materials. It also makes possible what we call EXPRESS CHECK, where you can speedily and efficiently check your own items. The do-it-yourself service is now available at the Plainfield Branch, and will be coming soon to Comstock Park.

A New Look for Both Libraries!

In August 2006, Kent District Library, the Friends of the Plainfield Library and Plainfield Charter Township worked together to establish a new level of service for users of the Plainfield Branch. The Friends of the Plainfield Library donated over \$34,000 for the new custom-designed furnishings, which include a new

checkout desk, book drops and a counter for new self-checkout stations. The township provided the funding and manpower to assist with the major electrical work, cutting of concrete, removing tile and new floor cover.

At the Comstock Park branch, you will find new colors on the walls, new computer tables, and comfy seating. And perhaps best of all, you will find an additional 40 parking spaces in a well-lit and convenient parking lot, thanks to the diligent efforts of Plainfield Township, working with the Kent County Parks Department.

Free Library Programming for the Whole Family

For Ages 6 and Under:

The regular Fall series of Babytime, Laptime and Storytime started in September. For more information on these programs, please call your closest branch. It's not too late to join in! Other upcoming programs include:

Evening story and craft time, a 4-week series
Plainfield – beginning Wed., Oct. 11 at 7 pm

Clifford, the Big Red Dog (with the Grand Rapids Children's Museum)
Comstock Park – Mon., Oct. at 10:30 am
Plainfield - Thurs., Nov. 9 at 10:30 am

Shiver Me Timbers - pirate stories, jolly games, and crafts
Comstock Park – Mon., Nov. 6 at 10:30 am
Plainfield – Thurs., Nov. 16 at 6:30 pm

Grandma/Grandpa and Me at the Library
Comstock Park – Mon., Nov. 13 at 10:30 am

PLAINFIELD BRANCH HOURS

2650 5-Mile Road NE • Phone: 647-3930

Mon. through Thurs. 9:30 am to 8:00 pm

Friday, Saturday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Sunday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

(during the school year only)

COMSTOCK PARK BRANCH HOURS

3943 West River Drive • Phone: 647-3860

Monday 9:30 am to 8:00 pm

Wednesday 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

Tuesday, Thursday 12:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Friday, Saturday 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm

For older children, and the whole family:

Big Kids Book Time – 6-wk. series ages 6 and up
Comstock Park – begins Thurs., Oct. 12 at
6:30 pm

Skulls and Bones with Diane Pletcher –
a fascinating collection of animal bones
Comstock Park – Thurs., Nov. 2 at 6:30 pm

**Magic Show for the Whole Family with
Joel Wendling** – Be Wowed by Wizardry!
Plainfield – Sat., Nov. 25 at 10:30 am

Looking ahead, winter children's program-
ming will bring our usual storytimes, as well
as themed programs on Charlotte's Web,
snowmen, and birds.

For Adults:

Free Computer Confidence Classes, focusing
on a variety of topics, will be held at the **KDL
Service Center**, 814 West River Center (behind
Wendy's) in Comstock Park this fall. Please call
647-3883 for more information or to register.

Book Discussions – You are warmly welcomed
to join our friendly, informal groups. Please call
to reserve your copy of the next title.

Comstock Park – Fourth Thurs. of the month
at 7:00 pm

Plainfield – 2nd Thurs. of month at 1:00 pm

Let your Photos Tell a Story – Photojournal
your favorite pictures.

Plainfield – Sun., Oct. 8 at 1:30 pm

Creative Beading – Basic techniques in jewelry
making. All supplies provided.

Comstock Park – Tues., Oct. 10 at 6:30 pm

Create a Coaster – Use ceramic tiles and stamps
to create beautiful beverage coasters to give as
gifts.

Plainfield – Sun., Nov. 19 at 1:30 pm

Armchair Yoga – increase your flexibility and
sense of well-being. Please bring a mat or a
towel.

Plainfield – Fri., Nov. 3 at 10:30 am

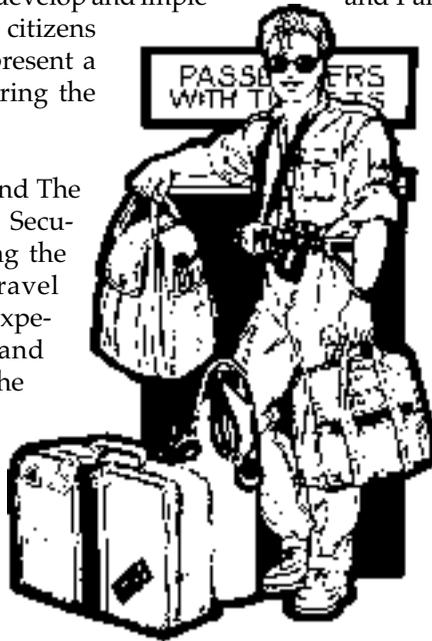
Plainfield Friends of the Library News:

At the Plainfield Branch, the holiday season
officially opens on Saturday, October 28th start-
ing at 9:30 am with the "Before the Snow Flies"
Annual Arts and Crafts Show sponsored by
Friends of the Plainfield Library. Halloween,
Thanksgiving, Christmas and other great gift
ideas are displayed by local crafters for sale.
There is an entrance fee of \$.50 with door prizes
all day as well as a silent auction and bake sale.
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. 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 indi-
viduals 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 or-
ganize fundraising events such as book sales
for the benefit of the library.

NEW Passport Requirements for Travel outside the United States

Currently, U.S. citizens, and some citizens of other countries in the Western Hemisphere are not required to present a passport to enter or re-enter the United States when traveling within the Western Hemisphere. The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (also known as the 9/11 Intelligence Bill), mandated that the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, develop and implement a plan to require U.S. citizens and foreign nationals to present a valid passport when entering the United States.

The Department of State and The Department of Homeland Security are now implementing the "Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative" to secure and expedite travel. Travelers to and from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central & South America, Mexico, and Panama *will be required* to have a U.S. Passport to enter or re-enter the United States by January 08, 2007. This is a change from prior travel requirements and will affect all United States citizens entering the United States from countries within the Western Hemisphere, who do not currently possess valid passports. This new requirements will also affect certain foreign nationals who currently are not required to present a passport to travel to the United States. Most Canadian citizens, citizens of the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda, and to a lesser degree, Mexican citizens will be affected by the implementation of these new requirements.



- **On January 08, 2007:** Passports will be required for all air and sea travel to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central & South America, Mexico, and Panama.
- **On December 31, 2007:** Passports will be required for all air, sea, *and land* border crossings to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central & South America, Mexico, and Panama.

Plainfield Charter Township Clerk's office accepts passports between the hours of 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Every effort is made to keep the office open during these hours; however, there are occasions when the office may be closed. It would be wise to call 616-364-8466 to confirm that the Passport Agency is open on the day you wish to come.

When you apply for a passport, you **MUST** bring the following information and documents.

- **Application:** Available on line at www.travel.state.gov or at the Township Offices.
- **Proof of identity:** Valid driver's license, state issued ID card or US Military ID card.
- **Proof of citizenship:** *Original* certified birth certificate with a raised seal or printed on government issued paper. *Hospital Certificates and Birth Registrations* are not acceptable as proof of citizenship. You can obtain a certified birth certificate from the county or state of your birth.

- **Two passport photos:** Plainfield Township takes passport photos. The cost is \$8.00 for two photos, which is the required number needed for a new passport or a renewal.
- **Two checks:** One for \$67.00 (adult – age 16 and over) or \$52.00 (child – age 15 and younger) made payable to the *U.S. Department of State* and one for \$30.00, plus the cost of photos, made payable to *Plainfield Charter Township*. (The township will accept cash instead of a check, but the Department of State will not). We do NOT accept credit or debit cards as payment.

All applicants must be seen in person, no matter of the applicant’s age, at the Township Of-

Plainfield Charter Township’s Code of Ordinances are now Online...

On June 19, 2006, the Board of Trustees approved the Codification of the General and Permanent Ordinances of Plainfield Charter Township. The Code of Ordinances is now available to residents 24 hours a day in an online, searchable, electronic database.

We know that people use the world wide web 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, whether the township offices are open or not. The web is always open! Please take some time to explore the township website and learn about the community that we all call home.

By the way, if you wish to explore, here’s a handy hint - you can get to the home page at any time by clicking on “Home” in the upper left hand corner. Enjoy!

Explore the Web –
www.plainfieldchartertp.org 11

fice to complete the form and sign it in person. There are no exceptions! There are special rules for children, expedited applications, and unusual circumstances. Please call to ask your questions before coming to the office. It may take up to eight (8) weeks to receive your passport; so early planning is a good idea!

The Clerk’s office would be pleased to make special arrangements to assist your group (church, school, club, etc.) with the application process at your facility, during specified times. These arrangements need to be made in advance. The Clerk’s office staff is happy to assist you with your application and any of your questions. Call us at 616-364-8466.



Notice

to the Residents of
Plainfield Charter Township

All legal notices (public hearings, minutes, new or amended ordinances, etc.) for Plainfield Charter Township will now be published in the Advance Newspapers and will no longer be in the Community Edition of the Grand Rapids Press, which has been discontinued. They will appear in the editions that cover all properties in Plainfield Charter Township. Usually the township logo will appear at the top of each legal notice.

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

Over the past 10 months, contractors for the North Kent Sewer Authority (NKSA) have shaped and filled a 14-acre site in preparation for the construction of the PARCC SIDE Clean Water Plant (CWP) between Coit Avenue and the Grand River. PARCC SIDE, by the way, has two meanings: (1) The site is alongside of Lamoreaux Park, which is a large undeveloped forested park owned by Kent County (“park side”), and (2) the acronym “PARCC” represents the first letters of the names of the communities that comprise the NKSA – Plainfield, Alpine, Rockford, Cannon and Courtland.

The NKSA Board of Directors has approved the overall design of the CWP’s administration building. It will look great and be an asset to the neighborhood. The project’s engineer, Prein and Newhof, has been working diligently with Triangle Associates, our Construction Manager, for several months in developing detailed plans for the CWP in a manner that will result in a project that will assure that our cost allowance will not be exceeded and will result in smooth construction with minimal glitches and surprises. We expect to have a “Guaranteed Maximum Price” for the project by mid-October, and we should be able to sell bonds for the project before the middle of November.

A plant director, or superintendent, may be hired in early 2007, and this experienced person will be part of the construction team. We have recently learned from Traverse City that

their Membrane Bio-Reactor clean water plant has enabled them to achieve remarkable efficiencies and lower operating costs than their former “traditional” technology plant. We are confident that the NKSA can indeed operate this facility as efficiently and cost effectively as we had projected — with six employees.

Please drive by the site and call me if you have any questions about the project. You may also call Michael Young, Chairman of the NKSA

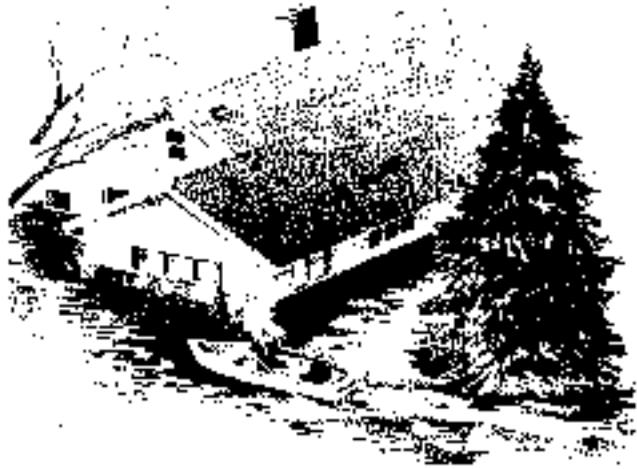
Board, and City Manager of Rockford. By spring of 2007, significant and visible progress should be evident. We look forward to the fall of 2008 when the Clean Water Plant is expected to be on-line and in operation.

Although this is old news, it is becoming clear that the increasing sewer rates in the NKSA member communities are necessary to pay for the CWP and its operation. Customers

should remember that the “new deal” offered our communities by Grand Rapids some seven years ago raised the cost of treating our sewage to the point where this project became feasible. In a way we owe some sort of positive acknowledgement to Grand Rapids for making it possible for us to divert millions of gallons from the City’s plant and treat our own sewage to a “clean water state” using the new Membrane Bio-Reactor technology. We are using the money that we would have paid the City to do a much better job and also keep it under our control.

Robert C. Homan, Township Manager

Update on Progress in Building the New PARCC SIDE Clean Water Plant



What are the Odds of a 100-Year Flood?

The term “100-year flood” has caused much confusion for people not familiar with statistics. Another way of looking

at it is to think of the odds that a 100-year flood will happen sometime during the life of a 30-year mortgage (a 26% chance).

Chance of Flooding over a Period of Years

Time Period	Flood Size			
	10 – year	25 – year	50 – year	100 – year
1 year	10%	4%	2%	1%
10 years	65%	34%	18%	10%
20 years	88%	56%	44%	18%
30 years	96%	71%	45%	26%
50 years	99%	87%	64%	39%

But looking at the 100-year flood does not convey the true flood risk because it focuses on a large, less frequent flood. Even these numbers do not convey the true flood risk because they focus on the larger, less frequent floods. If a house is low enough, it may be subject to damage by the 10- or 25-year flood. During the proverbial 30-year mortgage, it may have a 26% chance of being hit by the 100-year flood, but the odds are 96% (nearly guaranteed) that it will be hit by a 10-year flood. Compare those odds to the only 5% chance that the house will catch fire during the same 30-year mortgage. There are hundreds of acres in Plainfield Township that have been and will be affected by

floods. Flood proofing, elevating structures, relocating structures, demolishing structures, securing outdoor equipment, and planning for the event would be prudent things to investigate and act upon.

Plainfield Township has, with the assistance of a Federal (FEMA) grant, been working on a Flood Mitigation Planning exercise with several governmental agencies and citizens during the past few months. A report is expected before the end of the year. If you are affected or interested, please contact Peter Elam, at the Plainfield Township Community Development Department (616) 726-8899.

PLAINFIELD FD FIRE DEPARTMENT

Station staffing is quite a hot topic in the area right now. The Grand Rapids Fire Department has had several opportunities to be criticized in the press for longer-than-typical response times, and, just as the dust settled from that incident, Wyoming Fire Department and Dispatch was the target of criticism for an extended response to one of their stations that wasn't staffed. In both incidents the response was to a person in need of medical care who ultimately died.

I am not going to comment specifically on either incident, as I am not privy to all of the details and am certainly not in a position to judge the response or outcome in these two cases. What I do want to do is to explain fire station staffing methods and the potential for this type of situation happening in Plainfield Township.

Let's deal with the potential first. Could this type of incident occur in Plainfield Township? The answer is yes. It is nearly impossible and certainly fiscally imprudent to make sure that there are emergency personnel ready to respond from both of Plainfield's fire stations at all times. We can staff the stations 24 hours a day, seven days a week (24/7) with paid personnel, but there will be times when the sta-

tion is empty of personnel waiting to respond. We are not a site-based service where people requiring service come to us; we typically respond to the location of an "incident." As a result, we are frequently out of the station on calls ["incidents"]. Additionally, we may be out of the station for other reasons including: training, meetings, inspections, complaint investigation, apparatus maintenance, equipment procurement, public education and meals.



Many of our people work twenty-four hour shifts. They are encouraged to bring in food for the meals they eat during that shift. Occasionally they are asked to work beyond that shift's ending time, and when that occurs, they may need to get additional food for the next 12 or 24-hour period that they

will be working. Fire personnel may make this "food run" in fire apparatus, so that they are ready to respond in a moment's notice.

Many ambulance companies move their ambulances throughout the response district based on the odds of there being a call in a certain area at a certain time. This is called system status. The Plainfield Fire Department frequently has apparatus out of the stations, per-

forming part of the daily activities of operating a fire department.

Next is the staffing issue. There are many ways to staff fire departments; from full time people 24/7, which is the most effective, to a fully volunteer department, which is the least expensive. To staff a fire station with four (4) firefighters 24/7 costs somewhere between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000 per year in compensation related costs. To operate from a station staffed by volunteers is considerably less— as much as 1/10 the cost of the scheduled and fully paid staff. To respond to a house fire with one room burning, we will need a minimum of 12 people. So, in a system of all full-time, employees you need at least three stations – or three “companies” of four firefighters each. If you are covering a large geographic area, like Plainfield Township, one may prefer more stations to more people at the existing stations. The more full-time people you have, the more your department costs to operate. The more stations you have, the more non-personnel costs increase, too.

There are several reasons to have full-time firefighters; they are easier to schedule for training, they are instantly available to respond when they are in training at work, we can pretty much guarantee a certain minimum response, and the time from notification to the apparatus responding is normally less than a minute. While we are very proud of our Paid-on-Call firefighters, there are limita-

tions to what they are able to accomplish. Because of those limitations, we have five full-time employees on duty 24/7. Those employees are supplemented by our Paid-on-Call employees who respond from home, work or wherever they are when paged by dispatch.



Station distribution is somewhat of an art. In cities during the 1800's, stations were distributed based on how far a horse pulling a wagon could run in four minutes. In rural areas, there may not have been a township department, or county government may have provided a station or two. Today, station location is based on computer modeling and can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to build. We are still trying to get to the scene of an incident in four minutes or less.

For an area the size of Plainfield Township, we can function with our current two-station distribution. As we become more populated, two stations may be inadequate. So when you see these stories about “who’s at fault,” or “what constitutes an adequate response” to calls for fire department assistance, please remember that things are a bit more complicated than they appear to be. The ultimate decision for station density and staffing is made by the Township Board, which is ultimately responsible to the voters. If tax increases are required to increase coverage and numbers of available responders, the voters will decide. The fire chief can only work with the money that is provided in the fire department budget.

David Peterson, Fire Chief

Plainfield Charter Township

TOWNSHIP HALL HOURS

7:30 am to 4:30 pm

Phone: 364-8466

TOWNSHIP BOARD

George Meek, Supervisor

Susan Morrow, Clerk

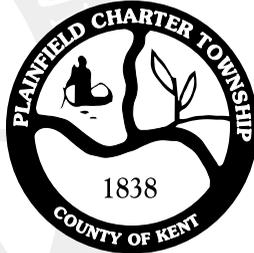
James Stover, Treasurer

Rebecca Borek, Trustee

Jack Hagedorn, Trustee

Robert Heindricks, Trustee

William Parris, Trustee



MANAGER

Robert Homan

TOWNSHIP BOARD

MEETINGS

7:30 pm

First and Third Mondays

www.plainfieldchartertp.org

The Profile

Plainfield Charter Township

6161 Belmont NE

Belmont, MI 49306

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