

Dexter Township “in the loop” December 2022

Happy Holidays to Everyone – as we bring 2022 to a close, we want to THANK everyone who participates in our email updates and supplies feedback. Communication is key to success, and we want to improve in 2023. Also, THANK YOU to our volunteers who graciously donate their time and talents, it is greatly appreciated! So, what’s happening this month in Dexter Township? Here we go –

First – the Dexter Twp voters spoke in November and the milage for the Open Space and Land Preservation passed with an overwhelming majority. Now, to move forward the OSLP committee is forming a new Board – named the Dexter Township Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board (FOSP). We now have a **NOTICE OF INVITATION TO APPLY FOR THE DEXTER TOWNSHIP FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD**: In Dexter Township there are competing needs to welcome and manage residential growth and development while at the same-time preserving open-spaces, farmland, and agricultural activities. It is critical that we as a township explore various avenues for preserving open land and natural spaces, including options for farmers in land conservation, use and sale, beyond residential development. This is the purpose of the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Board to: 1) explore available resources, strategies, and initiatives available to the township to preserve farmland and open space, 2) to continue to engage and educate the community through the process, and 3) to reach out to farmers to provide information and options for land use and sale. **If you are a resident of Dexter Township who is interested in serving on the Farmland and Open Space Land Preservation Board (FOSP) please create a letter of interest and send to the Chairperson of the OSLP Committee - Trustee, Laura Sanders at lsanders@dextertownship.org.** The committee shall be comprised of seven members: 5 members from the public, 1 farm owner and 1 member from the Dexter Township Board. All applications will be reviewed, and members will be appointed by the Township Board. **Applications will be accepted until January 10, 2023.**

Second – we have a new Fire Chief! – please welcome Chief Doug Armstrong – a long term team member of our Fire Department, his new position starts January 2023. The fire department operates within an interlocal agreement and the department services Dexter Township, City of Dexter, and Webster Township – manning 3 fire stations 24/7, covering

approximately 85 square miles and 25,000 residents. We look forward to working with Chief Armstrong and addressing the challenges faced within the fire department.

On to the topic of recycling – THANK YOU to our volunteers in helping empty the orange bin and move the film to Chelsea High School. We now have 5 volunteers that assist in this project, Chelsea High is very happy with our efforts; our parking lot is clean, and the High School continues working hard to win their Trek competition. Also, thank you to everyone for no longer leaving styrofoam and miscellaneous goods in the township parking lot. It is appreciated. In the spring we will tackle a full clean up of the wooded area around our recycling site. In fact, if you are interested in participating in a road clean up Spring event – please drop your name and email address to info@dextertownship.org. We can build a list and put together a Spring event to clean up the roadsides after the long hard winter. Additionally, if you have any ideas for a township event, drop your idea to us – we would love to hear from you.

Regarding our Township cemeteries – you may have heard prior; our current township landscaper (Kim Beck from KB Services) has taken a great interest in preserving our cemeteries and improving their condition. While working in 2022 Kim unearthed headstones, pieced together fragments, and generally started rebuilding and improving the cemetery. It is in our 2023 plan to form a group of interested volunteers to assist in this project, preserve our history and honor those that came before us. Interested in helping? Drop you name to us, and we'll be in touch in the Spring. Then just as we are discussing this project and delayed it until better weather – we receive a handwritten note, dated Nov. 7, 2022:

Dear Dexter Township officers and staff,

I was so pleased to see the maintenance and upkeep to the Four Mile Island (Lima Center Rd) Cemetery during my annual visit to Dexter-Chelsea area this fall. I was even more excited when I saw the Amanda (Turner) Beach original tomb stone had been unearthed and reset – in pristine condition no less! Amanda and Stephen Beach were my 2nd great grandparents.

Please use the enclosed check to help offset the cost of the upkeep of the cemetery. I would be especially grateful if some of the money could be used to remove the large dead limb about the Beach stone (southwest corner of the cemetery) so it doesn't damage the stones when it comes down on its own. Again, please know how grateful I am that you are preserving this little space of history.

*Sincerely,
Betsy Beach
Gettysburg, PA*

PS – Does the township keep records of who purchases the stones? No one in our family (including Dorothy Beach – who died in 2020 at the age of almost 102 years) knows who placed the large Beach marker and probably the adjoining Wm & Sally Turner stones. If there is anyone I can contact regarding that, could you please pass on their contact info. It has been there prior to my earliest memory – so pre 1970's.

So – if anyone out there has information on Betsy Beach's question, please share. And if you can participate on a Spring workday, or 2 or 3 to assist, we'll add you to the list. We want

to help cleanup additional landscaping (including that limb), piece together additional headstones, and set them in concrete to last years into the future. Proof positive, small actions make great impact on others - Thank you, Kim, for jump starting this project!

FREE Face Masks Available – with influenza cases rising in Washtenaw County – if you would like to obtain free KN95 face masks, simply stop by Dexter Twp. Townhall to receive 10 free masks.

A short recap of the Board of Trustee December Board Meeting included:

First, welcome to new Trustee Lonnie Scott to his first Board of Trustee Meeting. We did make re-appointments to the Board of Review – Lois Beerbaum, Ryan Doletzky and David Dising. Additionally, Bob Swistock was introduced and appointed to the Chelsea District Library Board. We thank everyone for offering their time and services to help fulfill these boards and support their activities.

Also, **Sheriff Department** representatives attended to clarify the contract, our Township liabilities and utilization of unused banked deputy hours. We do have 24/7 coverage for Dexter Township through our Township contracting from three (3) Police Service units plus all necessary support to keep those deputies on the road. Sheriff services are shared with our township, City of Dexter, and Webster Twp – each contracting their own number of police service units. Lake patrols are provided under County services. Conversations included the vacancy rate of the County department, the additional training needed to allow new deputies help with traffic control and issuing citations for trucks exceeding weight maximums on our high-traffic local gravel roads and assist in enforcing our ordinances. While many questions were raised, asked, and answered, new opportunities were discussed. The Board of Trustees did vote to renew a 4-year contract. The milage to assist in funding this contract is up for renewal in 2024.

Jim Carson from the **Dexter Senior Center** attended the meeting to answer questions regarding the purposed creation of a Dexter Senior Recreational Authority. Mr. Carson was very helpful in providing details of the challenges faced currently with the Dexter Senior Center and help delineated the current Senior Center from the Dexter Senior Recreational Authority, Mr. Carson was representing the Senior Center. In the past, the Senior Center rented space from Dexter Schools for \$1/year in the Copeland Building. When the building was sold to the Encore Theatre, they were allowed to remain for 4 years. That time is quickly approaching and many new possible sites, locations are being considered within the Dexter City downtown area. Mr. Carson assured everyone The Encore has been very gracious, but the community needs to decide their commitment level to having a Senior Center in our community. There has been a Senior Center in Dexter for the past 53 years and services between 300-350 members, annually. Mr. Carson reported a future yearly budget would be in the range of \$360K/yr to cover rent and operating costs, where they have been operating in the past on approximately \$157K per year, taking into consideration the \$1/yr rent. The new purposed authority would

function interlocally, creating a Board of 3 representatives from each: Dexter Twp, City of Dexter, and Webster Twp. and cover area within the Dexter School property residences. We thank Mr. Carson for taking the time to attend and offering a better understanding of the issue(s). The Board of Trustees did not vote to establish the Dexter Senior Recreational Authority since many questions were left unanswered and we need to begin interfacing with all parties and gain a clearer operational and financial commitment. Do you support having a Dexter Senior Center for our residents to use? Please share your comments via email to info@dextertownship.org.

The **Open Space Land Preservation Committee** requested budget approval to fund the remaining 5 ½% (\$29,500) to protect and finalize the purchase of the development rights of the Monier property. The remainder of the 94.5% funding is coming from Federal and State grants. The Board of Trustees did approve this expenditure, resulting in our first 70-acre plot of land preserved in our Township under our revised Ordinance 37. Treemore Ecology has been instrumental in achieving funding for our initial land preservation in the first 18 months of this committee's development. Thank you to all and closing on this is expected in the first two quarters of 2023.

Finally, updates on correcting the Township General Ledger financial reporting were given - the accounting firm has been in townhall working. Corrections from the past year have been made and the Clerk expects work to be complete by our next Board Meeting in January. Voices were shared that this is very important in accomplishing our jobs, especially as we move into forming the 2023-24 budgets. Additionally, the Clerk put forth a letter and a resolution to reinstate the Deputy Clerks pay until the end of January 2023. Discussions were had and the resolution did not pass. The Clerk also share we have received 17 resumes for the Deputy Clerks position, and she has and will continue reaching out to hire the best person, again ETA offered was end of January 2023. Trustee Scott offered his services to work with the Clerk in any way needed.

For Your Information: Township Board Meeting Schedules: please check the calendar on dextertownship.org website to confirm activities

1st Tuesday of the month – Zoning Board of Appeals - 6pm townhall

2nd Tuesday of the month – Local Roads Committee – 6pm townhall

3rd Tuesday of the month – Dexter Twp. Board of Trustees – 6pm townhall

4th Tuesday of the month – Planning Commission – 6pm townhall

3rd Thursday of the month – Multi Lakes Water & Sewer Authority (at MLWSA facility)

10:30am

4th Wednesday of the month – WWRA

3rd Thursday of the month – Fire Board

The Master Plan Steering Committee meetings are not set on a regular basis, please consult the Dexter Twp website for upcoming meeting schedules

We again, want to thank everyone for a fantastic 2022. We wish you the brightest of holidays, take care, stay safe during this storm, happy new year and see you in 2023!