

Dexter Township
“in the loop”
July 20, 2023

First, welcome to the new participants in our Township monthly email updates. We hope you find these informative and we welcome suggestions or if you need an update on any subject not included. Please ask. If you have the opportunity, please help us spread the word on “in the loop”, we would love to have more residents enrolled. Our goal is to help keep everyone informed on our communities’ challenges, changes, activities, and our success stories and encourage dialog.

Starting this month, we will be adding a new segment to our “in the loops”, The Supervisors Report. Our new Township Supervisor, Karen Sikkenga, has taken it upon herself to write a monthly Supervisors Report, which is included in the monthly Board of Trustee meeting packets and full of information. She includes actions occurring within the townhall, personnel changes, sometimes financial information, strategic planning and more. We hope you will find these as informative as we do. So, here we go –

- ❖ First, a resident brought to our attention spam emails that appeared to be from Dexter Township or Dexter. Please be aware that our “in the loop” updates will always come from the info@dextertownship.org email address and the subject line will appear like this email. Awareness is key.

❖ **Community Engagement Activities – mark your calendars!**

- **MOVIE NIGHT – is happening Saturday, August 19th** in the township hall parking lot. What does that mean?
 - A food truck will be in the parking lot starting about 6pm – for you to purchase dinner
 - Townhall will be open for residents to preview the draft of the updated Master Plan. Representatives from Beckett & Raeder will be there to answer questions and assist residents.
 - The first 50 people will receive a swag bag
 - Township officials will be there to answer any questions
 - The movie will begin in the parking lot approximately at 9pm –please bring your own chairs – popcorn and snow cones will be available, free of charge
 - Please join us for dinner and then enjoy the movie
 - We look forward to meeting you!

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- **Coffee Chat Hour – Saturday, September 23rd at 11am** – Topic – Elections, Elections, Elections

Please join us to learn more about upcoming elections and changes – this event will be led by our Clerk, who leads the election process for our township

- **Clean-Up Day – Saturday, October 14th 9am – Noon** - in the townhall parking lot

We will be accepting: electronic waste, scrap metal, tires, documents for shredding and Styrofoam (Tire collection is sponsored by EGLE grants, thank you)

Suggested donation of \$5 per vehicle

Wish to volunteer to assist on that morning? – drop a message to info@dextertownship.org (thank you)

- ❖ **Chelsea District Library** – reports their new mobile van will be parked in Dexter Township, twice per month for residents use

The 3rd Tuesday of the month – at Townhall parking lot from 5-6pm

The 4th Monday of the month – at the United Methodist Church on North Territorial from 4:30-5:30pm

Call the Chelsea Library for additional information (734-475-8732)

- ❖ **Cemetery Project** – we have begun cleaning headstones, products have been tested and we have educated ourselves a little more. We will have a training session on Tuesday, July 25th or Saturday, July 29th – if you are interested in assisting in cleaning headstones, please drop a note to Info@dextertownship.org – we sure could use your help.

- ❖ **Broadband update** – very briefly, Charter and Mercury are still the earmarked companies to build out our township. Currently, permits are being obtained by Charter from various entities. This appears to be a long and arduous process. They were awarded multiple communities in Northern Washtenaw, and it is possible that the first group of approved permits land in another township. Additionally, Mercury has reported to the County Project Manager, their ETA is the first quarter of 2024. We understand the waiting is frustrating, please believe the County Project Manager and your township representatives are in communication and staying focused on the topic. Once work has begun, expectations have been set for a 3-4 month build out process.

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- ❖ **Master Plan Update** – Our Planning Commission and Steering Committee have worked very hard, in combination with Beckett & Raedar to create an updated Master Plan for our Township. Resident surveys have been completed, engagement with local high schoolers completed and information compiled. The draft will have a public release date of August 1, 2023. Drafts will be posted online for your review, and we encourage you to read and share comments. We believe a very comprehensive study has been completed and is very interesting to read regarding our community. Five key themes to the plan include: preservation of our agricultural heritage, protection of our natural resources, traffic management, thoughtful planning for future development, and creating a sustainable community. It will provide history, social characteristics, land use, housing analysis, economic development and more. This plan has a 10 year shelf life and gives direction to the development, ordinances and future land use in our township. Representatives from Beckett & Raedar will be available to answer questions on Saturday, August 19th in Townhall, starting at 6pm. We encourage residents to read the draft and comment during the public review portion (August & September) of this process.

SUPERVISORS REPORT from July 18, 2023 – Board of Trustee Packet *(supporting documents are on the website (dextertownship.org) under township boards and committees – then township board)*

PERSONNEL CHANGES WELCOME NEW TRUSTEE GRETCHEN DRISKELL Gretchen Driskell was sworn in as Trustee on June 28, 2023, following the Board of Trustee decision to appoint her at our June 20, 2023 meeting. Gretchen brings extensive experience as an elected official at the state and local levels in Michigan. I look forward to welcoming Trustee Driskell at our August meeting (she is unable to attend this first meeting due to a prior engagement).

PLANNING AND ZONING - The RFP/RFQ for planning and zoning services was emailed directly to planning firms Beckett & Raeder, Carlisle Wartman, and McKenna on June 28, 2023. They were also advertised at the Michigan Township Association and at the Michigan Municipal League. The RFP/RFQ is provided as an attachment to this package, and is also on the Dexter Township home page. Proposals are due July 26, 2023.

Matt Dedes, our Deputy Treasurer, has accepted a job as Assessor for Marion Township. He will continue his service as Deputy Treasurer but is unable to serve as our Zoning Ordinance Officer. We have advertised to replace the Zoning Enforcement Officer based on the advice of our counsel and our contracted planner. The Executive Team met with the Chelsea Area Construction Agency, which confirmed our need for this position and provided leads on a replacement.

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OFFICE REDESIGN The Board of Trustees approved \$50,000 for Dexter Township Town Hall building improvements as part of the FY24 budget process (and the FY23 budget). The interior design company Proven, a Dexter-based firm, offered a preliminary design concept to use our spaces more effectively. This plan includes creating a locked file room for the Clerk’s Office contiguous to the existing office, converting the conference room to an enclosed office for the Office Manager, creating a small conference room/eating space in a small office, creating a “hoteling” space for contractors (Assessor, Planner, and Accountant), and switching the Treasurer’s and Supervisor’s Offices. We will be requesting bids from at least one other local design/firm bid, such as Dexter Builders, and returning to the board with a request to move forward.

NEWSLETTER Congratulations to In the Loop editor Karen Nolte (Trustee) and production manager Sam Edwards (Office Manager) for successfully completing the second printed newsletter for Dexter Township residents. Thanks, too, to everyone who contributed content, including the Local Roads Committee. The newsletter went to print on June 29 and arrived in mailboxes beginning early July. Planning for the next print edition, scheduled for January, is already underway. Trustees, staff, board members, committee members, and members of the public are encouraged to suggest content by reaching out to Trustee Nolte directly or emailing info@dextertownship.org. The on-line edition of In the Loop goes out monthly immediately following the Board of Trustees meetings. Occasional additional information blasts go out as needed. Residents and committee members are encouraged to sign up to receive the on-line newsletter to stay in the loop: please email info@dextertownship.org to register.

BUDGET AND STRATEGIC PLANNING BUDGET STATUS The attached “Revenue and Expenditure Report” is basically the same as the report you are used to seeing, with some minor changes. Each department is contained within solid lines and displays on the same page. The attached report has a “Notes” column, explaining significant budget variances or unusual transactions. The first quarter of FY2023 ended effective June 30, because our fiscal year goes from April 1-March 31. Each fiscal year has four quarters, and for most budget lines, we expect 25% of the financial activity to occur each quarter. I also included a five-year revenue and expenditure report showing changes in fund balances each year. Overall, consistent with years past, Dexter Township is forecasting a material General Fund budget surplus. Surpluses ranged from \$251K to \$421K in years with no capital outlay over the five-year period. The Board of Trustees will need to make policy decisions to ensure full, strategic deployment of public revenues. Discussion of the policy options will begin at our strategic planning working session (see below).

STRATEGIC PLANNING SCHEDULING We will be looking for a date to conduct a two-hour strategic planning update meeting, which will include listing potential priority items to be funded from our balances and from any structural surplus. Office Manager Sam Edwards will issue a scheduling poll to identify a date. Treasurer Metz has requested that we conduct this meeting at our earliest convenience; knowing our funding priorities will assist her in maximizing our investment returns.

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ACTING ON OUR STRATEGIC PLAN The Executive Team and staff have begun actively monitoring our strategic planning goals to make progress on incomplete goals and action steps. The following paragraphs describe our progress toward our strategic planning goals since the Strategic Plan status report was distributed as part of the June 2023 package.

- Create written policies and procedures for day-to-day operations will be the focus of the September board of Trustees meeting, with the compensation policy portion of this work to be discussed in August 2023.
- Improve recycling infrastructure at the township hall is another incomplete action step. New signage for the recycling bin area has been ordered and will be in place in July.
- Reduce environmental impact of township operations: some changes in our practices are underway, such as printing information double-sided and purchasing eco-friendly office products (recycled paper, non-pod coffee). At a future meeting I will be requesting BOT permission to issue an RFP for environmentally friendly landscape maintenance bids, such as reduction in our lawn size and conversion of lawns to native prairies.
- Encouraging greater community engagement through the use of township facilities is another strategic goal that has been only partially implemented. The upcoming movie night with food trucks is a specific strategic planning action step that will occur in August.

UPCOMING BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEETINGS Reminder that the focus of our upcoming meetings are:

- August: finance, including millages and compensation policy
- Between August and September regular meetings: special meeting on strategic planning
- September: operational policies & procedures; Board of Trustees by-laws
- October (tentative): public safety including Police and Fire millages
- November: Master Plan final approval (tentatively)
- December: first budget hearing

That’s all for this “in the loop” – we will email a draft of the master plan or a link for you to access after the August 1st projected public release date. We sincerely hope you can take an opportunity to read and share your comments.

Thank you, as always. Any questions, feel free to reach out to any of the Trustee’s (all email addresses are on the website) or send a message to this email (info@dextertownship.org)

Take care and enjoy your summer!