



July 2024 - "in the loop" monthly email update

Mark your calendars to join us!



**MOVIE STARTS AT DUSK IN THE TOWNSHIP HALL
PARKING LOT, BRING CHAIRS OR A BLANKET!**

Dexter Township will host our second outdoor movie night on August 17, 2024! I hope you'll join us for this family friendly, fun event. Free popcorn and popsicles, vehicles from the Dexter Area Fire Department and County Sheriff's office, and the main attraction- Trolls Band Together on a big screen under the stars!

The event starts at 7PM and the movie will start at dusk. Bring your chairs.

Contact: Trustee Lonnie Scott with any additional questions –
(lscott@dextertownship.org)

See you in the Township Hall parking lot on August 17!

Board of Trustee Meeting Highlights:

- Thank you to Washtenaw County for their continued sponsorship of our **Annual Fall Clean Up day** – this year it will occur on **October 26th from 9am – noon**. The Washtenaw County Department of Public Works provides financial support to offset the cost of clean up days: 50% of cost, not to exceed \$3,500. The township commits to the terms under which we receive reimbursement, including proof of appropriate insurance and documentation that the event occurred, and costs incurred. This is extremely helpful to offset the cost of recycling the electronic waste collected during event, especially. Additionally, IGLE provides assistance in providing the trailer and disposal of all tires collected. — a donation of \$5 per vehicle will be suggested to offset additional costs incurred. We will be collecting: scrap metal, electronic waste, tires, Styrofoam and providing document shredding. If you have questions on this event, please contact Trustee Karen Nolte at knolte@dextertownship.org See you there!
- The lower-level remodel at townhall continues and approval of furniture was approved. Supervisor Sikkenga has been working with DEA's interior design to select modular furniture so it can be reconfigured for varied purposes. Furniture includes modular conference table consisting of 6 separate tables, which are foldable and nested if not all are needed. Additionally, 8 bucket chairs with side tables for the edges of the room, which may be easily arranged into conversational groupings as needed. Also,

for the office room, furnishings will include an adjustable height sit/stand desk and 2 bucket chairs and side tables.

- An authorized payment of up to \$125K to the Dexter Area Fire Department was approved to support two dry hydrants at key locations throughout the township and one wet hydrant at Fire Station 2. This matter was presented and discussed at the June Board of Trustee meetings where Don Dettling was present to answer questions. Supervisor Sikkenga requested permission to transfer up to the \$125K for DAFD to execute this budget item. DAFD will collect competitive bids and request monies not to exceed the \$125K. DAFD will submit reports to the Board of Trustees on the status of the work, contractors, locations and schedules at a future meeting.

- Please review pages 27 – 32 of the July Board Packet (on the Dexter Township website) to review the Planning & Zoning Department Report. This report displays a summary of applications, zoning permits and projects, permits issued, code enforcement and other community development projects. This type of report is included in the monthly packet and is very informative as a summary to what is happening in the township in terms of building projects and developments. Thank you for Megan Masson-Minock, (Township Planning Consultant) and Ashley Cepeda (Township Zoning Officer) for developing this report, it is very informative. Additionally, we wish Ashley Cepeda well as she is leaving her position as Zoning Officer. Megan and Supervisor Sikkenga are working to fill her position.

- Short Term Rental Discussion – these types of rentals, such as AirBnB and VRBO, are disallowed in Dexter Township, except as Bed & Breakfast establishments. Below are the Supervisors comments:
 - Dexter Township recently received its first formal complaint about an AirBnB. Our current practice is to respond to zoning complaints and not to enforce proactively. I instructed our staff to respond to this single complaint consistently with our responses to any other zoning complaint, beginning with a letter notifying the property owner that

they are not in compliance with our ordinance. However, I am prepared for the property owner to be surprised and distressed by this notification, as it appears that property owners are likely collecting significant revenue from their short-term rentals. Our major policy focus over the next few months will be to enact a local renewable ordinance first, and second, to continue cleaning up the Zoning Ordinance. However, I do recommend that we begin to collect data and think about framing the policy issues and solutions for short-term rentals. To that end, I have requested that Carlisle Wortman provide data on the prevalence and use of short-term rentals in the Township. I will also be recommending that the Planning Commission begin policy discussions on the topic.

- **Additional Notes from Supervisor's Report:**

- **Resident Survey on Dexter Township Priorities**

- We have received 163 responses to our survey on community priorities as of July 2, and it's not too late to respond. The survey will close on July 31; the link can be found on our web site or here. Local road repair, protecting and preserving farmland and open space, and improving public safety infrastructure are the community's top priorities for our work to date. For the future, improving cellular access is first up, with single hauler solid waste collection a close second.

- **Community Conversation on Renewables**

- 36 Dexter Township residents participated at the Renewable Energy Open House in June. Megan Masson-Minnock presented an overview of State Public Act PA.233 of 2023, detailing options for the Township in regulating large-scale and medium-sized renewable energy facilities. Participants engaged with informational boards to share their opinions on different types and sizes of renewable energy systems and concluded with a discussion on priorities and advice. Key areas of focus included decommissioning, screening/landscaping, setbacks, and safety. Participants preferred to retain local control to the extent possible for big renewable energy systems. For medium energy systems, most participants voted to allow all three types of systems: wind, solar, and battery storage. Decommissioning, setbacks, and screening/landscaping were the highest priority for our local ordinance for both types of systems. This event was organized by a cross-functional team of representatives from the Farmland & Open Space Committee, the Planning

Commission, the Board of Trustees, and our Planning & Zoning Department. Thank you to everyone who worked hard to make this event a success. (Reach out to Trustee's Driskell or Sanders, should you have questions)

○ **Cell Service**

- Trustee Lonnie Scott (lscott@dextertownship.org) is our point-of-contact for the cell service providers and residents about the ongoing issues with cellular service in the Township. As residents alert him to problem areas, he is making a list to share with the providers. Trustee Scott met with Fire Chief Armstrong to discuss issues with cellular service near Station 2.

○ **Broadband**

- Washtenaw County continues to make progress on its commitment to broadband, with Dexter Township ahead of many townships in Michigan. County grants and awards were made to Spectrum, MEC, and Mercury. Currently, Spectrum has been laying cable and connecting residents to their services. However, some areas of the township are still waiting for their broadband connection. Midwest Energy & Communication (MEC) has begun laying cable to assist in reaching the underserved areas of our Township in the SW corner, in particular the Island Lake and North Lima Center Rd. areas. You can access maps on their website at teammidwest.com. Select the Internet option along the top line and then the construction map and timeline box. From there you can zoom into the Dexter Township area and the red sections are being built out by MEC. MEC expects to have installations and hook ups by the end of 2024. There is also a Check Eligibility box on their website for your use. Mercury has not begun laying cable in our township. Mercury is in compliance with the terms of its award and must be given time for scheduling and performing the work. While the wait may be frustrating, we are making progress thanks to Washtenaw County's commitment. Please stay tuned or email Trustee Karen Nolte (info@dextertownship.org or knolte@dextertownship.org) for the latest updates

○ **Single Hauler** (small date changes have occurred since the Board Meeting)

- First, thank you to all the residents who have shared their ideas, opinions and comments on the single hauler topic. We are incorporating residents' feedback into the request for proposals (RFP). The RFP is being finalized and sent to our

legal team for review for final review in August. Our expectation is to release the RFP to vendors in early September and have a pre-bid meeting to answer vendor questions midmonth. Please reach out to Trustee Nolte info@dextertownship.org with questions or comments.

○ **Plastic Film Recycling**

- WWRA is exploring the possibility of taking on plastic film recycling. (Plastic film is pliable plastic such as plastic grocery bags or cell wrap.) The Township, with the assistance of a cadre of volunteers, has been piloting plastic film collection. Members of the public drop off their plastic film recycling in the yellow bins at the township, and a team of volunteers collects the plastic daily and drives it to Chelsea High School, where it is picked up by vendors who sell it to recyclers. We will be meeting with WWRA and Chelsea High School representatives to discuss WWRA intercepting and weighing the plastic film from the township on a short-term basis to determine whether the volume is sufficient to allow them to take over on an ongoing basis. WWRA (a recycling authority) may be able to manage large volumes of plastic film recycling and ensure that all the plastic film is recycled. The program would benefit them also because it keeps plastic film out of their machinery, preventing snags. A big thank you to our volunteers who helped us execute this successful pilot, to Chelsea High School for providing a market/destination for the pilot collections, and to WWRA for their willingness to consider operationalizing this important project

○ **Don't Forget to Vote in August!**

- Township Closure --- Absentee ballots for the August primary election went out June 30. Reminder to everyone that Dexter Township will be closed on election day, August 6, 2024, except for election-related matters (voting and registering to vote). For all other matters, like property tax collection matters and planning and zoning questions, we will be closed on election days

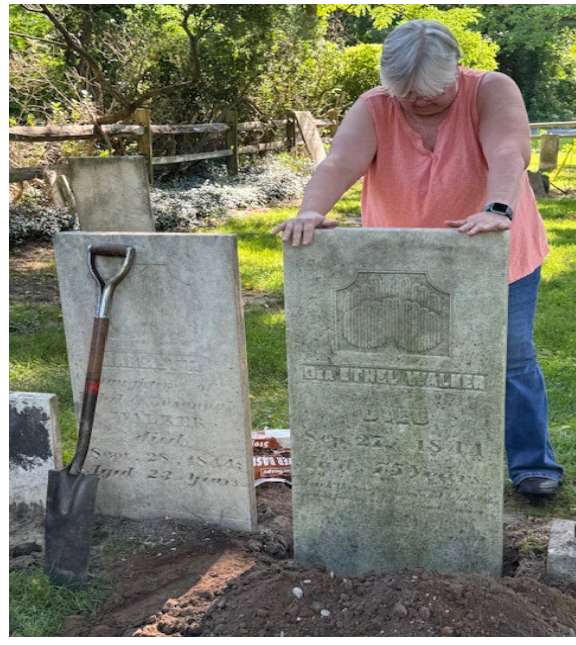
○ **Emergency Preparedness**

- I will be bringing the Emergency Preparedness to the Board of Trustees at the August meeting for discussion and, if no significant changes are requested, possibly for approval. The Fire Chief will be providing information on a Local Fire Ordinance for discussion in August. The Warning Siren upgrade and Town Hall fire alarm installation are underway. The upgrade is expected to be complete in August.

A short Hudson Mills Historic Cemetery story:

I will end this release of “in the loop” thanking Cheryl Beuning from Jackson County. A full story is expected to be released in The Sun Times for your review.

As a short summery, Cheryl found a headstone partially buried in the woods on her property and took it upon herself to extract it and conduct months long extensive research to find where it belonged, resulting in our own Hudson Mills Cemetery. Deacon Ethel Walker’s headstone (1844) was returned, in excellent condition, to its original location just last Saturday, based on Cheryl’s research. According to records, this headstone has been missing from Hudson Mills Cemetery for over 40 years. We sincerely appreciate and thank Cheryl for all her work, research, and for bringing it back to Dexter Township. Deacon Ethel Walker’s headstone is now next to his daughter (Harriet) and just a row away from his son (Rev. George) and his wife. Regretfully, his wife’s headstone is still missing. A very nice addition as we continue to work to restore our historic cemeteries. Thank you everyone for helping. THANK YOU CHERYL! And watch for the Sun Times article for additional information.



Great way to end the month, take care and don't forget to VOTE in August

As always, any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out!