
Bruce Township Newsletter

MAY 2006



Springtime...a new beginning!

- **Township Meetings are the second Thursday of every month at 7:30 P.M.**
- **Township hours are Mon., Wed., and Fri., from 10:00A.M. To 4:00P.M. Closed holidays.**
- **Special meetings and Board of Review are all posted on the Hall bulletin board.**
- **Planning Commission Meeting on the Tuesday before regular Township meeting at 7:00 P.M.**
- **Dan Gallagher, Township supervisor can be reached any time:
632-0437 (Home)
635-3058 (Township Hall)**

BASIC TOWNSHIP INFO

We had a busy January, February, and March at the Township Hall with Educational Training in Grand Rapids, Tax Collection and Board of Review. We learned at the conference in Grand Rapids that all the rest of the townships are having the same problems we are having with the cutbacks in Federal moneys and the lack of funds for road work from State and Federal sources. There are also more requirements from the State and Federal Government pushed on us for Homeland Security, Elections and Tax Collections. We seem to be going to more trainings and updates sessions in the last few years than ever before.

The hall has become a very popular place to hold weddings, showers, reunions and such so if you plan to rent it you should contact the office as soon as possible. Our calendar is filling up fast.

We have scheduled a spring clean up again this year in May. It is designated for two weekends, May 5th and 6th which was last weekend and the 19th and 20th. You will be allowed to haul 500 pounds of trash to Dafter Landfill. You will need to stop by the Township hall to pick up your "chit" or dump slip to prove you're a township resident. Last year was extremely successful and hopefully this year will be the same.

Spring cleanup once again places our attention on the problem of old junk vehicles. The Ordinance Enforcement Officer will be out checking places out and ordering them to be removed. A copy of the ordinance is available on the Bruce Township Website. Please read it carefully and abide by it.

We had our Annual Meeting on March 25th and the turn out was surprisingly light with only fifteen residents and the Board Members attending. It was a brief recap of what happened last year and a quick briefing of what is going to happen this year. The committee reports in the newsletter will give more detail.

A resolution was made at the Annual Meeting for a \$600.00 annual increase in the salaries of the Township Supervisor, Clerk, and Treasurer. This increase is to cover the inflation rate in the cost of living and was approved by the residents of the township. We appreciate your approval and thank you very much.

On June 8, 2006 at our regular board meeting:
Andrea Berry from AmeriCorps Groundwater will be presenting a program on groundwater and how it affects the people in our area in regards to septic system failure and drinking water.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Bruce Township Historical Society is gathering information about churches in the township that no longer exist. We have identified five that were in the area in addition to Donaldson, Rosedale and Barbeau Catholic churches. If you have any information as to the location, denominations or histories of churches in the area, please contact Isobel Sibbald at 635-1102. We are always interested in pictures of any buildings, barns or homes that were in the township. We would reproduce the photos and return the originals.

The Bruce Township Historical Society is looking for a copy of the booklet researched and published by the seventh and eighth grade classes of Bruce Township School in 1968. A presentation was given to the P.T.A. and some of the students were featured on the Four Horsemen radio program. Please contact Carolyn Person (632-4146) or the Township Office if you have any information about this booklet.

We appreciate all the help and information that is being so freely given by residents of the area. We are beginning to put together a very interesting picture of the early township. Thank you.

WEBSITE

Awareness and use of the Township website is increasing. As of early January, 428 “hits” were recorded since the website was established. The website has links to Township ordinances, permit application forms, hall rental applications, Township Board and Planning Commission minutes, newsletters, and several other subjects of interest to Township residents. We currently have a technical problem with the link to Planning Commission minutes but hope to correct it in the near future.

For those of you that may not know that we have the website, the web address is www.brucetownship.net. Check it out. Suggestions regarding other types of desirable information are always welcome.

PLANNING COMMISSION

Since the first of the year, the update of the Township's Master Plan has been the focus of the Planning Commission's efforts. Most of the narrative portion of the Plan has been completed in draft form and much of the necessary exhibit material has been gathered. Overall progress has been slow but steady. A first draft of a brief Township history statement has been prepared for inclusion in the Plan and work is underway on the Current Land Use and the Future Land Use sections.

The Current Land Use section will describe the status of the development of the Township as it presently exists and is the starting point for the future land use planning that will be the framework for future development. This look into the future is undoubtedly the most important aspect of the Master Plan and it must reflect the preferences of the residents of the Township. The Planning Commission revived some excellent insight into these preferences in the responses to the 2005 community survey. Additional public input and comment opportunities will be available as work on the update nears completion and will continue to be available thereafter.

The Future Land Use section in this update will focus only on limited portions of the Township where public preferences are quite clear. Considerably more public input and study will be necessary before any broader based land use planning will be feasible.

The Planning Commission would also like to remind residents that the Master Plan should be looked at as an expression of preferences of Township residents that will serve as a guide for Township officials as development decisions are made. The Plan will not in itself establish any new requirements.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

The construction season is coming upon us again and we want to remind anyone that is planning construction this year to get your zoning permit. Forms are available on the township website or at the township hall. There is a \$25.00 fee for the permit that must be paid. No fee is required for decks but you do need a zoning permit.

Some "Stop Work Order" notices were issued last year which caused some delays in construction. This is not our fault! The responsibility of obtaining these permits belongs to you or your builder. We are here to work with you not against you. We have up to 10 days to approve or deny the permits so don't wait until the last minute to get them. In most cases we can review your permit in a day or two.

Please remember that if you have any questions as to whether you need a permit or not, call the Township Hall to find out. We are here to work for and with the property owners.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The Township Board has approved a plan submitted by the Parks and Recreation Committee for the development of the Township Park at the Township Hall property on 12 Mile Rd. As you might have noticed the fill sand is being put in place for a 28'x40' pavilion structure. Also to be installed is the playground equipment from the Bruce Township School.

As the project progresses, volunteers will be needed, so check with the girls at the hall to see what you can do to help.

We would like to thank the Parks and Recreation Committee for there timeless effort in planning and seeing this project thru. They are Dave Norman, Joe Colvin, Kathleen Jennings, Marcy Misner, Jeff Monck and Brian Pepler. Thanks you and keep up the good work.

We are also trying to enter into a purchase agreement with the property owner at the north side of Nine Mile at the St. Mary's River where the old Great Lakes Dock used to be. We are in the planning stages of putting a boat launch there. There is a deep water channel about 100 yards off shore that was dredged out back in the 50's and early 60's that is still there and about 14 ' deep.

The purchase agreement is based, of course, on the approval of the grant and the authorization from the D.E.Q., the D.N.R. and the Corp. of Engineers for this project.

We also have support from Soo and Dafter Townships as well as the D.N.R The grant people we talked to say that this is the type of project the State of Michigan like to get involved with. So hopefully we will see something happening with the Nine Mile Boat Launch Project within the coming year. We'll be keeping you posted as it progresses.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

We talked in the past about posting your 911 number so we can find you in case of an emergency. The Fire Department wouldn't have too much trouble finding a house fire because of the smoke but the ambulance or Police who often respond to other types of emergency situations may not be able to locate you, especially at night.

We applied and were approved for a grant to purchase new reflective 911 address numbers that will let a person see your number very clearly. We have an example of one in front of the Township Hall. It's blue on one side and green on the other with the numbers 359 on it. Please check this out some evening after dark to see how well the numbers show up. Enclosed in this Newsletter is one of the fliers so you can order these signs. We think they are critical for the safety of all township residents because it will greatly reduce the amount of time it takes for responding to an emergency call of any kind. This would be a great idea for gift giving!!! If you need more information call the Township Hall and ask for the Supervisor or the Fire Chief.

Please be careful with your trash burning etc. You can call 1-800-511-1684 for burn permits prior to setting a fire. There were two house fires in April. The one on Kilacky Rd. and 7 Mile was a complete loss and the one on Scenic and 6-1/2 Mile was not. There were no injuries at either one.

COUNTY AND TOWNSHIP ROADS

The Township's road projects for this year are going to be scarce. The Road Commission has a full schedule of projects with other townships this year. Our biggest problem we have is the lack of funds. On the average, the cost is approximately \$50,000.00 per mile of paving. In order to pave a road, we need to do sand and gravel lift along with changing out culverts. This type of preparation for paving work will cost anywhere from \$50,000.00 to \$70,000.00 depending on the condition of the road. (These are in accordance with 2005 cost estimates) With the figures in black and white you see that we need approximately \$125,000.00 per mile of road that needs to be upgraded and paved. We have about 35 miles of good dirt roads and around 25 miles of seasonal roads that will be coming into the system as year around roads as these properties sell and require road work. Our proposed budget for this year is approximately \$130,000.00 and out of this we need to pay out around \$18,000.00 for dust control. We're pleased to announce that the roads have already been brined this spring.

As it is now we have 1 mill voted for roads which brings in about \$52,000.00 a year. This mileage is up for renewal this year and hopefully will pass without any problem.

If we plan to do at least a mile of road a year in the township, we will need more money. How does this get done? We can put in a few thousand dollars every year out of the budget by cutting some other items or we can ask the voters of the township for more millage.

If we ask and get 1.5 mills this will put approximately \$75,000 with our renewal millage and 1 mill for a total of around \$125,000.00 or ask for 2 mills and that would give us around \$160,000.00 annually.

We also have the chance to get some State or Federal aid for some projects, but we need to add a percentage of the project to qualify for these funds. So you have to have a reserve set aside for these types of projects. We all would like better roads, and/or paved roads but the expense is very high. We need to pass this millage request to accomplish these goals. The Township Board will be reviewing this before May 30th to determine what to put on the ballot this year.

We received a grant from the Office of Emergency Service to install missing intersection road signs this summer. This will also help out the emergency responders to be more prompt in 911 calls.

We are now going to be responsible for funding any bridge repair or upgrading that is required by the State. There is no more Federal or State bridge funding.

THE ASSESSORS' REPORT

The 2007 construction season is upon us and please note that you do need a permit for decks while there is no charge for same. We will be starting soon checking construction projects started in 2006 but not yet completed.

The year 2006 found another good raise in assessed value for Bruce Township which continues to show growth every year.

We will be checking some properties for changes in the following months.

The Board of Review was held in March and there was a total of 17 protests presented to the board in the two days over which it was held.

Any questions you may have can be directed to the Assessor, Ken Brown at 632-6584.

CLERKS' REPORT

Elections: The school election is now behind us, now it is time to think about the August Primary on August 8, 2006. The last date to register to vote for the primary is July 3rd.

If anyone would like to have an absent voter ballot please contact me at 635-3058.

The last date to vote absentee for the primary election is August 5, 2006.

We will have a voting machine available to the people who are sight or hearing impaired.

TREASURERS' REPORT

Summer taxes: You will be receiving your tax bills the first week in July. This summer the amounts will be a little higher, the county will be collecting $2/3^{\text{rd}}$ of the allocated tax, last year they collected $1/3^{\text{rd}}$. This is not an increase; your winter bill will be reduced by this amount. These taxes are payable at the Township Office on M-W-F during regular office hours, or they can be mailed at anytime. The deadline for payment is Sept. 14, 2006 without interest.

Dan Gallagher
Bruce Township Supervisor

