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www.gainestownship.org

**Working Together to
Preserve Family Values.**

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Supervisor's News

Don R. Hilton Sr., Supervisor

Imagine being awarded a trip of a life time. Picture traveling around the world and visiting exotic places,

places where you have only dreamed of exploring. A trip like that would take a significant amount of time, while we are dreaming let's just pick five years of travel. If you don't care to travel you might turn into another Rip Van Winkle and take an extended nap, again let's pick a five year snooze. When you wake up or return from your extended trip what would you expect that your community would look like?

Friday, December 2nd and Saturday December 3rd of 2010 the Township Board members were challenged with a similar mental exercise as they participated in a [strategic planning retreat](#) held at the Township offices. We employed the services of a retired professor to facilitate the sessions, which began on Friday evening with all Board members present. The facilitator opened this session with a few introductory comments and then asked the Board members this question; if I return in five years what can I expect Gaines Charter Township to look like? His question prompted a significant amount of thought provoking discussion. Later in the evening we divided into two groups and each group was instructed to look to the future and visualize how the township would look in five years and beyond. Each group was instructed to list three to five goals. We then regrouped and discussed the goals prepared by each team and at the end of this four hour session we finally settled on the following [four goals](#), in no particular order the goals are:

1. Efficient, Effective, Adaptive Township Operation that is Fiscally Sound.
2. Create Efficient, Effective, Cost Effective Approach to Public Safety.
3. Create a Stronger Sense of Community.
4. Expand Economic Development.



The following morning (Saturday) all of the Department Heads joined with the Board members for the next session. The Saturday session started at 8:00 A.M. and ended at nearly 2:00 P.M. For the benefit of the Department Heads, the facilitator provided a brief introduction to the process and we again divided into groups this time, however, we were able to add the expertise of the Department Heads as each group then contained both Board members and Department Heads. Each group focused on one of the four goals, adding objectives, time lines and other pertinent information. After spending nearly two hours we came back together to discuss our findings and continued to refine the goals and objectives. The outcome of these sessions created; "A Vision Tour". The [implementation of these goals by 2015](#) will allow the Board and Staff of

Gaines Charter Township to be able take visitors on the following tour of the Township and visitors will see A Township operation that is:

- * Fiscally sound
- * Nimble and adaptive to citizen and community needs and demands
- * Flexible in staff and resource utilization
- * Strong public safety operations that are efficient and effective
- * A Township that has a stronger sense of community and embraces its rural character
- * A community that is connected via sidewalks and trails and that has developed more opportunities for interaction
- * A community that has expanded and developed opportunities for economic growth

The list can and will go on and probably be refined. If you have ever had the opportunity to be a part of this type of planning process you know that a sound strategic plan is not placed on the shelf to collect dust. Currently, each month the Township Board is hearing reports from our Department Heads on their assigned goal and we will be meeting soon in a workshop session to review the data that has been accumulated. Let me assure you that you really won't need to take that five year snooze before you will see results from this project. Some of the items that we discussed are already being considered and will be factored into future budgets for implementation.

As always, [your Township Board is interested in your thoughts and suggestions](#) as we all strive to create that stronger sense of community where we can live, work, play and raise our families in a very safe and wholesome environment.

Treasurer's Notes

Laurie Lemke, Treasurer

The past three years I have been attending the annual Treasurer's Institute; this consists of intensive training for one week available to all Michigan treasurers held at Central Michigan University. This past spring I have graduated and have now been designated a [Michigan Certified Professional Treasurer](#). I am grateful that I was able to take advantage of this exceptional program.

I have also been busy preparing your summer tax bills. Your township tax bill is unique from other taxes you pay because it is [itemized!](#) As you review your tax bill you will see where I send your tax dollars as each taxing authority is listed individually. These taxes will be [due by Wednesday, September 14](#). Once you receive your bill you may begin making payments, I am also happy to accept any partial payments, if you choose to pay your bill in installments. If your property taxes are in escrow, your escrow company will request from me a copy of your tax bill. Look for the escrow information listed on your tax notice near the perforation.

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Planner's Corner

Brian Tingley, Planning Director

As development activity has slowed over the past few years, the Township has been able to

complete **several important projects**. The list includes:

- ◆ Adoption of a new Zoning Ordinance in 2007, which replaced the 1979 Zoning Ordinance
- ◆ Establishment of the Division Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority, and its related Development and Tax Increment Financing Plan
- ◆ The 2008 Master Plan Update
- ◆ The 2010 – 2014 Parks and Recreation Plan
- ◆ The 2010 Nonmotorized Transportation Plan
- ◆ The Educational Tree Grove at Prairie Wolf Park

With this foundation in place, the Planning Department, along with other Township personnel, has been working with the Township Board and its **Strategic Planning efforts** that began last December. Planning Department staff has been spearheading the efforts related to increasing economic development activities within the Township.

As one part of these efforts, the Township Board recently agreed to become partners with the Right Place, Inc., which is West Michigan's regional economic development agency. By contributing \$2,000 per year, over the next 5 years, the Township has made a commitment to regional economic development.

Another preliminary suggestion has been to combine the Planning Department and Building Department into a single department that manages all planning and zoning services, building inspection services, code enforcement and economic development activities. By streamlining development review activities and combining administrative processes, it is thought that improvement could be made in customer service, fiscal efficiency and staff effectiveness.



As the Township takes a more proactive approach towards economic development, the role of land use planning becomes ever more critical. Economic development has been linked to "placemaking" efforts, such as mixed-use land use policies, increased recreational and cultural opportunities, and alternative transportation modes. The link between economic development and land use policies is becoming more obvious. Recently, the term placemaking has begun to be used in connection with a stronger sense of community. Placemaking respects the important link between land use policies and their impact on community building. In addition, placemaking is increasingly recognized as an economic development tool, in that places with a strong sense of community will naturally attract those businesses and residents that will have a more positive impact on the community as a whole.

Over the course of the next few years, it is anticipated that the Township will prepare a **new Master Plan**, which will replace the 2002 Master Plan and the 2008 Master Plan Update. The new Master Plan will be an economic development tool and a land use policy tool, as the Township faces the post-recession economy and the new economic realities that it brings.

Treasurer's Notes

Laurie Lemke, Treasurer

(Continued) Our current township millage rate is .8720 mills. A home owner

with a value of \$150,000 would pay approximately \$ 65.40 annually in Township tax. It is my desire to provide you with the best service for your tax dollars.

I am here to serve you, and am happy to answer any questions you may have, and **look forward to serving you** this 2011 tax year!



Clerk's Corner

Crystal Osterink, Clerk

It has begun, hasn't it? The **2012 Presidential Election** is already part of everyday discus-

sion. For the Township Clerk's office that means we are planning ahead even now. Yes, there are things we consider and plan for even this far in advance.



At this point, we have heard there will be a Republican Presidential Primary but the date is still under discussion as to whether it will be in January or February. Then in August of 2012 the Primary for all other offices for the General Election will be held. And, of course November will bring the General Election at which the President will be elected along with many other positions—among those to be elected in November are all of the Township offices.

In **other election news**, it is all but certain that all school elections will be held with the even numbered November elections. The hope is to reduce cost and increase turnout for these school board member elections. As a result we will be moving some precinct boundary lines to lessen the number which have two school districts in them. This will most likely affect precincts 3, 6, and 7.

Stay tuned as dates become established and information arrives in your mailbox.



Recreation Program!

This is a drop-in program where children can participate in a variety of activities including arts and crafts, games, theme day, special events and occasional field trips. Parents must be available throughout the day if the children need to be sent home for any reason.

DAYS: Monday – Friday
DATES: June 27 – August 5, 2011
TIME: 9:30 – 11:30 AM AND 12:30 – 3:30 PM
AGE: 6 Years and older
ELIGIBILITY: All Gaines Charter Township residents
COST: **FREE** (Minimal cost for field trips)
LOCATION: Countryside Elementary School, 8200 Eastern Avenue

Registration is **not required**, but information cards are available at Township Offices.



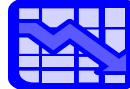
Assessor's Office

Kelley Ziesemer, Assessor

The declining market conditions have continued to reduce the average residential property value in Gaines Township:

2010	\$156,946
1 year ago	\$160,788
5 years ago	\$182,228

As a result of the decline, the gap in assessed and taxable values (created by Proposal A of 1994) is closing. Over 80% of the residential properties have matching assessed and taxable values. Agricultural, Commercial and Industrial values have also dropped, yet there continues to be a larger difference between assessed and taxable value.



After several years of rapid growth, the total number of parcels remained level this past year with a total count of 8195. Although nearly 85% of the parcels in Gaines Township are residential in nature, over two thirds of the 36 square miles in the Township consist of properties that are 10 acres or greater. Half of the properties are located in the Kentwood School District, 30% in Caledonia and 20% in Byron Center.

REAPPRAISAL: In order to continue our State recommended updating of property records, the Gaines Township Assessing staff will again be visiting properties this summer. If your property is in a neighborhood that is scheduled for review, a questionnaire will be mailed to you. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the survey to us.

Fire Department

Chief Russ Jansen, Cutlerville and Dutton

The renovation and expansion project at the Dutton Fire Station is nearing completion. The upgrades

bring the Station to nearly 15,000 square foot that include many components for future growth, such as: living areas for future full time firefighters, training rooms with updated technology, spacious new office areas, and additional vehicle and equipment storage areas. The design of the new 1.4 million dollar Station, accomplished with approximately \$866,000 in federal grant funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, could not have been made possible without the knowledgeable guidance provided by the Township Board members and staff, Wolverine Building Group, Paradigm Design, and the contractors - including many local companies. The Station was designed to serve the growing community for many years to come. If you see the Red Dodge out front stop in and take a walk through, I would be honored to give you a tour and show off your new Fire Station.

As the weather warms up make sure you maintain a higher level of liquids intake. It doesn't take long to become dehydrated when temperatures are in the 80 and 90 degrees. Also make sure you are calling for burning permits if you are looking to have a brush fire, please call 616-299-6055.

If anyone has some exercise equipment that you are not using any more, we would like to talk to you about giving it a new home. Dutton Fire is looking for a few pieces to put in our exercise room.



Thanks again for the continued support of the Cutlerville and Dutton Fire Departments!

July

4th	Office Closed for Independence Day Holiday	8:30 am to 5:00 pm
11th	Township Board	7:00 pm
13th	Parks and Recreation	11:30 am
13th	Zoning Board of Appeals	7:00 pm
28th	Planning Commission	7:00 pm

August

8th	Township Board	7:00 pm
10th	Zoning Board of Appeals	7:00 pm
25th	Planning Commission	7:00 pm

September

12th	Township Board	7:00 pm
14th	Zoning Board of Appeals	7:00 pm
22nd	Planning Commission	7:00 pm

Important Phone Numbers

Dutton Fire	911	(616) 541-0019
Cutlerville Fire	911	(616) 455-7670
Sheriff Substation	911	(616) 632-6490
Kent County Road Commission	Road Repairs/ Dead Animals/ Snow plowing	(616) 242-6900
Consumers Energy	Street lighting	1-800-477-5050
Gaines Library		(616) 647-3870
Township Offices	Phone (616) 698-6640	Fax (616) 698-2490
Byron/Gaines Utility Authority		(616) 971-0002

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