

NEWSLETTER

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP

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Caledonia, MI 49316
616-698-6640

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP



Improvements taking place along Division Avenue

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SUPERVISOR SPARKS INITIATIVES... Supervisor, Bob Terpstra

It's been a minute! I have served over 6 months in the position as Gaines Charter Township Supervisor. Though I've lived in the Township since 1992 and served 4 years as a Trustee prior to becoming Supervisor, the learning curve was steep and informative. What's happening in the Township is exciting and demands thoughtful and informed processes during this growth period. A highlight during these first months has been collaborating with staff, department heads and Township committees. On April 28, the Board of Trustees met to discuss our vision for the Township; this was a highly collaborative meeting. As Supervisor my priorities are sparking new initiatives, giving direction for the next 4 years (and beyond), engaging residents through events in collaboration with the Chamber, and communicating with residents in real time. This collaboration continued with various committees including Parks & Trails and Public Safety, along with the Gaines Chamber and the Division Avenue Corridor Improvement Authority.

The Township's newly adopted vision and mission statements can be found in this newsletter. The next step is a total rebranding of the Township. The rebranding may include a new logo, images, and a marketing strategy.

Managing growth well is a high value. Maintaining a balance of rural and community-based lifestyles in Gaines Charter Township is critical during this time of population growth. The recently adopted Zoning Ordinance will support appropriate housing and promote green spaces appealing to all residents.

Throughout the pages of this newsletter, you will find information about updates at our cemeteries, a redesigning of our website, new development in the Township, and much more.

GAINES CHARTER TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

It's official, our Township now has one Fire Department, with two stations. Station #1 – Cutlerville and Station #2 – Dutton. On Tuesday, May 6th Kent County Dispatch officially signed off of the two separate departments. Dispatch will send all calls for our Township to both stations, rather than each separate location. Firefighters from both Stations have been sworn in as members of the GCT Fire Department.



GAINES TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Join the Gaines Township Historical Society to help preserve our community's rich heritage! As a member, you will support historic sites like the DeTray School, engage with local events, and protect valuable records for future generations. Membership is affordable at just \$7 a year, and your involvement makes a lasting impact. Join today! Contact us at gaines.twp.historical@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST 5TH

NATIONAL NIGHT-OUT
South Christian
High School
4:30PM-7:30PM

AUGUST 22ND

MOVIES IN THE PARK
Township
Hall Grounds
Movie @ 8:30

OCTOBER 11TH

HERITAGE FESTIVAL
Township
Hall Grounds
9:30AM-3:00PM

CEMETERY NEWS!

The Township is excited to announce the addition of columbariums to our cemeteries. The first columbarium will be installed at Blain Cemetery, with more being installed at Blain and Dutton cemeteries at a later date. Please reach out to our Clerk's office (616-698-7980) for details, pricing, and updates to our Cemetery Ordinance, which can be found at:

www.gainestownship.org/document_center



2025 TAX DUE DATES

Summer – September 15, 2025

Winter – February 16, 2026

Seniors, did you know that you may qualify to defer your summer taxes until the winter tax due date of February 16, 2026? If your household income does not exceed \$40,000 per year and you meet one of the following requirements:

- A citizen, 62 years or older
- Paraplegic, Hemiplegic or Quadriplegic
- Eligible Serviceman, Eligible Veteran or Eligible Widow or Widower
- Blind Person
- Totally and permanently disabled

If you feel you are qualified to defer your taxes, please contact the Treasurer's office for an application.

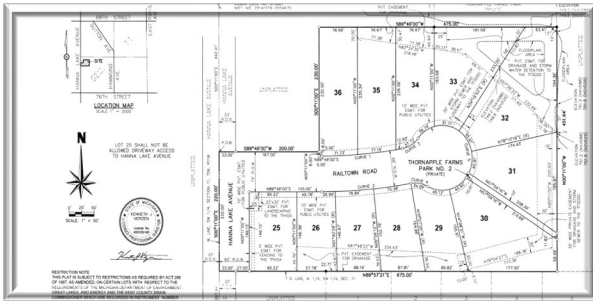
Laurie Lemke, Treasurer

616-499-2045

laurie.lemke@gainestownship.org

FROM THE ASSESSING OFFICE...Assistant Assessor, Mike Visbara

The 2025 tax roll has been finalized, and we have turned our attention to 2026. Summertime is when assessing departments statewide conduct their field work. The State recommends that local assessing units visit 20% of properties in their unit each year. The purpose of these visits is to ensure that our records are up to date through physical observation. Relying solely on outdated records or aerial imagery can lead to inaccuracies. Keeping our records up to date contributes to fair and equitable assessments across the Township. With that said, you may see Township Staff surveying neighborhoods during this time of year with identifying credentials to communicate the nature of the visit.



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT...Planner, Dan Wells

During the summer months, you will see several new projects begin the construction phase.

Prairie Wolf Station, a mixed-use village center at the corner of 84th & Kalamazoo, will feature a pedestrian plaza, retail center, senior housing center with approximately 160 beds, and a housing project

with over 500 homes.

The industrial area at 60th & East Paris will see Switch complete one of their new data centers. This project has kept hundreds of tradespeople busy for over two years.

Dutton continues to grow with the Alexander Trails subdivision, which will bring 400 single-family homes, the Thornapple Farms subdivision, bringing 178 single-family homes, and the Dutton Village Center hopes to break ground in the fall.

OUR MISSION:

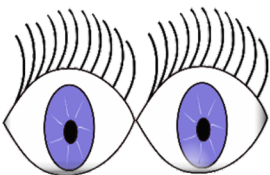
Gaines Charter Township honors our heritage, creates a hospitable, responsible, and engaging environment for residents, business owners, and community partners to ensure a vibrant future for generations.

OUR VISION:

Gaines Charter Township provides quality living for generations to come.

WE'VE BEEN WORKING HARD ON SOMETHING SPECIAL JUST FOR YOU!

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN! Our website is going to start looking a little different, but it's a **GOOD** different.



Staff has been working to improve the website, so you can enjoy the best possible user experience. You may notice small changes here and there as we move toward the launch of our redesigned website.

Visit us regularly to tell how we're doing, and please feel free to offer your opinion or ideas. Send your ideas to info@gainestownship.org.

WATER & SEWER DEPARTMENT

Water & Sewer Administrator...Tracy Lawrence

Did you know that one of the most likely ways to contaminate drinking water is through a cross connection of the drinking water pipes to a source of contamination or pollution? Under certain conditions, water can flow backwards due to back siphonage or back pressure. Cross connections can be prevented by using a backflow prevention device. The Michigan Safe Drinking Water Act aims to prevent contamination of drinking water through cross connections. The testing of backflow protection devices is regulated by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE). To comply with EGLE regulations, the township has started a Residential Cross Connection Control Program. If you have an underground sprinkling system, you will receive notification of the need to have it tested. The Byron-Gaines Utility Authority is running the program for the township; each home with an irrigation system will be required to have their device tested once every five years. For more information, please visit www.bgua.org/crossconnection.



COMMUNITY POLICING OFFICER

Kent County Sheriff's Officer...Jeff Bylsma



I'm Deputy Jeff Bylsma with the Kent County Sheriff's Office, and I am assigned as the Community Policing Officer for Gaines Charter Township. I have 10 years of law enforcement experience and am currently a field training officer and an armored vehicle driver. **My primary responsibilities are building community relationships, teaching educational classes, and code enforcement.** I am looking forward to meeting you at the community events this summer!



Vision, Mission, Goals

- Manage growth in the Township such that GCT remains a strong community engaging with its rural roots & lifestyle
- Develop a GCT brand that honors heritage and embraces a vibrant future
- Engage residents in community activities and with increased transparency
- Improve collaboration between the Township, Chamber, residents, and area businesses
- Manage public safety to provide for the needs of the growing Township
- KDL Gaines Branch Library – Continue to provide resources for all ages and socio-economic ranges
- Acquire land for future recreational space