

The Essex Update

SUPERVISOR: Carla Wardin • 989-640-9284 • 6522 W. Colony Rd, St. Johns, MI 48879 • Email: essexsupervisor@gmail.com

CLERK: Timothy Karasek • 989-307-0425 • 5111 Findlay Rd., St. Johns, MI 48879 • Email: essexwpclerk@gmail.com

TREASURER: Kathleen George • 989-307-1069 • 5462 W. Lowe Rd., St. Johns, MI 48879 • Email: essextreasurer@yahoo.com

TRUSTEE: Jim Gavenda • 989-682-4612 • P.O. Box 32, Maple Rapids, MI 48853 • Email: gavendajames55@mail.com

TRUSTEE: Mark Winsor • 989-224-7275 • 5031 Anderson Rd., St. Johns, MI 48879 • Email: mark.winsor@yahoo.com

ASSESSOR: Beth Botke • 517-204-3752 • P.O. Box 90, Bath, MI 48808 • Email: b.bassessing@gmail.com

CEMETERY MANAGER: Bonnie Hale • 989-292-1700 • 5553 Findlay Rd., St. Johns, MI 48879 • Email: essexcemeteries@yahoo.com

WEBSITE: www.essextownship.org

Summer 2023

Boy Scouts in Action

Cemetery Manager Bonnie Hale reports that on Saturday, May 20th, the placement of the veterans' flags in our cemeteries went very smoothly. Boy Scout Pack #516, under the direction of Cubmaster Ivan Gunderman and Den Leaders Katlin & Jake Train, Scott Thompson, Brittany Johnson and Audrey Tipper had 15 scouts pulling old flags and replacing them with new flags at Lowe and Sowle Cemeteries. The scouts were given copies of the US Flag Code, along with the following statement: "We put flags on Veterans' graves to provide a unique visible tribute to all of our Nation's Veterans to commemorate the heroic acts of loved ones who died in the service of others, or served our country in the military." This project was combined with their advancement program. Scouts received merit badges for community service and an additional credit for doing a project related to veterans. Many thanks go to the scouts, their parents, Ashley Foster for coordinating with the Scout leaders, and a township official for delivering pizza to the scouts. This event benefits all of us!

Local vs County Zoning

In light of recent events surrounding renewable energy projects, the Clinton County Board of Commissioners has placed a moratorium on all new Utility Scale Wind and Solar Project applications. This moratorium allows the Board of Commissioners to review and update outdated zoning ordinances. Currently, Essex is one of eleven townships that abide by the ordinances and policies of Clinton County's Planning and Zoning Board.

As a township, this also gives us the opportunity to re-visit the idea of setting up our own local zoning. In 2015, Essex Township explored the idea of local zoning, but there wasn't enough interest at that time to move forward. The current township board would like input from our residents once again to gauge interest in creating our own Master Plan and setting up our own Planning and Zoning Board.

In January, we invited Lori Pung, a representative of Bengal Township's Planning and Zoning Board, to speak at our township meeting. She provided extensive insight into their process, including the costs and the commitment from residents that was needed to construct a Master Plan and then create their own Planning and Zoning Board. Lori stated that setting up local zoning was a long process, but it has worked well for their township.

If you have questions or thoughts that you'd like to share about implementing local zoning, please contact any member of the Essex Township Board. Contact information for all members is located at the top of this newsletter. Comments and concerns should be communicated by July 15th.

ARPA Update

In 2021 and 2022 Essex Township applied for and received ARPA funds. To date, we have kept that money local, for the good of our township residents. Projects included extra road repairs, a Lucas CPR machine for the Maple Rapids Fire Department and most recently, we teamed up with Lebanon Township to help the Clinton Area Ambulance Service Authority pay off an ambulance. While we want you to make good use of the roads, we hope you never have to use the other items we've invested in! Thank you to MRFD and CAASA for letting us know where the money could be used best.

ITC Transmission Lines

In December 2022, ITC Holdings Corporation notified Essex Township that they intend to construct new electric transmission lines in our area. This project includes 40 miles of double circuit 345-kV line extending from the Nelson Road Substation in Gratiot County to the Oneida Substation in Eaton County. As of the writing of this newsletter, there has not been an established route for these lines, and the township has not received any further updates. For more information on this project, see the link on our Essex Township webpage.

2023 Meeting Dates

August 16, October 18 and December 6

All meetings will be held at 7 p.m. at the Lowe United Methodist Church Hall, 5485 W Lowe Rd. We'd love to see you there!

Veterans' Services Available in Clinton County

All county veterans and their family members have access to veteran's benefit information and claim assistance through the VFW. Barry Walter, the VFW Service Officer will be available BY APPOINTMENT ONLY at the Clinton County Courthouse in St. Johns every Wednesday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is no charge for VFW assistance. To make an appointment, please call Barry at 313-674-1511 or 517-488- 2033. He may also be reached at the VFW State Service Office at 313-964-6510 or barryfw516@hotmail.com.

Assessing Site Visits

This summer and fall, the Essex Township Assessor, Beth Botke and/or her staff will once again be performing onsite property re-inspections. The purpose of these inspections is to make property records for Essex Township as current and accurate as possible. These visits will include measuring all buildings, noting property improvements, taking photos, and walking around buildings to observe the current condition and amenities present. This will not affect your property taxes unless there has been new construction, demolition, a change in millage rate, or if you purchased your property this year. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with Beth as she does her work for the township. If you have questions, please contact her at (517) 204-3752 or b.bassessing@gmail.com.

Essex Township Roads Report

We complete as many roads projects as we can fit in the budget each year, since we know how important it is to our township to have maintained roads. The cost share amount this year from the road commission for our township is \$38,815.85, which means if we pay that amount, they will match it.

We also signed a contract for brine (commonly called chloride) application. We will pay for brine to be applied in May, June, and August. We always do the first two, and the third application is as-needed.

This year, we are contracting the road commission to complete these projects:

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Essex Center – Mead to Island | \$16,680 |
| Essex Center – Island to Hyde | \$8,340 |
| Harris Rd – Gratiot to Lebanon Twp line | \$14,742 |
| Lowell – Lowe to Mead | \$8,340 |
| Lowell - Maple Rapids Rd North to dead end | \$24,405 |
| Paxton – Anderson to Findlay | \$16,680 |
| Hyde – McNeil to Twp line | \$8,340 |
| Overband crack fill | \$7,498.92 |
| Total | \$105,025.90 |
| Brine – three applications | \$37,855.13 |

If you ever have road concerns, please contact the Clinton County Road Commission, Douglas Steffen, Managing Director, (989-668-0030), or Supervisor Carla Wardin (989-640-9284), essexsupervisor@gmail.com.

Disabled Veteran's Exemption

Pursuant to MCL 211.7b, Real property that is used and owned as a homestead by a qualified disabled veteran (or the unremarried, surviving spouse of a qualified disabled veteran) is exempt from property taxes. The veteran, surviving spouse, or legal designee of a veteran or surviving spouse must file an affidavit EACH YEAR with the supervisor or assessor between December 31 and the final adjournment of the Board of Review for each tax year. Please let our assessor, Beth Botke, know if you qualify for a disabled veteran's exemption or if you have any questions.

Summer Deferments Available

Pursuant to MCL 211.51, property taxpayers may defer until February 14, 2024 without penalty or interest, the due date of their summer taxes on their principal residence. To qualify, the gross household income for the preceding calendar year must not exceed \$40,000, and one of the following:

- (A) Is a totally and permanently disabled person, blind person, paraplegic, quadriplegic, eligible serviceperson, eligible veteran, or eligible widow or widower.
- (B) Is 62 years of age or older, including the unremarried surviving spouse of a person who was 62 years of age or older at the time of death.

Property that is classified or used as agricultural property may qualify if the gross receipts of the agricultural or horticultural operations in the previous year (or the average gross receipts of the operations in the previous three years) are not less than the household income of the owner in the previous year, or the combined household incomes in the previous year of the individual members of a limited liability company or partners of a partnership that owns the agricultural real property. A limited liability company or partnership may claim the deferment under this section only if the individual members of the limited liability company or partners of the partnership qualified for the deferment under this section before the individual members or partners formed the limited liability company or partnership.

Persons applying for a deferral must certify that they qualify for the deferment on a form available through the treasurer's office. The form must be completed each year, and must be filed with the treasurer no later than September 14, 2023 to receive the deferral for this year.