

The Essex Update

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Winter 2024

Trustees Stepping Down

The Essex Board thanks outgoing trustees Jim Gavenda and Mark Winsor for their years of service. They have been a pleasure to work with, but both felt it was time to let someone else have a chance to serve in a trustee position. The board will miss their insight and sense of humor, but we know they'll find something just as riveting to keep them busy. Mark will try hard to miss being at our winter meetings, and Jim will certainly miss the exciting ambulance meetings. If you see either of these fantastic guys, tell them thanks for their service to the township!

Welcome New Trustees

Introducing the two newest members of our township board: Jake Klaus and Isreal O'Boyle.

My name is Jake Klaus. I grew up in DeWitt and have lived in Essex Twp for the past five years with my wife, Holly (Conner) Klaus who has lived in Essex Twp since birth. We have one son - Vincent (Vinny) and another on the way - Anthony (Tony). We enjoy living here and feel this is the best place to raise children! I look forward to serving our township and representing the concerns/needs of our residents. Our world has changed a lot in the past five years. As a father of young children, I think it's important to be involved in local politics, as their future is in our hands. We welcome neighbors to call, email, or stop by anytime with questions, concerns, or just to catch up.

Our other new trustee is Isreal O'Boyle, and he's also looking forward to his new position on the Essex Township Board. Isreal and his wife Shari moved into their house on Colony Rd in 2019. They originally lived in St Johns, but are enjoying life with their three girls out in the township. An indoor dog and an outdoor cat round out the O'Boyle family. In his spare time Isreal enjoys just about any outdoor activity, including hunting and fishing.

Welcome to the board! We're looking forward to your perspectives on township business.

Renewable Energy News

As of the date of this writing, the State of Michigan is anticipating PA233 to take effect. PA 233 is the law that was passed last fall that allows three un-elected members of the Michigan Public Service Commission to regulate the placement of large industrial wind, solar and battery storage facilities. Barring any lawsuits or legislative action, PA 233 will take effect on November 29, 2024.

The MPSC's interpretation of PA233 indicates that all parcels that don't match the state's zoning specifications, regardless of their current zoning designation, will be eligible for industrial size wind, solar and battery storage facilities. Foster, Swift, Collins and Smith is a legal firm that believes their interpretation is incorrect and has filed an appeal against that part of the law. Here is a link to explain it in more detail. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/michigan-communities-band-together-with-lawsuit-in-state-zoning-battle/ar-AA1sGywq>

After much debate, the Clinton County Commissioners have committed to joining this appeal, along with at least 70 other municipalities throughout the state. The commissioners originally planned to commit \$10,000 for legal fees, but changed course and decided to commit \$5000 with the hope that the ten townships that fall under county zoning would contribute the remaining \$5000. Your Essex Board agreed to set aside funds to pay our share of the remaining legal costs. Stay tuned for developments.

County News

The current (as of November 5) Clinton County Board of Commissioners is considering dropping zoning services for the ten common law townships that use these services. BOC Chair, Commissioner Showers, has made it clear that he sees this as a financial burden on Clinton County. He feels that the taxes these township residents pay to the county aren't enough to justify the costs of our zoning. You can find his comments in the Board of Commissioners October 29th Agenda, pages 9-12, or at this link. <https://www.clinton-county.org/AgendaCenter/Board-of-Commissioners-2>

The Clinton County BOC membership will change with the newly elected members in January, but we don't know if they will follow this same direction or not. Mr. Showers has retained his position, and will likely bring this issue up with the new members. Township residents and the board will have to watch and react accordingly.

Stay In The Know

In an effort to keep our residents better informed of township news, Essex Township has started a list of residents' email addresses. This will only be used for those who want township updates more frequently than the newsletter allows. If you would like your email address to be added, you can either let a board member know, or put a note in your tax payment. If you'd like to be removed from our list, please feel free to request that as well. We will never share your information outside of Essex Township.

Cemetery Superhero

The Essex Township Board would like to thank hard-working resident Husted Lynn for the volunteer work he has been doing at the Beech Cemetery. He has accomplished quite a bit in the past several months. Go check it out for yourself if you have the time! Beech Cemetery is located on Wacousta Road, just south of Stone Rd.

Zoning Merge Update

This spring and summer, discussions were held with Bengal Township regarding a joint Planning and Zoning Committee. Those discussions ultimately ended without an agreement to join forces. Although there were some positive aspects to merging the townships' zoning plans and decisions, the Bengal Township Board chose to keep their zoning "as-is". This means we are still currently under Clinton County's zoning authority.

Drain Improvements

As some of you may have noticed, the Drain Commissioner has a couple of projects planned for our township. To cover the cost, the residents in the area of the drains being repaired are assessed a fee on their property taxes. This is not new, but we do get questions about these fees. This time around, the Vanhoesen Drain and the Dallas/Bengal Drain are being repaired. If you live in the areas served by either of these drains, you'll notice that on your bill. Next year's projects will likely affect a new group of residents.

If you ever have any questions about our Clinton County Drain system, feel free to contact Phil Hanses, our Drain Commissioner, at (989) 224-5160. He's been in the department for around 30 years, and knows the business!

A Look Back....

The following "Want Ads" were in the May 1965 Clinton County Republican.

- Real Estate: 160 acres northwest of St. Johns with 3 new 16x50 silos, large barn, 4-bedroom home, new gas furnace. \$12,000 down.
 - Maple Rapids -E. Main St. 3-bedroom home, modern kitchen, priced under \$6,500.
 - Maple Rapids—Excellent 6- room home with full basement, owner would like to exchange for farm. Will FHA.
 - Val's Dari-Rich ice cream business in Maple Rapids. Owners will take small farm or priced to sell.
 - Maple Rapids. 4-bedroom home, close to downtown, now vacant. Well worth the asking price.
 - 1959 PLYMOUTH 2-dr., motor recently overhauled, radio and heater, \$200. Can be seen at 427 S. Oak St., Maple Rapids.
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Township Board Meetings

Unless otherwise noted on our website, the Essex Township Board meets at the Lowe Methodist Church Hall, located at 5485 W Lowe Rd. Meetings begin at 7 pm. We'd love to see you there!

Meeting Dates: 2024: December 18

2025: February 19, March 19, April 16, June 18, August 20, October 15, December 17

