

ALAMO TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

News for Alamo Township Residents

FALL 2007

www.alamotownship.org



OFFICE HOURS

BOB VLIETSTRA,
TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR

Tuesdays: 9:00 a.m. – noon

Township Hall: 7901 N. 6th Street

TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

The summer newsletter contained an article on House Bills 4780-88. Introduced on May 17, 2007, the eight bills were referred to a committee where they remain. The last known action on this series of bills was May 22, 2007. The bills would remove ALL assessing, tax collection and elections from township hands. Grassroots government as we know it would be destroyed. We're proud that Alamo Township is able to provide fire protection and EMS services with a first-class Fire Department on a very tight budget with NO special millage to support it. The Township provides planning and zoning services as well as convenient and personable tax collection through our treasurer. Under the proposed bills, all taxes would be paid to Kalamazoo County at the County Treasurer's Office. We have our own assessor, ordinance enforcer and building official, our own Parks and Recreation Department plus monthly recycling and twice annual junk days. The fact is, we can run Alamo Township for much less money than the County could or would. As a small community, we greatly benefit from our extremely generous volunteers and our overall community spirit. Feel welcome to let your representatives know how you feel. Senator Tom George (517) 373-0793, e-mail SenTGeorge@senate.michigan.gov or mail to Post Office Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909-7536. Representative Jack Hoogendyk (517) 373-1774, e-mail JackHoogendyk@house.mi.gov.

PROPOSED G AVENUE GRAVEL PIT

In June, the Zoning Board voted 4-1 to deny the request for a Special Exception Use Permit to mine gravel at the proposed site. The applicants responded by suing the Township. Among other things, the suit challenged the constitutionality of our Zoning Ordinance and sought damages in the amount of \$10,000,000. To preserve its right to defend, the Township responded in Circuit Court. Knowing that the Court would order the Township to engage in procedures for the purpose of settlement and believing that a settlement with the right terms could be in the best interests of the Township, that option was explored. On September 18, the Board of Trustees (representing the Township in this matter) voted to accept the terms of the settlement that had been worked out by their attorneys. The Township received many concessions, guarantees and benefits from the settlement including solid environmental safeguards, independent inspections, property value and well protections for surrounding property owners, restricted hours of operation (no Saturday mining), more generous set-backs (especially from G Avenue), the donation of 60 acres of land for Township parks, at-cost pricing for asphalt and labor for roads, \$10,000 per year to enhance Township parks and a significant increase in personal property taxes for the equipment. The Township Board felt that a settlement on these terms was in the best interests of the residents of Alamo Township. The settlement was signed by the Court on September 19. Recently, C-COATS and some individuals have sued to set aside the settlement.

At a hearing on September 26, the Court permitted C-COATS and others to intervene in the lawsuit but denied their request for a Preliminary Injunction. All parties will be back in court on October 12. The Board of Trustees is hopeful that the Court will recognize the right of the Township Board to act in the best interests of and to enter into this settlement on behalf of its residents. We will keep you posted as the process continues.

TAXES

Another busy summer tax season is behind us. Our sincere thanks to Mary Stoneburner. Summer taxes were due on Friday, September 14. If you missed the deadline, taxes may be paid to the Alamo Township Treasurer with a 1% late fee through September 30. After that time, an additional 1% late fee is added on the 1st of each month until February 14. Beginning on February 15, there is an additional 3% fee. Summer taxes not paid by February 28, 2008 are considered delinquent and must be paid to Kalamazoo County.

Winter taxes will be mailed on December 1 and are due February 14. Payments may be mailed or dropped off to Mary Stoneburner, 7605 West D Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI 49009.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Remember, all building and remodeling projects over \$500.00 must have a building permit and all permits start with our Building Inspector Bill Henderson (720-5248). All permit requests must go through the Building Inspector. To avoid confusion, no permits are given out at the Township Hall. Commercial site plans are reviewed by the Building Inspector, the Fire Chief and the Chair of the Zoning/Planning Board. This is important as more commercial buildings are coming to Alamo. Our goal is to keep a rural atmosphere in our Township. Because of this goal, developers have labeled us as a “tough” Township to develop. In a survey done in 1998, 62% of persons responding spoke to an overwhelming desire to keep a rural atmosphere in the Township. Since then we have been working toward that goal. We also recognize that though we can't stop development, we can direct how it occurs.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Moore continues to keep our Fire Department well-trained and equipped to meet your needs. New turnout gear through a FEMA grant brings all Alamo Township firefighters up to current firefighting standards.

A big thank-you to our fire fighters for staffing the fire station for nearly 48 hours when the storm knocked out power in the township. Having an available water supply helped many members of our community. The department continues to seek out and attend regular training and education to remain up-to-date and skilled in the latest fire fighting techniques.

UPDATES FROM THE CLERK

Township Clerk Garilyn Sportel-Bogard has moved her office to the town hall. She may be reached by calling 382-3366.

Clerk Sportel-Bogard notes that there is nothing on the ballot for the November elections.

Please remember to remove all summer decorations from gravesites in the Alamo cemeteries by November 1. Thank you.

PARKS DEPARTMENT

The lack of rain this summer put a damper on the Farmer's Market at the DE Avenue Park for this year. We look forward to a much better year in 2008. Booths are free to Alamo Township residents. A flea market may be added next year.

If you haven't made the time to visit the DE Avenue Park recently, you've missed out on numerous improvements. There are now three distinct trails that picturesquely meander through the park. A wheelchair accessible bridge spans Sand Creek. A wildlife observation deck is under construction off the bridge and it's common to see deer bounding through the woods from the bridge. A wildlife preserve has been established along the northeast boundary of the park. The trails are great to walk all seasons of the year and offer cross country skiing opportunities in the winter. Feel welcome to visit your park during daylight hours regardless of whether the gates are open. Parking and access when the gates are closed is available at the west gate. A small parking lot is planned for 5th Street and will have access to both the DE Avenue Park and the Kal-Haven Trail. A big thank you to the Parks Department, Boy Scouts and multiple volunteers for their tireless efforts in transforming this park into a showcase.

RECYCLING and FALL JUNK DAY

Bring us your junk! The fall clean-up sweep is October 13th from 9:00 until 1:00. Sorry, NO tires or appliances containing Freon. NO hazardous waste such as motor oil, pesticides, oil-based paints, car batteries or cement. (See Hazardous Waste) The system put in place in May proved that we can get you in and out quickly. This proved helpful for folks who had several truckloads of junk!

The regular monthly recycling is the 2nd Saturday of each month EXCEPT January and February. We accept #1-6 plastic (no lids, or motor oil containers), clear and colored glass, clean and flattened cans, magazines, junk mail and newspapers. Please do not bring items we cannot recycle. Let's all help keep landfills from filling up with recyclable materials.

Ron Feniger is always looking for volunteers to help with recycling and extra hands are always needed for clean-up days. We thank all of our volunteers who make recycling happen in the Township. If you have a couple of hours and would like to help, please call Ron at 381-8478 and volunteer!

EUGENE RECTOR

The Township lost one of its stalwart public servants on August 28th. Eugene Rector took office as the Alamo Township Supervisor in 1968, filling the term of John Gray who died in office. He retired from this position in 1988. Mr. Rector continued his involvement in public service by working as a legislative aid for both Jack and Robert Welborn. Mr. Rector recognized that growth in Alamo Township was inevitable and worked to institute safeguards to preserve as much of the rural nature of the Township as possible and prudent. He was instrumental in establishing the Alamo Township Park on DE Avenue. Last year he was the guest of honor at the dedication of the Rector Trail at the DE Avenue Park. Mr. Rector remained a staunch supporter of the park even with his passing, requesting that memorials be sent to one of two groups, one of which was the Friends of the Township Park. He will be fondly regarded and sorely missed by those who knew him.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

If you have household hazardous waste, take it to the Hazardous Waste Center at 1301 Lamont off Lake Street near the Sheriff's Department. They take oil-based paints, used motor oil, solvents, pesticides, mercury, insecticides, car batteries, old cell phone batteries and other items that cannot go into your regular trash. Hours are Tuesday and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Wednesday from noon until 6:00 p.m. and the 2nd Saturday of each month from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. If you have questions, please call them at 373-5211. This service is FREE to Alamo Township residents and no appointment is needed.

GET WELL SOON

Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Bob Vlietstra. Bob had non-emergency surgery in late September and will be out of commission for a few weeks. In Bob's absence, the rest of us are pitching in and will staff his office hours. Please call 382-3366 or drop in for conversation or assistance.

ALAMO FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS SIGN ORDER FORM

**IF WE CAN'T FIND YOU, WE CAN'T HELP YOU
THESE SIGNS MAY SAVE YOUR LIFE
OR THE LIFE OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE**

SIGN.....\$10.00

Please make checks payable to:
Alamo Firefighters Association

Mail Completed form to:
Alamo Fire and Rescue Department
7860 North 6th Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Address if different than above:
