



FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK

BY WILL HATHAWAY, SUPERVISOR

You may not know it, but there is an ongoing debate about the structure of Scio Township's government. Should we fill the position of township manager left vacant since September 2019? What additional positions might be necessary to meet the needs of our growing township? What responsibilities does the Board of Trustees want to grant to these staff positions or to particular officers?

The Board of Trustees has discussed these issues as a whole and in committee. At our May 11 meeting, the Board voted to adopt the "Township Administrator Model" and to start a search process for an individual with the skills and experience needed to fill the Township Administrator position. The Township has engaged the services of Amy Cell LLC to lead an executive search. Our Human Resources Consultant, Diane Benson, is coordinating with the search firm. The process will include input from the Board of Trustees and members of the staff to create the job description and posting. The timeline envisions final interviews in August. Ideally, the selected candidate could begin work at the Township in September. The Board of Trustees continues to deliberate on the various new positions to be authorized, delegations of authority, and organizational structure.

While much of the Township's work is behind-the-scenes, this summer and fall residents may see evidence of a number of infrastructure projects that will directly affect their quality of life.

ZEEB ROAD PATHWAY

Work is underway on Phase III of the Zeeb Road Pathway. This segment of the Township's non-motorized pathway network will extend northward from the intersection with Dexter-Ann Arbor Road along the east side of Zeeb Road to a point 1,200 feet north of Miller Road. The project is funded with Michigan Department of Natural Resources Trust Fund and Washtenaw County Connecting Communities grants, as well as the Township's Parks and Pathways Millage. Planning is underway to bring the Pathway further north to the Huron River. Eventually, the Zeeb Road Pathway will connect with the Border-to-Border Trail, a non-motorized pathway that will extend the length of Washtenaw County.

PARKLAND PLAZA SIDEWALK

A 6-foot-wide sidewalk will be constructed along the west side of Parkland Plaza this fall. This long-anticipated project will increase pedestrian mobility through the neighborhood and address significant safety issues. Several partners support this effort, including the University of Michigan Health System, the Downtown Development Authority, and residential developments in the Parkland neighborhood.

LIBERTY ROAD WATER MAIN

Construction will begin on a new water utility infrastructure project, a water main extending out Liberty Road west of Wagner Road. This new "loop" will provide important redundancy and capacity to serve existing water customers as well as new residential and commercial developments.

ACCESS TO PARKS AND NATURE PRESERVES

Work on trailheads at four Township parks and preserves will be completed this summer. The improvements include parking areas, information kiosks, foot trails, and signage. For details, see the Update on Parks, Paths and Preserves, p. 8.

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BUS SHELTERS ON JACKSON BLVD

The Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is working with the Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority (AAATA) to construct five bus shelters along Jackson Road. The shelters will be located at existing bus stops and will be ADA compliant.

ROAD MAINTENANCE/IMPROVEMENT

The Township has arranged with the County Road Commission and private contractors for maintenance work on Township roads including the repaving of Enterprise Drive (supported by the Township's DDA) and maintenance of prior road projects completed under the Township-wide Special Assessment District (SAD).

WATER AND SEWER RATES UPDATED

The Township is overhauling its water and sewer fees. Scio's utility fees have not been updated in many years and the Township has been running a significant deficit in these funds. At our June 8 meeting, the Board was presented

with a plan to reduce what has become a \$500,000/year gap between water and sewer costs and revenue by streamlining processes and increasing equity in fees. For example, businesses, landlords, and homeowners with sprinkler systems have not been charged for services that cost the Township significantly in terms of staff labor and time. On June 22, the Board considered a resolution to implement fees for these special services. **The result will be a more equitable system in which users will pay for the services they use rather than spreading the costs across the entire system.** The water and sewer system is funded solely by users. Changes in fees and streamlined processes will not close all of the gap between costs and revenue. The Township is undertaking a comprehensive study to determine how much rates for water and sewer will need to be increased in order to keep the system solvent. This is a step that nobody likes, but one which is essential to pay the actual costs of running the water and sewer utilities.

On a happier note, I am lucky to have worked closely with Jim Merte, whose retirement is being formally announced in this newsletter (see p. 7). I have valued his wise counsel and creative thinking as well as his sense of humor. He has helped Scio Township in so many ways throughout a long career as our assessor. We all wish Jim a very happy retirement.

Finally, a few words about opportunities for resident participation in our local government. As noted elsewhere in this newsletter, we are creating a Compensation Commission and a Sustainability Task Force, both of which are looking for interested residents to share their expertise. The Township also has vacancies on existing bodies such as the Roads Committee.

If you would consider serving on a Township committee or commission, please send an email with your qualifications and interests to: whathaway@sciotownship.org.

VACATION AND TRAVEL TIPS

Going on vacation or leaving home for an extended period of time? Consider the following safety tips:

- Make sure all doors and windows are locked. Consider placing a wooden, plastic or metal rod in the window tracks;
- Keep some lights on: indoors, on a timer (if possible); outdoors, such as porch lights and garage lights; leave a television on--the flicker of a TV from a window can be a simple deterrent;
- Stop the mail or have someone pick it up. Nothing says "vacant house" like mail piling up;
- If you are leaving behind vehicles, make sure they are locked, clear of valuables, and parked in your driveway;
- Tell someone you trust that you are going to be away. Ask them to keep an eye on your property, or have a friend, family member, or other trusted person check on your house while you are away.

DOG ETIQUETTE

Summer temperatures mean more time out-of-doors, which can highlight the need for dog-owners to pay more attention to pet etiquette for the safety and happiness of pets and people alike. First, bring your pet indoors, away from the heat, and away from all the other animals and people that make your dog bark. Second, make sure your dog is under the control of a person when it's outside the yard. Not everyone knows your Doberman just wants a friendly sniff and a lick. And third, pick up after your dog and dispose of its waste in the trash. That keeps our walking paths clean and protects water quality. Be a good neighbor, mind your dog's manners.

BY THE WASHTENAW COUNTY OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

- Sign up for the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office Property Watch service: www.washtenaw.org/1743/Property-Watch.

NEW INFO ON EXPUNGEMENT LAWS

The Michigan Department of Attorney General Dana Nessel has launched a webpage to inform Michigan residents about the state's new expungement laws, which began phasing in on April 11, 2021, with marijuana misdemeanors. This site is designed to help applicants determine eligibility and navigate their way through the new laws. It features an FAQ and links for resources and assistance. Go to Michigan.gov/ag and check out "Expungement Assistance" under the Tab "Initiatives."

CLERK'S COLUMN

TENDING OUR LOCAL DEMOCRACY: COMPENSATION OF TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS

I am so appreciative of the many ways you my fellow Scio residents tend to our local democracy: by attending Township Board or committee meetings, picking up the phone, sending emails, or just stopping by Township Hall to tell us what we need to know. The input of our residents is also needed to proactively improve our Township's democratic governance. With the myriad assaults on democracy internationally and domestically, we all can act here and now to make Scio Township a model local democracy that solves problems and improves community through ongoing and informed deliberation.

Tending our Township democracy includes establishing a better way for all of us to decide how much to pay those of us who are fortunate enough to have been elected to public service.

How does the Township set the compensation for we seven elected officials—four Trustees, and the Treasurer, Supervisor, and Clerk? State

law provides for three ways that townships may set the salaries of elected officials. For decades, the Scio Township Board of Trustees has opted to follow one of those ways—setting our own salaries. We have not used any formal or standard process for evaluating the duties assigned to, or carried out, by officers, nor assessed comparable salaries for similarly organized townships, nor asked for public input beyond what is elicited through public comment at Board meetings.

To bring more discipline and consistency, the Board of Trustees held a Public Hearing on June 22 where adopting an Ordinance to establish a Scio Township Compensation Commission was considered. If established, the Township Compensation Commission would send salary determinations to the Board of Trustees for their approval or disapproval. Many townships have a Compensation Commission, drawing on the expertise of our electors (that is, you, the voters) to inform salary determinations of

BY JESSICA FLINTOFT, CLERK

elected officials. Doing so would also bring us up-to-date with our neighbors: Pittsfield Township, Webster Township, Dexter Township, and Ann Arbor Township all use compensation commissions.

If you are interested in serving on the Compensation Commission for Scio Township, send a letter to Township Supervisor Will Hathaway (WHathaway@ScioTownship.org), describing your qualifications.

The Board of Trustees will appoint five of the residents recommended by the Supervisor.

Townships may be best described as “neighbors serving neighbors”—the most local form of government we have. Our Township Assessor, Jim Merte, has exemplified this spirit of neighborly service for more than 40 years, and is taking a well-deserved retirement as of September 1. Jim has cared for Township residents, staff, and infrastructure with consistency and integrity, Merte, we are going to miss you!

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

WHAT A YEAR 2020 WAS! 2021 WILL BE BETTER!

We've just closed out the tax year for 2020 and it is time to start again. You should have your summer tax bill by now or

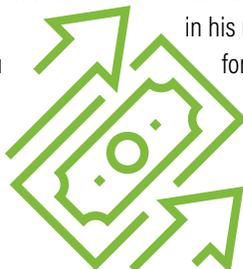
will have it shortly. Please make sure your record is correct. If you find an error, email me at DEPalmer@ScioTownship.org.

The Township is soon going to be offering the option to pay

your taxes by ACH bank transfer. It's free to both residents and the Township and can be a more safe and convenient option than writing and mailing a check. Please watch the website and your mailbox for further information.

As a final thought, I would like to wish our long-time assessor, Jim Merte, nothing but the best in his retirement! He has been a fine employee for the Township, treating all with fairness.

Jim and I have worked together for a long time. We have become friends, sharing ideas, mentoring each other, sharing our families' joys and a few sorrows.



BY DONNA E. PALMER

I will miss him. Thank you, Jim for being “you.”

As always, I thank the residents of Scio for making my job easy. I appreciate all of you. Donna Palmer

PAPERS OF RECORD

All actions taken by the Board of Trustees are published in two official papers of record: The Dexter Sun Times and the Washtenaw Legal News.

LETTER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

BY ANDREW HOUDE, CHIEF
SCIO TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

I hope that the summer is finding everyone in a better place than we were in a year ago. As I write this, COVID restrictions are being lifted and it's feeling like we may have a somewhat normal summer this year. Additionally, we are actively planning for the annual community Halloween party, which will be held on October 24, from 1 to 4 pm. I am looking forward to this after cancelling our 2020 event.

Renovations to the Fire Station should be complete by the fall. With some luck we may be done by August if the supply chain slow-downs are over, though that may be an overly optimistic goal. While a lot of the exterior renovations are complete, we still have a long way to go on the interior, which has essentially been gutted and is being reconfigured. **In the apparatus bay, we have built an area to decontaminate our dirty firefighting gear, as the health risks of contaminants from fires are becoming more widely understood.** This area will have a place where our gear can be washed and stored well away from the living area of the station. This will take up about half of one of our apparatus bays.

The interior living spaces are being reconfigured to allow us to sleep four people, which is a significant improvement and a critical component of keeping the community safe. **Four people is the number necessary to**

begin interior firefighting immediately upon arrival at an emergency, rather than waiting for off-duty personnel or mutual aid to arrive. Throughout all this construction, we are housed in a trailer behind the main building. Firefighters have a little farther to go to get to the apparatus, but we are working around the construction with little issue.

In late May, the Township Board authorized the Fire Department to replace our rescue vehicle, which for more than 10 years has responded on about 40 percent of our medical calls. This 2009 Chevy Tahoe is at the end of its life expectancy as an emergency vehicle and will be replaced by a heavy-duty pickup truck that will provide us more flexibility in use. With the ongoing microchip shortage, delays are expected purchasing this vehicle, but we hope to have it added to the fleet by early fall. The Tahoe will remain in the fleet for non-emergency use as a utility vehicle.

In closing, I would like to wish our retiring Assessor/IT mastermind Jim Merte a long and healthy retirement after serving the community for over 40 years. While I have only worked with him for the 15 months I have worked in Scio, I have seen the mark Jim has left on the systems he designed and installed that keep us up and running seamlessly. Whoever takes his place will have big shoes to fill. Congratulations Jim!

GOOD FIRE

Keep campfires safe and clean by carefully choosing your fuel. Use the driest, most well-seasoned wood you can find. Get it locally to avoid spreading invasive insects and tree diseases, and make sure to burn it all before you leave for another location. Avoid burning treated wood, which can be identified by a manufacturer's stamp and a greenish color. Treated wood releases arsenic or other chemicals in the air when burned. Likewise, don't toss trash, plastic food wrappers, foam cups, or hazardous materials in your fire – it's illegal, not to mention stinky and unhealthy (source: Michigan DNR).



DNR ON COVID?

What role did the Michigan Dept. of Natural Resources play in the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out? Through a 2018 change in the law (MCL 34.5514), the DNR's incident management teams, ordinarily sent to forest fires or flooding, were able to deploy their experts in data tracking, logistics, and equipment and supplies ordering to help organize the mass vaccination operation at Ford Field in Detroit. "It is amazing how, if we follow the process, we can tackle any type of incident," said Mike Janisse, a DNR forest fire supervisor.

AVOID FOAM ON LAKES AND RIVERS

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has issued its annual recommendation that Michiganders avoid contact with any foam they see on Michigan waterbodies such as lakes, rivers, and streams. Foam can form on any waterbody, but foam on some waterbodies may have high levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS-containing foam tends to be bright white in color, is often lightweight and may pile up like shaving cream on shorelines or blow onto beaches.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT ON CAPTAIN BRIAN KOCH

BY BRIAN KOCH

My name is Brian Koch and I am currently a Captain with the Scio Township Fire Department. I started my fire training at Scio Fire in the fall of 1987, before Scio Fire was officially established. We opened our doors on July 1, 1988. The Department had at that time only two full-time personnel: A Fire Chief and an Assistant Chief, both working 40 hours a week, 9-5. The rest of the Department, including myself, was paid on-call, approximately 20 members. Paid on-call employees typically work other jobs and respond to calls when available. This means sometimes having to leave dinners or family get-togethers, and getting calls in the middle of the night and then having to get up and go to your main job in the morning. **I knew firefighting was what I wanted to do for a career and spent the next ten years training and furthering my education** while at the same time working other jobs and continuing as a paid on-call member.

I was hired full-time September 29, 1997, by former Fire Chief Carl Ferch. I started out working Monday through Friday, 9-5. Two years



later we added a second full-time firefighter and each of us worked four 10-hour days. I worked Sunday-Wednesday and he worked Wednesday-Saturday. This meant we had someone at the station during the day 7 days a week when a large part of our paid on-call staff would be at their other work and not available. As the Township grew so did the need for around-the-clock fire coverage. This meant adding a third firefighter and changing our shifts to 24-hour shifts. Over the years we have added a second

and then a third member to each shift. Now each shift consists of a Captain, a Lieutenant, and a firefighter. **It has become harder year after year to find and keep paid on-call members due to training requirements, call volume, and the overall time away from family.**

I have been with the Department 30+ years, 23 of them being full time. The best part of my job is working with my fellow firefighters. When you spend 24 hours a day every third day with your shift partners you become family. You endure both the good and the bad times together. You never know what the day may bring and that's part of what keeps this job exciting.

Time has flown by and the Department is changing faster now than ever. Chief Houde has been with us just over a year and has been an integral part of preparing the Department for both current and future needs of the Township. Our station is currently being remodeled both inside and out. It is being updated to a more functional layout and should serve us well for the future.

ROAD DUST CONTROL ALERT

The Washtenaw County Road Commission will be treating dirt roads in Scio Township to control dust during mid-June, late July, and mid-September. The mineral brine used for dust control attracts moisture to the road surface, minimizing the spread of dust and maintaining the road surface. While the calcium chloride contained in the brine is a naturally occurring mineral, it can be a respiratory- and eye-irritant, and in rare cases has been linked to chronic

bronchitis, pulmonary fibrosis, emphysema, and asthma. **Residents are advised to avoid driving, walking, or biking on roads immediately after the treatment** when possible, and to keep car windows closed while driving on recently treated roads (until the surface is dry).

To stay informed about the schedule for local road dust control applications, check on the Road Commission's weekly work schedule to

BY JACQUELINE COURTEAU, TRUSTEE

find out when nearby roads will be treated (wcroads.org/weekly-road-work-schedule), or sign up for the Road Commission's email alerts (wcroads.org/residents/subscribe-to-road-updates).



A WORD FROM THE UTILITIES DEPARTMENT

While residents in the Uplands area and the Jackson Road corridor are serviced by municipal water and wastewater service, there are many Township residents who rely on seepage systems to eliminate their liquid wastes. These systems consist of a septic tank for capturing the solid content and a septic field for distribution of the liquid portion. These systems are expensive to replace but their life cycle can be extended by following a few simple do's and don'ts.

DO: Reduce or eliminate the use of a garbage disposal. Coffee grounds, waste food, and grease should be segregated and placed in your garbage can.

DO: Have your septic system inspected by a licensed contractor every three years and have the tank pumped out every 3-5 years depending on the size of the household and the substances flushed down the drain.

DO: Install low-flow fixtures on showers and sinks to reduce the hydraulic loading on the system and save money.

BY STEVE WYZGOSKI,
UTILITIES DIRECTOR

DON'T: Flush non-degradable items such as dental floss, feminine hygiene products, and diapers down the toilet. While other items such as wipes may be labelled "flushable" they may cause problems in your system.

DON'T: Flush acidic or caustic cleaners down the drain. Diluted concentrations are generally acceptable, but household chemicals should be dropped off at the Washtenaw County Home Toxics Center at 705 North Zeeb Road.

DON'T: Park or drive on your drain field. This can compact the soil and break the distribution piping. Also, roots from trees and shrubs planted on or near the drain field can grow into the system and cause damage.

AAATA RETURNS BUS SERVICE TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS

TheRide hosted a series of public meetings in June to present their final updated Service Recovery Plan, which outlines service starting on August 29, and includes changes to many routes and services. They also presented and received feedback on their new Fare Proposal and will make any necessary adjustments before the proposed fare change in January 2022. To stay up-to-date on the Fare Proposal, Service Plan, and route information, visit TheRide.org or call 734/996-0400.

DEXTER SENIOR CENTER

The Dexter Senior Center, located at 7720 Ann Arbor St in Dexter, is a nonprofit organization that provides the local senior community with opportunities for fitness, wellness, creative fun, music, games, nutrition services, and more (travel! tax and Medicare counseling! flu shots! on-site vegetable gardening!). It's a wonderful resource right in our backyard. Find out how to become a member at 734/426-7737, or dexterseniors.org.

WASH YOUR CAR ON THE LAWN...

Did you know that washing the car can benefit your lawn? When you pull your car onto the grass and wash it there your lawn will gladly soak up the water. Plus the grass will break down the soap and absorb any phosphates for use as fertilizer. Bonus: keeping soapy water out of storm drains and ditches protects the water quality of your local lake or river. If you can't wash your car on the lawn, use a commercial car wash, which are required to collect and treat the wash water (source: Huron River Watershed Council).

"988" IS THE NEW NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

988 has been designated by the federal government as an abbreviated code to reach the National Suicide Prevention network in its ongoing efforts to stem the crisis in suicides. All phone numbers in the area codes 616, 810, 906, and 989 must now dial all 10 digits instead of the usual 7, even in local calling, due to their use of the 988 prefix. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a network of local crisis centers that provides free and confidential emotional support 24/7 to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

FOND FAREWELL TO JIM MERTE, A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR

Some people just seem to be born with more talents than the ordinary run of humans. Scio Township's assessor and chief IT officer, Jim Merte (pronounced "mer-tee"), is one of those people, and since 1978 he has shared his talents with the Township. His coworkers describe him as patient, easy to work with, a good teacher, and a nice guy with a wicked sense of humor. Longtime Township treasurer Donna Palmer considers Jim a mentor and praised his talent for working with people. Former clerk Nancy Hedberg called Jim "a remarkable renaissance man" who could be counted on to save the day even at 6 am on Election Day. Longtime associate assessor Bill Aili, who will also be retiring this fall, is one of Jim's biggest fans. He recalls seeing Jim calm down any number of irate taxpayers by hearing them out and then calmly explaining how their assessment was arrived at: "They might walk in all upset, but they'd walk out with a smile," Bill said.

It is evident that the Township has changed and grown immensely since the 1970s, when Jim was hired. The job of an assessor is to appraise the value of properties for the purpose of taxation, and in the early days, the work was conducted by hand, with pencils and calculators the only tools. Jim recalls involving as many as 8 staff members (it might have been the whole office at that time) in the annual task of calculating assessments and updating paper records. "There's absolutely no comparison," Jim exclaimed when I asked him how his job had changed over the decades. When Jim wrote a little computer program to calculate personal property depreciation things got a bit easier, and then a start-up that eventually became BS&A automated the entire property tax system statewide, revolutionizing the work of assessing. Another big change came with Proposal A in the 1980s, which tied property taxes to the overall



Warming up for retirement on a golf course in Chelsea with granddaughter Della

rate of inflation. Jim recalled that, "before Prop A, a homeowner's property taxes might go up 18 percent in a single year, and there would be 500 people at the Board of Review."

Jim calls his early experience with computers "lucky." Like many of his generation, coming into an organization knowing a little bit about computers eventually turned him into "the IT person" on staff. Being responsible for all the computers, software, database management, GIS mapping, and cyber security for the Township staff and Board might be considered a full-time position on its own, but Jim has been doing all that alongside his work as chief assessor, a feat made possible because of what Jim calls "the Dream Team" back in Assessing, Andrea Garrett and Bill Aili. Moreover, Jim has enjoyed the variety that working both jobs enabled. He also notes that wearing multiple hats is common in the Township, as the staff has always been small. And when all this cerebral

work got to be too much, he recalls with a laugh that he occasionally went out to another department to help them stuff envelopes or do other kinds of simple tasks.

Jim is also a lifelong musician and has played violin and viola in the Ann Arbor and Plymouth symphonies and worked as a church organist. These days he can be seen playing piano and keyboards in local rock-and-roll, Motown, and blues bands around the area. His wife of 10 years, Lisa, is a retired music teacher, and in his retirement the two of them are looking forward to catching up on the vacations they had to cancel due to COVID, including trips to Italy and Hawaii. They hope to walk across Spain next year in an adventure called the Camino de Santiago. Jim has three daughters from his first marriage, and 5 grandchildren, with one more on the way. Clearly, he has a busy and well-deserved retirement to look forward to.

Please join the staff and the Board of Trustees in thanking Jim for his many years of service and wishing him many vacation adventures during his retirement.

ONE MORE GOODBYE

This fall Township staff will also say goodbye to Bill Aili, who has served as Associate Assessor under Jim Merte for 30 years. Bill asked me not to make a fuss over his retirement so I will only say this: During the summer of 2020, when other clerks were scrambling for plexiglass partitions to separate voters and election workers in polling places, Bill stepped in and made ours from scratch on his own time. Bill, you're a hero to the voters of Scio Township! (I hope that's not too much of a fuss. -MG)

SCIO UPDATE ON PARKS, PATHS, AND PRESERVES

Scio Township has partnered with other local organizations to secure a Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) grant from the USDA for \$74 million. The City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt Program led the effort to secure the funding for a coalition of eight other conservation organizations, including Scio Township. These nine organizations form the Lake Erie Conservation Partnership to support land and water conservation in the Huron and Raisin River watersheds. The participating organizations will match the \$74 million grant, resulting in more than \$15 million to invest in farmland preservation, water quality protection, and wildlife habitat improvements over five years.

Local conservation partners have protected more than 18,000 acres of land in Washtenaw County since 2000. "This long-term project to preserve land, water and farmland in Washtenaw County through projects is now in place," said Land Preservation Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board member Hob Calhoun. "It requires the right people and organizations doing the right things across many regional organizations. **We're proud to work in concert with our colleagues throughout the community to preserve the precious natural resources for the residents of Scio Township and Washtenaw County.**"

YOUR PARKS MILLAGE DOLLARS AT WORK

The **West Scio Preserve** will soon be sporting signage and a kiosk to welcome visitors and educate them about the features of this largely untouched preserve. Marked trails provide an opportunity for strolling through the area with abundant birdlife and a plethora of wildflowers such as jack-in-the-pulpit and trilliums.

The parking area for the **Marshall Park** trailhead on Zeeb Road is finished, and the design phase for installing a pavilion and trails is underway. We anticipate adding a pavilion and picnic areas convenient for bikers and hikers along the Zeeb Road Pathway.

Construction is also progressing on the parking area at the **Liberty Pond Nature Area**. The design of the parking lot has been revised to accommodate school buses. Local schools have used this nature area for instructional field trips for years. Trails throughout the 57-acre parcel will be laid out for a pleasant walk around the pond and prairie area, providing convenient opportunities to observe wildlife.

The **Sloan Preserve** on Baker Road is attracting a growing number of hikers who seek a pleasant walk through this undeveloped property near downtown Dexter.

MEET THE INTERNS!



Parks interns James Johnson (left) and Anna Cone

We're pleased to introduce two Parks interns from the University of Michigan's Ecosystems, Science and Management Master's program. Anna Cone, a native of Oregon, and James Johnson from Kentucky are one year into the two-year program. They will be at work for twenty weeks, focusing on the West Scio Preserve and the Liberty Pond Nature Area. Their mandate is to conduct a comprehensive survey of the existing birds, vegetation, amphibians, and reptiles that thrive in these locations. Their final report will offer a long-term plan for the restoration of areas where needed and strategies for eliminating non-native, invasive species. The millage that residents passed in August of last year provides the funds to create this internship program that will pay dividends to the community for years to come.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to use the skills we've learned to preserve and enhance the Scio Township properties that the community is fortunate to have access to,"

BY PATRICK MCLAUGHLIN (PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD) AND PATRICK SHIELDS (TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PLANNING COMMITTEE)

said Anna Cone. "It's my passion to work at the intersection of environmental justice and land care management." "It's gratifying to see the enthusiasm for our work from the residents we have encountered in the field," added James Johnson. "It's apparent there is a love of the parks and preserves, and I'm proud to contribute in the effort to make certain Scio Township retains its natural beauty and charm."

Please welcome Anna and James to our community and say hello if you meet them while out in the parks and preserves. We are fortunate to have the dedication and commitment of these two interns in a win-win situation for them and the residents of Scio Township.

SATURDAYS AT SCIO PRESERVES

Come and hike Scio Township's new preserves with local residents who serve as members of the Land Preservation Commission and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Explore and enjoy the natural areas that Scio residents have purchased and developed with funding from the Open Space millage and the Parks and Pathways millage. Saturday mornings, 10-11:30.

July 10: **See the Shingle Oaks & Other Trees** at Marshall Park, walk over from Township Hall

August 7: **What's at the End of Dino Drive?** West Scio Preserve, park is located at 317 Dino Drive

September 11: **Water and Wildlife** at Liberty Pond Nature Area, meet at the parking lot at the intersection of Wildwood Lane and West Liberty Road

Reserve your place by emailing ScioParksandRec@ScioTownship.org.

Volunteers from the Land Preservation Commission and the Parks Advisory Board met on an April Saturday to clean up refuse at the West Scio Preserve on Dino Drive.



Construction began in early June on Phase III of the Zeeb Road Pathway. A short video is on the township website with construction details and a brief overview of the project. Many thanks to all the Zeeb Road neighbors who gave the easements to make the Pathway a reality.

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF INVASIVE STILTGRASS IN SCIO

Stiltgrass was first documented in Scio in 2017. By 2018 it was also found on public areas around the Township, leading to the formation of the Stiltgrass Working Group, a collaboration of landowners, land managers, and conservation organizations. Grants were written. Stiltgrass coordinators were hired; interns and volunteers mapped the spread. Thousands of acres have been surveyed, mapped, and treated with herbicide either by homeowners or professionals.

Stiltgrass is an annual that can grow anywhere—full sun or deep shade, moist or dry soil. This floppy grass sends additional roots from the leaf nodes (hence, stiltgrass) and can sprawl many feet. One plant can produce 100-1,000 seeds by late August/early September. Seeds are very lightweight and easily washed downhill. Lawns of stiltgrass can set seed at 3



Stiltgrass with distinctive mid-leaf stripe

inches. Stiltgrass has no natural predators—even starving goats won't eat it. It quickly overtakes native and ornamental vegetation. Lawnmowers, deer, and hikers' boots are all implicated in the spread of this invasive.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

As we emerge to more normal sociability, this is a great time to explore your neighborhood, parks, and natural areas. Woodland edges are

BY STILTGRASS WORKING GROUP OF WASHTENAW COUNTY

a good place to spot infestations. To learn more, go to annarbor.wildones.org/stiltgrass. If you think you have seen stiltgrass, send a photo and precise location to washtenawstiltgrass@gmail.com.

HOMEOWNER TREATMENT OPTIONS

A few treatment options are available, depending on the size and location of the stiltgrass population. Spraying stiltgrass with a glyphosate-based herbicide at very low concentrations will kill the stiltgrass while limiting impact to native, perennial plants (follow herbicide label directions). For smaller populations, hand-pulling is effective, but needs to be done several times throughout the stiltgrass growing season. Bag and trash or burn; do not compost. Clean your boots.

SEEKING VOLUNTEERS FOR TASK FORCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

HOW CAN SCIO EMBRACE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY? WITH YOUR HELP!

The Planning Commission is seeking diverse Scio residents and business owners, representing all parts of the Township, who would like to contribute their environmental knowledge and passion to the Planning Commission's newly forming Task Force on Environmental Sustainability.

The Task Force will develop the Township's first Environmental Sustainability Plan as part of the 5-year Master Plan revision currently underway (see update p. 11). The Task Force is charged with formulating specific sustainability

and climate goals, including goals for energy efficiency, renewable energy, carbon neutrality, and resiliency. In addition, recognizing the need for regional collaboration, the Task Force will connect with neighboring communities.

The Task Force will consider how to incorporate sustainability into new or revised ordinances, as well as assessing Township operations, to identify opportunities and practices for reducing energy use and carbon emissions and benefiting the environment. A draft plan should be ready to submit to the Planning Commission by the summer of 2022.

Assisting the Task Force are two interns, who will compile information about sustainability and climate plans of nearby and model communities, and identify key components that could be adapted for Scio's use. Please join us in welcoming our interns:

BY JACQUELINE COURTEAU, TRUSTEE,
JAN CULBERTSON, PLANNING
COMMISSION CHAIR, AND
JANE VOGEL, TRUSTEE



Sustainability intern **Katie Portz** was born and raised in Ann Arbor and graduated from Texas A&M in 2020 with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration. She is now working to obtain her Master of Science in Environment and Sustainability at University of Michigan. To relax, she likes to open water swim and go backpacking on the weekends.

If you are a Scio resident and are interested in contributing your environmental vision, passion, and expertise to the Task Force, please **send a letter of interest and a resume or description of your qualifications to Planning Commission Chair Jan Culbertson (PCChair@ScioTownship.org) by July 12.**

We anticipate that the Task Force and its associated Technical Advisory Groups will meet twice a month for the first year, then assess a future meeting structure based on progress and needs.



Sustainability intern **Michelle Black** is a rising second-year Master's student at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability. Her research area focuses on the intersection between organizational change and environmental/sustainability strategy. In her free time, she enjoys gardening and spending time with her cat.

FIREWORKS

Love it or hate it, fireworks season is upon us. The Scio Township Board of Trustees has granted permission for two fireworks displays this year: a private display at 6620 Dexter-Ann Arbor Road on July 3, and a public display on Midland Drive between Bridgeway Lake and Greenoak Lake on June 26 or 27 (weather dependent). Whether you will be close enough to see either display, you and your loved ones, including those sensitized by loud noises (including pets), may be likely to hear them. If you are thinking of shooting off fireworks yourself, remember that fireworks in Scio are restricted to the day before, the day of, and the day after a national holiday, and may not be released from the hours of 1 to 8 am. Please take care of yourselves, your loved ones, and your neighbors during this holiday season, either by enjoying fireworks displays at the allowable times and dates, or by avoiding them.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The Planning Commission is continuing its work updating the Township Master Land Use Plan, which presents a vision for the Township's future growth and development. In June, the Board of Trustees approved the distribution of the document for public comment. This officially commences the 63-day public comment period required by state law. Adjacent communities, county agencies, utilities, and railroads are required to be notified

and sought for comments. The draft document is also available on the Township website for review and comment by the general public. All comments and suggestions are welcome, and should be directed to the Planning Commission at 827 North Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor, MI 48103, or via email at PlanningCommission@SciOTownship.org. After the required public comment period, the Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing before adoption of the document.

BY LAURA KREPS,
TOWNSHIP PLANNING CONSULTANT

Based on the current timeline, we anticipate the public hearing will take place in August 2021. Please watch the Township website for more information on the Master Plan update, how to review and submit comments, and the finalized public hearing date.

PERSONALIZED RECYCLING HELP IS ON THE WAY!

Scio Township is a member of WRRMA, the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority, a group of seven municipalities working to improve recycling in Washtenaw County. This summer, **WRRMA will be conducting a Recycling Quality Improvement Program.** The program aims to reduce contaminants (items that can't be recycled) to ensure your recycling efforts pay off in terms of useable recyclable materials. This is part of a statewide effort to increase the recycling rate and quality, to decrease the costs of recycling, and to attract manufacturers who use recycled materials.

The Recycling Quality Improvement educational campaign kicks off with a postcard of recycling information mailed to you. You've already received a recycling flyer from GFL, this flyer is a simpler version for use across all WRRMA communities that also introduces the Quality Improvement program. Feel free to use whichever flyer works best for you, either the detailed list from GFL or WRRMA's quick-reference guide.

Next, a team of recycling checkers will quickly glance at each single-family home's cart on four curbside recycling days, starting in mid-June. These trained staff will provide individualized feedback based on what they find: contaminants in your recycling can spoil other

materials in the recycling truck, reducing their value. Contaminants like batteries can cause fires, and items like plastics bags and hoses get tangled in processing machinery. **Cleaner recycling will help ensure the materials you recycle (and pay to recycle!) are ultimately able to be recycled, benefiting us all.**

During these quick checks, if something in your recycling cart does not belong there, the trained workers will leave an orange "oops" tag with feedback on how to improve your recycling. If it happens again, your recycling cart will not be collected that week. Another tag, this time red, will tell you what contamination needs to be removed from your recycling for it to be picked up on the next collection date. **A hotline number is listed on each tag, call this number with any questions or concerns: 734/222-3920.**

Michigan is investing in both local recycling systems and manufacturers who use recycled materials. The Recycling Quality Improvement Program is funded by a grant from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and The Recycling Partnership, a company that has coordinated this program in over 80 locales across the US. For more information about the program, what can be recycled curbside, or alternate locations for hard-to-recycle materials, visit WRRMA's website at www.wrrma.org.

BY ISABELLA GARRAMONE, WASHTENAW
COUNTY DIVISION OF PUBLIC WORKS

PREVENT HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS

- Drink more fluids (avoid sugary or alcoholic drinks)
- Limit outdoor activities to morning and evening, when it's coolest
- Spend time indoors in air conditioning
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, and loose-fitting clothing
- Wear sunscreen, as sunburn affects the body's ability to cool down
- Check on elderly neighbors and relatives to determine if they need assistance.

For those without access to air conditioning, text or call Michigan 211 or contact your local health department to find out if there is a cooling center nearby. You can also spend some time at an air-conditioned store, shopping mall or other public building – even a few hours spent in air conditioning can help (source: MDHHS).



Scio Township Hall
827 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

To Scio Neighbor

USEFUL CONTACT INFO

TOWNSHIP HALL AND CLERK'S OFFICE

827 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 369-9400
info@sciotownship.org
clerk@sciotownship.org
website: **sciotownship.org**
newsletter@sciotownship.org
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In Scio:
Regular business hours (734) 369-9350
After-hours emergencies: (734) 651-4770
In Dexter: (734) 426-4572
(with after-hours automated triage)
In Loch Alpine:
Water or sewer emergencies. . . (248) 433-8904
Non-emergencies (517) 715-9739
Account Management/Billing
(office hours M-F, 5-8 p.m) . . . (734) 433-0835

FIRE DEPARTMENT

For emergencies 911
Business line (734) 655-6001

WASHTENAW COUNTY

Water Resources
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drains@ewashtenaw.org

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wrc@wcroads.org

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