

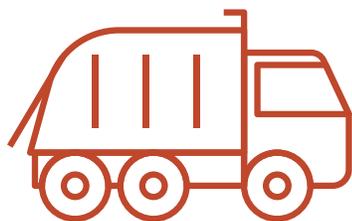


FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK

TRASH TALK

The Board of Trustees adopted the ordinance establishing a single waste-hauler in July 2020, and the contract with GFL Environmental—signed just days before I and the rest of the newly-elected officers were sworn-in in November—went into effect in January of this year. There are obvious benefits to be gained from the single waste-hauler model. Fewer trips by heavy trucks means less wear-and-tear on Township roads and reduced pollution. In addition, the agreement with GFL extended curbside recycling to every household in Scio Township, an important, positive step. And for some residents, the quarterly fee for GFL service is lower than they previously paid.

Unfortunately, the transition to a single waste-hauler has not been without problems. GFL informs us that they, like other waste haulers, are experiencing a labor shortage. Some residents have experienced significant service failures as a result. **While the unexpected challenges faced by GFL are understandable, they don't excuse GFL from its responsibilities to honor the contract and provide the specified services.** The Township's contract with GFL includes a provision for "stipulated financial charges for violations." I recently sent a letter

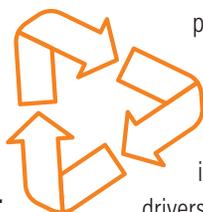


to GFL in which I raised the possibility of imposing the charges for violations. However, I first offered to work with them to eliminate the problems that were resulting in complaints.

And GFL is stepping up: Scio Township residents frequently complain about the long wait to speak with a GFL customer service representative. To shorten the wait times, GFL is adding a customer service position dedicated to handling Scio Township complaints. To help the Township monitor progress, GFL will provide us with monthly customer service reports.

WHAT ABOUT RECYCLING?

One service failure that causes alarm is mixing recyclables with trash. Several residents have contacted me after witnessing GFL drivers picking up trash and recycling with the same truck. I raised this issue with GFL General Manager Nadeem Syed, who stated: "The policy for GFL is not to mix trash and recycle and we take this seriously. ... If your residents come across this and get evidence that this is happening, we will discipline the drivers accordingly." The Township website has a new, online form to receive comments about GFL service issues, and a photo or other documentation of the issue can be attached.



BY WILL HATHAWAY, SUPERVISOR

This will help us to respond to resident complaints more efficiently and track complaint trends over time. (Find the GFL Feedback Form at ScioTownship.org/Community.) If you call Township Hall with your complaint at (734) 369-9400, a GFL Feedback Form will be completed on your behalf.

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Scio Township residents care about recycling and actions your Board has taken reflect that. We are one of seven communities participating in the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority (WRRMA), a recycling cooperative at work to improve the quality of recycling and access to markets for recyclables. And through the Township Planning Commission's recently launched Sustainability Task Force we are seeking wide-ranging ways the Township can do its part to protect the environment and maintain the livability of our planet.

Our partnership with GFL is an important part of our commitment to environmental sustainability. The Township and GFL partnered on a mailing to all Township residents in March 2021 that included Recycling Guidelines. And this summer, the Township participated in a county-wide Recycling Quality Improvement

Program, during which your recycling bins were examined for signs of contamination. In the context of recycling, "contamination" means materials that are not recyclable mixed in with those that are. (For more on the results of this survey, see Recycling Update, p. 6).

The good news is that the audit indicates recycling contamination in Scio is less than 10 percent by volume. County Public Works Director Theo Eggermont, who oversaw the Quality Improvement Program, commented: "A less than 10 percent contamination rate is considered a very low contamination rate."

Many residents have asked when the recycling drop-off service that used to be held monthly behind Township Hall will be re-instituted. Trustee Jacqueline Courteau and I have been discussing this with Bryan Weinert of Recycle Ann Arbor (RAA), the organization that ran the monthly recycle effort with the help of resident volunteers. Unfortunately, RAA isn't able to

re-start the monthly drop-off as it existed prior to the pandemic. Instead, Bryan has proposed issuing vouchers to residents for recyclables that are currently not accepted by GFL (e.g. plastic bags, Styrofoam, construction debris, etc.). The drop-off location would be the Recycle Ann Arbor Recovery Yard at the former Calverts site on Jackson Road. We hope to have a proposal for consideration by the Board of Trustees this fall.

REUSE OPTIONS IN SCIO TOWNSHIP

- Habitat for Humanity Re-Store
- Kiwanis
- Share House
- Westside Consignment

GFL CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Phone: (844) 464-3587
- Email: gflcustomerservice@gflenv.com
- Website: gflenv.com

YOUR REPRESENTATIVES ON THE FEDERAL PFAS BILL

The US House of Representatives passed the bipartisan PFAS Action Act on July 21. The bill will head to the Senate, where it enjoys bipartisan support but faces obstacles from some Senate Republicans. Representatives Debbie Dingell (whose district includes eastern Scio) and Fred Upton (District 6) of Michigan co-sponsored the legislation in response to the crisis of PFAS contamination across the country. Congressman Tim Walberg (whose district includes western

Scio), voted against the Act. Both US Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters have spoken out against PFAS pollution.

Among other provisions, the PFAS Action Act would require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement a drinking water standard for PFAS, provide funding to municipal water systems, support cleanup efforts, and put in place standards for discharging PFAS into the environment. It would also provide specific guidance for first responders to limit their

potential exposure in emergency situations. (Source: HRWC)

PFAS are highly toxic "forever chemicals" that are pervasive in the environment and are present in the Huron River. The PFAS Action Act would set the initial standards to keep some of the most widespread PFAS compounds out of the environment and away from people. This newsletter contains contact information for your representatives in the House and Senate (see back cover).

COMMUNICATION IMPEDIMENTS

Recent changes to Michigan law allow residents to add a communication impediment designation to their driving record to help ensure better, safer interactions with law enforcement. **If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or autistic, you may request that a special "communication impediment" designation** be placed on your Secretary of State record to notify law enforcement about your specific communication needs. The designation is voluntary and is not printed on your driver's license, state ID card, or vehicle registration. It can only be viewed by law enforcement when accessing your record in the event of a traffic stop or an emergency. "Alerting law enforcement to the needs of the citizens they interact with helps ensure the safety and comfort of everyone involved," said Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson. To make this request, which must be signed by a medical professional, search for "Communication Impediment," or Form BFS-250 at Michigan.gov, or pick up a form at the front desk of Township Hall.

CLERK'S COLUMN

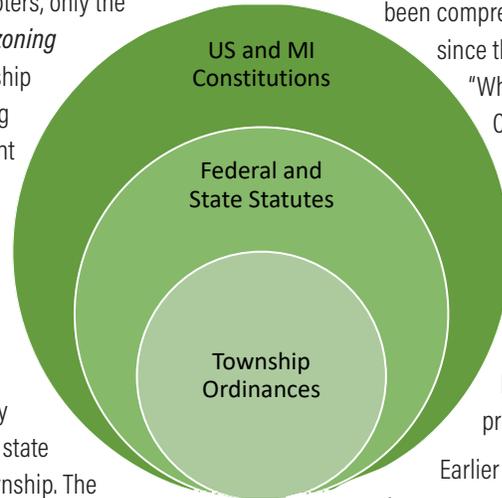
BY JESSICA FLINTOFT, CLERK

RULES OF ORDER

Like bylaws, Rules of Order provide guideposts for how the Board of Trustees receives and hears information, how it deliberates in open meetings with the public on proposed actions, and how it records and publishes its activities. While Rules of Order must conform to our Constitutions and statutes, the Rules themselves do not have the force of law—ultimately being adopted via Board resolution. **As shown in the Chart, the Township is empowered to take only the actions permitted by state law.** Board of Trustees meetings are Township meetings *with* residents and other interested public—who may choose to participate via Zoom, phone, or in-person here at Township Hall. Unwritten norms and traditions have long guided the various Boards of trustees to work effectively and efficiently together, but no official Rules of Order have ever been adopted in Scio. As we mature our Township governance to meet the expectations of our residents, the Board of Trustees will soon deliberate on proposed written Rules of Order at an upcoming regular meeting (held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 pm), or possibly at a Special Meeting (date to be announced).

RECODIFICATION

The Board of Trustees adopts new laws regularly; these laws are called ordinances and have force and effect within the Township. Once enacted, these ordinances are organized into the Scio Township Code of Ordinances. Currently organized into 36 Chapters, only the 36th Chapter contains *zoning ordinances*. The Township regularly adopts zoning ordinances in alignment with the Master Plan and enabled by the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act. Chapters 1 through 35 are all *general ordinances*, enabled by the police powers that state law extends to the Township. The Township may enact these ordinances to "secure the public health, safety, and general welfare of persons and property" (*MCL 41*). These 35 Chapters cover a range of aspects of Township life, including: Alcoholic Liquors, Businesses, Environment, Fire Prevention, Private Roads, and Telecommunications.



Scio Township's Code of Ordinances was last adopted and enacted as a whole more than 12 years ago. Over that time, controlling state and federal laws have changed—and the resulting effects on our local laws have not been comprehensively reviewed since then. (See, for example, "What's In Our Sign Ordinance?" p. 7) The best practice for Townships is to recodify at least every 10 years to ensure that our local ordinances keep up with current laws and residents' priorities.

Earlier this year, our Township Attorney started combing through our Code of Ordinances to draft proposed amendments so that they conform with current state and federal laws. Beginning at regular Board meetings in October, I plan to bring sets of Chapters to the Board so that we may identify policy areas within ordinances that should be examined, and direct certain advisory committees and management staff to study and propose additional amendments. Working each Chapter through deliberation, the Board of Trustees should have a fully updated Code of Ordinances to consider for adoption by spring 2022.

We invite all of you to participate in the process of reviewing and refreshing the local laws we enact for the betterment of all of us in the Township. A link to the current Code may be found under Laws and Policies at SciOTownship.org/Democracy. Contact the Board of Trustees by email at TownshipBoard@SciOTownship.org or give us a call at (734) 369-9400 to share your thoughts.

SCIO GROWTH AND THE CENSUS DATA

Early data from the 2020 Census indicates that Washtenaw County grew over the last decade by 8 percent, and became, as was seen elsewhere in the state, slightly more diverse, with the percentage of population identifying as white falling from 72.1 percent in 2010 to 67.8 percent in 2020. Michigan as a whole gained only 2 percent in population since 2010, however, pushing our numbers over the 10 million mark but dropping our state from eighth place to tenth in the nation for population size. Officially, Scio Township is among the majority of Michigan jurisdictions that lost population over the last decade, but since the Village of Dexter became a city in 2014, withdrawing its population of more than 4,000 from Scio (and from Webster) Townships' numbers, that statistic appears to mask the actual growth we see all around us.



LETTER FROM THE FIRE CHIEF

BY ANDREW HOUDE, CHIEF
SCIO TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT

With life taking on the quality of a new normal that includes COVID 19 for the near future, the Fire Department is planning to re-start the annual Halloween Open House event this year. We will have masks and hand sanitizer readily available and will be structuring the event differently than previous years. Most activities will be held outdoors, though guided walk-throughs of the renovated interior of the fire station will be available to small groups. We know that some people may have a higher comfort level than others and some may choose not to attend this year. We do ask that if you plan on attending but feel ill, please stay home this year, we will see you next year.

The Halloween Open House, held on October 24, will be a great opportunity for Scio residents to see how their fire station has been modernized. **As this article is being written, the station renovations are nearing completion.** The floors are going in, tile work is being completed, and the ceiling tiles are being placed. The electricians are installing lights, light switches,

and outlets. Your firefighters are looking forward to getting back inside the firehouse, a space that will be more usable and accommodate our needs much better than the old building did. And the roof won't leak anymore! The whole fire team is grateful to Scio taxpayers for their support in providing a safe, efficient, and accessible firehouse for us to work in.

Autumn brings cooler temperatures, beautiful fall colors, and the annual changing of the clocks for the end of Daylight Savings Time (this year on November 7). **This year, when you change your clocks, check your smoke detectors and change the battery.** Then inspect your smoke detectors for dust or debris in the sensing chamber, the small area that lets air in, using a brush or compressed air to clean it out if needed. This simple maintenance is enough to keep your smoke detectors working over their lifespan, which is 10 years from the manufacture date or date installed. Replacing your old smoke

detectors allows you to take advantage of the latest technology, which makes them less prone to false alarms, and allows them to detect fire earlier.

If your smoke detectors go into alarm, get everyone out of the house immediately and call 911. Designate a meeting place and practice how to react when the smoke detectors go off, especially if you have children in the home. Home fires grow rapidly, so giving your fire department early notification of a fire is important to reduce the damage that can be caused.

We may only think of our smoke detectors when we are a little overzealous cooking, but if we remember to do a little annual maintenance, they have the best chance of doing their job keeping our families and our homes safe.



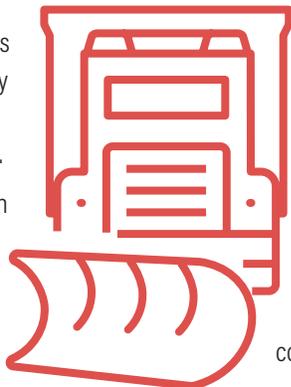
ROADS: FALL INTO WINTER

BY EMILY KIZER, WASHTENAW COUNTY
ROAD COMMISSION

It has been another tremendously busy road construction season in Scio Township this year. After running into some delays last winter, three major projects were completed on Miller Rd this summer. In addition, Baker Rd and Joy Rd were seal-coated, helping to protect these new pavements for years to come. This fall, we plan to wrap up our safety improvement project on Wagner Road in Scio and Lodi Townships. Although the construction season winds down in the fall, there is still plenty of work to do. WCRC crews are busy providing routine maintenance such as grading

unpaved roads and patching potholes. We have also started preparing for winter. You may see our big orange snowplows driving around your neighborhood in the coming weeks as part of our annual "dry run." It's a chance for our snowplow drivers to relearn their snow routes and fine-tune everything on their truck.

Lastly, we're excited to say that snowplows have been dropped off to local schools across the county, including Creekside Elementary, as a part of our Paint-a-Plow Program. We can't wait to see what this year's artists will come up with!



HALLOWEEN PARTY AT THE FIRE STATION



DATE: OCTOBER 24
TIME: 1-4PM
**LOCATION: SCIO TOWNSHIP
FIRE STATION
1055 N ZEEB**
**ACTIVITIES: PETTING ZOO
PONY RIDES
MAGICIAN
STATION TOURS**



Come see the renovations to your fire station!!



RECYCLING UPDATE

BY RENA MCROY, WRRMA INTERN

You may have seen the recycling cart taggers walking through your neighborhood this summer, helping WRRMA (the Washtenaw Regional Resource Management Authority) learn what obstacles remain to effective recycling in Scio. They identified a major source of recyclers' confusion – plastic bag and plastic films. Plastic films are items like air pillows, product wrappings from water bottles and paper towels, bubble wrap, and produce bags. Of the recycling carts that had contamination (items that are not recyclable), 89 percent of them had plastic bags or plastic film!

Plastic bags and plastic film are recyclable, but not in your curbside cart. Plastic bags and plastic film tangle in the machines at the recycling sorting facilities, which slows down operations and creates a safety risk for workers who must cut the tangled bags and film out of the machine.

The remedy for the problem of plastic bags and film is a classic one: Reduce, Re-use, Recycle. Avoid plastic packaging and bags where you can by choosing reusable substitutes over single-use plastics. Saving and reusing items like plastic grocery bags can reduce the need to make or buy more plastics. Even after reducing and re-using, you may still have plastic bags

or plastic film you need to dispose of, so do it responsibly by recycling them at drop-off locations. **Many stores, such as Meijer, Kroger, Target, and Wal-Mart, maintain plastic bag and plastic film recycling bins in their front entryway.** PlasticFilmRecycling.org has an online directory for finding nearby drop-off locations like these, as well as educational resources to learn more. When plastic bags and film are recycled properly, they can be repurposed into useful items like composite lumber instead of ending up in a landfill, polluting the environment, or causing problems at recycling facilities.

A WORD ABOUT WATER

BY STEVE WYZGOSKI,
UTILITIES DIRECTOR

Scio residents on municipal water and sewer will have noticed that their bill went up this fall. The Board of Trustees took this action based on analyses conducted by the Woodhill Group, a Michigan company of financial and accounting consultants to business and governments. Scio Township recently contracted with the Woodhill Group to review billing procedures, fee schedules, and to perform a rate-study of the Township's water utilities. Rate studies are normal procedure for public utilities and Scio has been long overdue for one.

In a well-organized public utility, the amount customers are charged covers the cost to purchase the product and service the debt incurred to build the delivery infrastructure. In our case, the amount we were charging customers was insufficient to cover the purchase cost of water from the City of Ann Arbor, and Reserve Funds and Connection Charges (for new-construction hookups) were used to make up the difference. A better system would be to have Connection Charges go to a fund for Capital Improvements, such as replacing or doing maintenance on

aging infrastructure or building additional infrastructure. For example, the Township's five-year plan calls for both water tower maintenance and a new water main and valves at Liberty Road. Finally, the Water Debt Charge customers see on their utility bills, which is principal and interest on the loan taken out to construct the original water infrastructure, was insufficient to cover payments and had to be supplemented every month out of the Reserve Fund. This arrangement was determined to be unsustainable.

Woodhill made several suggestions that have been implemented to streamline the billing and collections processes for Water and Sewer, realizing some savings. A fee schedule was proposed so that only those customers requiring special services (such as water turn-offs) pay for those services and the Board of Trustees agreed that these fees should no longer be absorbed by all users of the system. These savings only offset some of the shortfall in operating costs. So, additionally, the commodity charge (usage), is being raised to cover the increased purchase cost from the City of Ann Arbor.

On September 1, 2021, the water usage rate increased from \$8.18/1000 gallons to \$8.39/1000 gallons and the sewer rate increased from \$9.86/1000 gallons to \$10.39/1000 gallons. Both fees and rates will be updated annually in April, starting in 2022. Look for this information and more under Water and Sewer Services at ScioTownship.org/Community.

BECOME A VOLUNTEER SCIENTIST

Community members (ordinary people like you and me) can collect valuable data and observations for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. From finding big trees or counting birds to spotting invasive species or testing water quality, find ways you can help at michigan.gov/dnrvolunteers and look under the heading Wildlife Observations.

WHAT'S IN OUR SIGN ORDINANCE?

Perhaps you have noticed some new billboards in Scio that seem different: bigger or more visually intrusive. The first thing to know about this situation is that the Board of Trustees is aware of these signs and aware that many residents are concerned about them. This is the story of those signs and the evolution of the law governing billboards in the Township, a story that is still in progress.

THE NEW BILLBOARD ON I-94

Located on the south side of I-94 where Staebler Road ends (visible to eastbound traffic), this billboard at this location is the result of litigation between the owner of the billboard and Scio Township. The litigation started when a similar billboard was denied by the Township because it did not meet our current zoning standards. After the initial denial of the billboard a lawsuit was brought and an agreement was entered into between the billboard owner and the Township resulting in the sign you see on I-94. The lawsuit revealed some vulnerabilities in our current sign ordinance. These vulnerabilities resulted in a recommendation from the Township Attorney to update our sign ordinance.

THE NEW BILLBOARD AT THE INTERSECTION OF LIBERTY AND WAGNER ROADS

Many of you who regularly travel through the Liberty and Wagner Road intersection may have been surprised to see a new billboard located on the northeast corner and wondered how it got there. In this case, the zoning compliance

application met the standards for a billboard at that specific location and the Township had no discretion but to approve the application. The background here is that anyone who wants to erect a billboard in the Township must complete a Zoning Compliance Application, including a plot plan and additional details about their proposal. This is the same process a homeowner must go through when they want to put an addition on their home, construct a deck, or remodel their home. **If the application meets all current standards of the Zoning Ordinance the zoning official must approve the Zoning Compliance Application.** There is no discretionary authority to deny a zoning request if it meets all current standards contained in the zoning ordinance. It is not a matter of "like or dislike" but rather a matter of meeting or not meeting the zoning standards. In this case all standards were met and thus it was approved.

REVISIONS TO THE EXISTING SCIO TOWNSHIP SIGN REGULATIONS

Driven by the lawsuit that resulted in the billboard on I-94 and a precedent-setting Supreme Court decision, a revision to the Township sign ordinance was embarked upon by the Planning Commission. Most of the proposed amendments address the issue of content neutrality, which was the subject of the *U.S. Supreme Court Reed v. Gilbert* decision. According to that decision, local sign ordinances cannot regulate the content or actual message of a sign. In the majority opinion the court stated, "government

BY DOUGLAS J. LEWAN, TOWNSHIP PLANNER,
CARLISLE/WORTMAN ASSOC. INC.

regulation of speech is content based if a law applies to particular speech because of the topic discussed or the idea or message expressed." Creating a sign ordinance that is fully content neutral is no easy task. For example, a real estate sign can no longer be referred to as a real estate sign in the Ordinance. In addition to addressing content neutrality, proposed revisions to the ordinance address issues such as the amount of light that comes from a sign (to reduce off-site glare), and electronic message signs (to prevent driver distraction). A public hearing on the draft ordinance was held in August. The next step in the adoption of the ordinance will be for the Planning Commission to review the most current draft and recommend it to the Township Board for their adoption.

We hope this summary clarifies some of the recent concerns regarding signs within the Township. Should there be other questions please feel free to call the Township offices (734-369-9400) and ask to speak with me.

STORMY WEATHER

"In our watershed, we've seen extreme weather events amplified by climate change. With the first wave of major storms that flooded much of Southeast Michigan this summer, we went from a moderate drought in June to above-normal water levels overnight. Since then, we've been hit with two other storms that have dropped around 3-4 inches of rain within 12- to 24-hours. That means we have seen at least three '50-year storms' in the past three months. At this point, our past climate is no more."

-Daniel Brown, Huron River Watershed Council

"If we rapidly decarbonize our economy and recalibrate our infrastructure for a changing climate, the Great Lakes region is positioned to withstand climate change better than the world's arid and coastal regions."

- Kelly House, Bridge Michigan

Find programs and services for older adults and their caregivers on the new Calendar of Events published by Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County. Events and activities are organized by local community agencies in the Resource Directory at getaheadwashtenaw.org.

TAPping INTO THE FUTURE

During the pandemic, many Scio residents were reminded of the inherent value of walking in the woods or cycling with family and friends and began to explore the new parks in the Township. The goal of Scio's Transportation Alternatives Planning (TAP) Committee is to provide residents with non-motorized paths to safely move through the community. **This fall we are seeing two significant advances in the long-term pathway goals of the Township.** This is a good time to review how we got here and describe how we will move forward.

PARKLAND PLAZA

This fall, a six-foot-wide ADA-compliant sidewalk will be built on the west site of Parkland Plaza, extending from Jackson Road south to the entrance of the new ScioView neighborhood. There will be a painted bike lane on both Parkland Plaza and Eagle Point Drive (south side), giving residents from cohousing and the Lakestone apartments safe access to the sidewalk and from there out to the rest of the Township. The sidewalk will also make safe the passage of busriders to and from the businesses and homes in this area.

This type of "relatively simple" project is actually the culmination of more than five years of planning, design, and negotiations with affected businesses and neighborhoods. This particular

sidewalk was made possible because of our partners, including the University of Michigan Health System, Lakestone Apartments, Parkland Plaza Senior Living, and the Downtown Development Authority as well as all the businesses along Parkland Plaza that granted easements.

ZEEB ROAD PATHWAY

A 2010 report on pedestrian pathways identified Wagner Road as a good candidate for a north-south corridor through the Township for non-motorized traffic. But the costs in terms of lost trees and construction on a narrow right-of-way led TAP to select North Zeeb Road instead. That decision led to additional studies and developing consensus around this concept.

Subsequently, the route was designed, permits were filed and approved, money was secured from a variety of sources, easements were negotiated and signed, and contractors were hired. The Zeeb Road project has so far taken over 11 years, and this fall residents will see Phase III of this project completed, with the Pathway extending to about 1400 feet past Miller Road. **When complete, the Zeeb Road Pathway will enable cyclists and walkers to safely travel from Township Hall to the Border-to-Border Trail on Huron River Drive.**

Currently, design and engineering work on Phases IV and V, crossing the Huron River and connecting up to the B2B, are in process. A

BY PATRICK SHIELDS, TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PLANNING COMMITTEE

complex, multiphase project like the Zeeb Road Pathway can take as long as 15 years.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Work is actively under way to secure outside funding to leverage funds from the 2020 Parks and Pathways Millage to complete the remaining phases of the Zeeb Road Pathway within the next 3 to 5 years. For example, local engineering firm OHM is working on a federal grant for the bridge across the Huron River.

Having seen the future, residents have begun emailing TAP with their ideas for new pathways and sidewalks (TAPChair@sciotownship.org). We now face a new opportunity—identifying the next group of priority projects. TAP will spend the coming months engaging the public through a series of virtual and in-person meetings to identify possible pathway projects and priorities. TAP meets in Township Hall on the second Wednesday of each month from 4 to 5:30 pm. Find our agendas and Zoom links for virtual participation at ScioTownship.org under the tab Meetings. Email us or come to a meeting, we look forward to hearing from you!

OUR AIR QUALITY

The annual air quality report for the state of Michigan for 2020 was released by EGLE (Michigan Department of Environment Great Lakes and Energy) in August 2021. The entire state has attained National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Carbon monoxide, Lead, Nitrogen dioxide, and Particulate matter smaller than 10 and 2.5 microns. A small area along the southeastern edge of the state has not attained the air quality standard for Sulfur Dioxide; and several counties in the state, including Washtenaw, are out of attainment for Ozone. See daily air quality monitoring from the nearest monitoring station and throughout the state at deqmiair.org



GOT LEAVES?

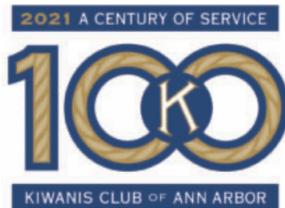
Rake 'em! GFL offers yard waste collection from April through December. Place a COMPOST sticker on a metal or plastic receptacle or use a brown yard-waste bag. Stickers are available at the front desk in Township Hall.

Leave 'em! Mulch leaves by running over them with your lawn mower at next cutting. Leaves and grass clippings are the best fertilizer for your lawn.

Or... **rake 'em and leave 'em!** Rake leaves into a compost pile for a nutrient-rich fertilizer to use on your garden next spring.

KIWANIS CLUB AT 100

The Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor celebrated its Centennial in June 2021, marking 100 years of service to the local area. The Club was located in downtown Ann Arbor for many years where it conducted activities including a rummage sale. In the 1960s the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor Foundation was established and the rummage sale grew to become the Kiwanis Thrift Sale as it is known today. The Thrift Sale sells donated goods and merchandise including furniture, clothing, antiques, hard-to-find items, and virtually every household item imaginable. Thrift Sale hours are Friday and Saturday from 9 am to 1 pm. Revenue from the Thrift Sale is returned to the community in the form of grants, gifts, direct giving to other nonprofits, and scholarships (through



our partnership with Washtenaw Community College). **Kiwanis has given over \$8.5 million dollars back to the community since the 1920s.**

In 2015 the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor Foundation purchased the 123,000 square-foot building complex at 100 N. Staebler Road in Scio Township and moved all operations there. In addition to the building, the Kiwanis Center site includes 8 acres that are designated for the Kiwanis Environmental Education Preserve (KEEP). The KEEP is envisioned as a site where Kiwanis and partnering educators and environmental groups will offer programs and research opportunities. The KEEP is planned to be a regional resource and demonstration project illustrating the effects of both good and bad land stewardship as well

BY MARGARET KRASNOFF, PRESIDENT,
KIWANIS CLUB OF ANN ARBOR AND
FOUNDATION

as the effects of climate change on wildlife and vegetation. The KEEP concept and design were prepared by a local landscape architect, and UM graduate students and faculty have been compiling inventories of flora and fauna in the preserve and conducting water analyses and site-mapping. Development of the KEEP is ongoing and will incorporate new realities for outdoor activities imposed by COVID. Next steps include finding additional project partners and applying for funding to complete various aspects of the KEEP.

For more information about the Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor and Foundation and the many opportunities to become involved in our activities as a member or volunteer, please visit a2kiwanis.org.

MICHIGAN FIRST IN THE NATION

Thanks to an agreement between the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and DTE Energy, part of Michigan's 3.9 million acres of state forest land now will yield carbon credits that will help DTE reduce its carbon footprint and add an estimated \$10 million in revenue to natural resource management. The pilot project offers a portfolio of carbon offset credits generated from sustainable forest management activities on more than 100,000 acres of the celebrated Pigeon River Country State Forest in the northern Lower Peninsula. **This project is the first of its kind in the nation to leverage the carbon storage capacity of trees in state forests.** A single tree can absorb as much as 48 pounds of carbon dioxide in a year. By the time a tree is 40 years old, it can store 1 ton of carbon. If these trees are then used to make long-lasting wood products, the carbon

BY SCOTT WHITCOMB, MICHIGAN
DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

they absorbed from the atmosphere is captured and "stored" within. Studies show carbon capture (sequestration) could contribute up to 30 percent of the global effort to reduce carbon in the atmosphere. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use, and enjoyment of the state's natural and cultural resources for current and future generations. Online at Michigan.gov/DNR.

"On average, every \$1 invested in land conservation leads to \$4 in economic benefit."

– Governor Gretchen Whitmer

A BEAUTIFUL WAY TO REDUCE WASTE

Instead of wrapping food, gifts, and other items in plastic wrap or wrapping paper that can't be recycled, embrace the Japanese tradition of *furoshiki*, a cloth-wrapping tradition from Japan that can be both a unique and meaningful addition to a gift and a clever way to avoid waste. Traditional, reusable *furoshiki* come in a wide variety of prints and fabrics, are available in boutiques or online, and are great for wrapping gifts. But *furoshiki* can also be used for everyday objects. Any square or slightly rectangular piece of fabric can be used. Whether thrifted or new, the fabric should be thick enough to support the weight of the object you want to wrap, but not too thick for tying in knots. (Source: [Earth 911.com](http://Earth911.com))

VIEW FROM A TRUSTEE

This is a new column offering a perspective on Township news from each of the four Trustees.

The Scio Township Board of Trustees is made up of seven elected officers: Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer, and four Trustees. Three of the four Trustees are new to the Board, and we are working up a learning curve and getting to know how best to serve Scio residents. It is an honor to serve on this Board which brings such a wide range of experience and expertise to our township.

HOW ARE TRUSTEE ROLES EVOLVING?

I thought it might be helpful to share how the roles of the Trustees are taking shape on this new Board. **Trustee Jacqueline Couteau** brings her deep expertise in the environment and forestry to her role as Board representative to the Land Preservation Commission, which works to both preserve open space (think farms and forest) and steward it over time to protect the rural character of Scio. Trustee Couteau is also the Board representative to the Planning Commission, and is co-leading the launch of the new Environmental Sustainability Task Force, along with Planning Commission Chair Jan Culbertson and myself. **Trustee Alec Jerome**, with his strong professional background, is Board representative to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, which is working to open Scio's preserves with new parking pads, trails, and signage. He also supports the Planning Commission and Land Preservation

Commission, drawing on close to 15 years as former Chair of both. As Trustee, I also draw on a long business career and serve as Board representative to Transportation Alternatives Planning Committee (think pathways) which I chaired for a number of years (See TAPping into the Future, p. 8). I am guiding the progress on the Zeeb Road Pathway and the Parkland Plaza sidewalk as well as efforts to secure federal, state, and county grants for Scio's pathways. **Trustee Kathleen Knol**, with long experience as a Trustee and former Clerk of the Township, continues to be a critical lead in the ongoing resolution of the Gelman Plume and is a passionate champion of issues our residents care deeply about.

WHAT HAVE WE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH IN RECENT MONTHS?

The Township staff is coming out of a two-year period without a manager and coping with the challenges of the COVID pandemic. Hearty thanks to the many who have stepped up to keep the Township running smoothly during this difficult interim period. The search for the new Township Administrator is on schedule and screening and interviews will happen in the coming weeks. The new Township Administrator, with the Supervisor, Treasurer, and Clerk, puts a strong leadership team in place for the Township.

In addition to the new Township Administrator,

BY TRUSTEE JANE VOGEL

the Board has been focused on four key staffing needs. With the retirement of our longtime Assessor Jim Merte, the new Township Assessor, Warsha Kulkarni, is now in place (see Spotlight p. 11). The hiring process is underway for a seasoned Human Resources professional, which was the number one need identified by an all-employee survey in early 2021. Given the passage of the Parks & Pathway Millage in 2020 the process is now underway to hire a Project Manager to support that work and leverage millage funds with outside grants. The search is also underway for a Deputy Treasurer to assist with a wide range of Treasurer responsibilities. See Employment Opportunities at ScioTownship.org for more information.

MANY THANKS TO SCIO RESIDENTS

I couldn't end without recognizing and thanking all of our residents who step forward to be of help in the Township. Scio is fortunate to have so many residents engaged in the many boards and commissions. There is such important work being done there. As a relatively new Trustee it's been so helpful to talk with many residents and get perspectives and input on a wide range of township issues, thank you. We are a well-rounded Board, a strong staff and together a great community.

STILTGRASS WORKING GROUP 2021 SEASON REPORT

Since it was first identified in Michigan in 2017, stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*) has become widespread in Scio Township, mainly on private properties. The Stiltgrass Working Group (SWG) has done outreach to residents living in the stiltgrass "hot zone," raising awareness of the new invasive, educating landowners about identification and control methods, and offering assistance with treatment. This season, SWG



conducted site visits at 88 properties to record populations in an online ArcGIS map with help from interns from the Huron River Watershed

BY CHLOE HERNANDEZ
STILTGRASS COORDINATOR

Council. Of these 88 properties, 68 had stiltgrass and 49 were treated at no cost to the property owners with help from our partners at PlantWise Restoration, LLC. These efforts received Township funding through a budget allocation by the Board of Trustees. Find more resources related to stiltgrass management on our Facebook page, [@washtenawstiltgrass](https://www.facebook.com/washtenawstiltgrass).

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: WARSHA KULKARNI, TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR

The staff of Scio Township extends a warm welcome to Warsha Kulkarni, our new chief assessor. Warsha comes to Scio from Bloomfield Township in Oakland County, where she has worked for 22 years. She was inspired to earn her Level 4 assessor certification by her own advice to her children, whom she always encouraged to branch out and never stop learning. So she was ready to apply when Jim Merte, who has been our head assessor since 1980, announced his impending retirement after 43 years earlier this summer.

Warsha's intention is to follow Jim's lead in welcoming the opportunity to personally explain property assessments to residents. She says, "I gladly invite all corrections to the record, and recognize the possibility of errors. **I was a single mom and I understand that money can be tight, and every dollar matters.**" She invites any concerned resident to speak with



her "if you feel your taxes are too high. I will help if I am able according to federal guidelines." Warsha explains that all assessing activity is bound by the Federal Property Tax Act, and the

BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR

schedule mandated by law. She goes on to say that the premise of assessments is "equal and fair—nothing is personal."

Warsha came to Michigan in 1971 from India, was raised, educated, and married here, and in turn raised her children here in Michigan. She has two adult children of whom she is very proud: her daughter is a pediatrician and her son, with a business degree from U-M, works in Charlotte, NC. She has one grandchild and another on the way. In her spare time, she enjoys scrapbooking, quilting, and traveling. A trip to the Paduca, KY Quilting Convention in 2018 was a dream come true, combining two of her hobbies. She also loves to cook—"anything but pies," she added. Warsha moved to the Township in September and hopes to buy a home here soon. Welcome to the team Warsha, we are very glad to have you!

BEST WISHES MATT KNAPP

Last month Township staff bid a fond farewell to Matt Knapp, a technician in the Utilities Department for nearly 16 years. Matt is moving on to work for Madison Township, which is much closer to the home he shares with his wife and three teenage sons. While Matt is sad to leave Scio at a time of so many positive changes in the Utilities Department, he wishes "nothing but great things for the Township and staff," and expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work and learn all these years alongside "so many different great people." Bon voyage Matt, and best wishes to you and your family!

BY MARY GILLIS, EDITOR



TheRIDE RESUMES FULL-SERVICE LEVELS

TheRide welcomes the community back as full-service levels resumed on August 29. As a reminder, per federal law, face masks are required until further notice. Safety continues to be TheRide's priority, and many safety precautions are in place to ensure vehicles are clean and ready to welcome riders back. All routes and services have been updated, so be sure to plan your trip and check out the most up-to-date schedules at [TheRide.org](https://www.theride.org) or by calling 734/996-0400. Due to the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and workforce availability, service adjustments may be made. Get the most up-to-date information and sign up for Service Alerts at [TheRide.org](https://www.theride.org).



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To Scio Neighbor

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(with after-hours automated triage)

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