

Scio Township

Spring 2015 COMMUNITY REPORT

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May is BIKE TO WORK Month!

Learn about Bike to Work Month and the events scheduled for

Bike to Work Week (May 11-15)
 and
Bike to Work Day (May 15)

For details, go to: <http://bikeleague.org/content/bike-month-dates-events-0>

FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK – BY SPAULDING CLARK, SUPERVISOR

Renewed Development in the Township

This year, activity levels have jumped in Scio Township. I thought that I would take this brief opportunity to hit the highlights, with more information to follow in this issue or in issues to come. With the economy improving, at least in our area, there has been a renewed interest in development, both residential and commercial. We have a Menards nearing completion, although as I write the grand opening has not been scheduled, but it is close. And although the grand opening of the Holiday Inn has yet to be scheduled, they are open for business in a great looking facility. Property behind the Menards location is being proposed for residential development with 300+ homes, likely to be constructed over an 8 to 10 year period. An out-lot owned by Meijer on Zeeb is currently proposed for development with 94 condominium units, and another outlot is under construction for commercial units along Zeeb which will include a Starbucks.

Transit Options are being explored

Given current development activities, the Township has begun to explore at with AAATA's suggestion, the expansion of bus services into the more populated areas of the Township, to determine both the need and cost of any such improvement in service levels.

Oil and Gas Exploration

On the oil and gas front, the Township has extended its moratorium on oil and gas exploration activities while the finishing touches are put on new police power ordinances. With changes to the Zoning Enabling Act, the State has pre-empted the ability of townships to use their zoning ordinances to regulate drilling activities. So we must turn to our police powers to regulate certain aspects of oil and gas activities. However, townships would still remain unable to regulate the drilling activities or locations absent changes to State legislation. Scio and other communities thus continue to press state legislators for the enactment of reasonable zoning and land use regulations which will allow townships to deal with the inherent conflicts that typically arise with oil and gas activities, particularly those occurring within residential areas of the township.

Road improvements

Finally, the Township is proceeding with the second phase of local road improvements funded through the Township-wide special assessment. This year the proposed work will include improvements to East and West Delhi and Railroad Street, portions of Pratt Road and Marshall Road. Some of the landscape and tree work is being undertaken by the Township to reduce the cost of the project. As may affect Scio, it is expected that the Washtenaw County Road Commission will be making improvements to portions of Scio Church and Liberty within the Township.

A lot of improvements are coming to the Township, so keep your eyes open for more!



Election May 5



Vote on a constitutional amendment regarding sales tax in the State of Michigan

May 5 we will be holding an election on a constitutional amendment regarding sales tax in the State of Michigan, and the Ann Arbor Public Schools will be asking for approval on a bond proposal. We are really looking forward to your participation at the polls! Plan to vote at your regular polling place, and if you have forgotten what that is, it is easy to check it on-line at the Secretary of State's *Voter Information Center*. The State's website address is: <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/>. You can also find out if your Absent Voter ballot has been sent or received by the Clerk at the State's *Voter Information Center*. If you don't have computer access please call the front desk here at the Township. Please be reminded that the polling place for Precinct 9 has been permanently moved to WISD. If you have questions, you can call us here at the Township or check the Secretary of State's *Voter Information Center*.

Absentee voting

If you are voting absentee, please be sure to read the application thoroughly, and fill out every blank that applies to your request. Note that there are two places for your signature on the application. One attests to the reason for your request, the other is the application to vote. Be sure to provide your phone contact number because if any required information is missing, we always try to call you.

If information is missing from the application, your ballot cannot be sent. With the demise of land phone lines, it is sometimes impossible to find phone numbers. And because some folks have asked, we hold all returned Absentee Ballots until the day of the election and then all valid ballots are tabulated in the same manner as ballots used by in-person voters. The main reason a ballot would be considered invalid would be the lack of the voter's signature on the return envelope. Again, we try to contact the voter but without a phone number, it is difficult. So please remember to sign and date the return envelope.

Don't forget to register

One must be registered 30 days before an election date to vote in that community. If you are new to the Scio Township, you must have registered before April 6, 2015, for the May election. You can update your information with the Secretary of State's office, or here at the Township offices. Registration status can be confirmed by going to: <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/> Address changes must be made within 60 days of your permanent move.

How To Look Up Your Utility Bill and Pay It On-Line

To look-up and/or pay your utility bill:

1. Go to www.sciotownship.org
2. Under Quick Links on the right, click *Look Up My Tax & Utility Info*. This takes you to the Tax Information page
3. At the bottom of the page, click *View Property Tax & Assessing Info and Utility Billing*. This will take you to the "Search Directions" page
4. At the bottom of the page, click *Click here to continue*. This will take you to the Internet Services page
5. On the left side of the page, under Utility Billing, click *Utility Billing Search*. This will take you to the Utility Billing Search page
6. Go to the second box entitled *Search by Address*, click the circle to the left of the box, then type only your street address number in the first and second boxes, then click *Search*

7. All of the addresses with your street number will come up, click on your property's account number and your current utility bill will come up. On the right side of the page, click *Pay Online*. Pay Online only appears on this current bill screen if there is a balance due on the account.

8. Enter your account and payment information.

You can pay your utility bill in person, by US mail, or online. If you choose to pay by credit card, the fee is \$3 per \$100 (after bill amount is rounded up). If you pay by electronic check, the fee is a flat \$3/transaction. These fees are charged by the Online Payment Administrator. There is no fee to pay by personal check in person or by mail. Please do not postdate your check. We have had too many problems trying to hold checks for days (or even weeks) before depositing them. Thank you.

You can pay your utility bill in person, by US mail, or online.



Scio Township makes progress on control of oil and gas exploration

The Board of Trustees imposed a moratorium on oil exploration in August 2014 and recently extended that moratorium until June 2015.



Since residents began signing leases with West Bay Exploration last winter and spring, Scio Township kicked into gear in tandem with neighbors, legislators, and experts on oil and gas extraction to address drilling in residential communities. Even though the exploratory well on Miller and West Delhi Roads reportedly turned up dry, Township officials and citizens assume that West Bay – or other companies – will return to our neighborhoods. With the recent filing of leases on hundreds of acres within the Township, that assumption has been given some credence.

Exploration Moratorium extended

The Board of Trustees imposed a moratorium on oil exploration in August of 2014 and recently extended that moratorium until June of 2015. The purpose of the moratorium is to give the Township the opportunity to amend its ordinances in contemplation of this new use of land in the Township.

Ordinances under review

That process is ongoing under the guidance of the Ordinance Review Committee. The BOT appointed representatives from the Planning Commission, the Land Preservation Commission, and the BOT, as well as the President of Citizens for Oil Free Back Yards. to serve on this Committee. The Committee meets weekly, and has thus far accomplished the following:

- Recommended amendments to Chapter 16 of the Code relating to nuisance violations;
- Reviewed other sections of the Code for applicability to oil and gas operations (e.g. private roads).

All proposed ordinances will be scheduled for a public hearing, so please watch the Township website for upcoming meetings.

Legislation changes needed

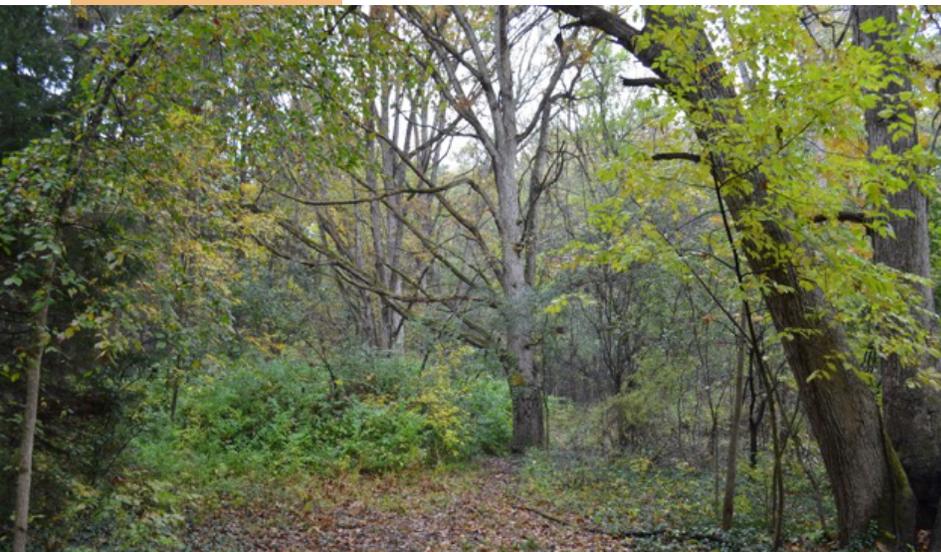
Meanwhile, the Township retained Government Consultants Services Inc. to represent us in the state legislature. We are working closely with Senators Hune, Brandenburg, and Warren, as well as Representatives Lucido and Driskell on proposed legislation to return a degree of local control to Townships. Although various bills addressing drilling in residential areas have been introduced, none so far would help us in Scio. Our goal is to fashion a bill that will help Scio and other similar townships, and that also has a good chance of success in the legislature. It is likely that such a bill will impose minimum setbacks between wells and homes and other structures, as well as natural features.

Please feel free to contact your Township office with any questions you may have.

LAND PRESERVATION – BY BARRY LONIK, LAND PROTECTION CONSULTANT

New Preserve Purchase!

Scio Township's Land Preservation Program wrapped up 2014 with a significant purchase of land to be made into a natural area preserve with public access.



The property purchased is 90 acres in size, about three-quarters of a mile long and located between Joy Rd. and Huron River Dr. across the latter from Dexter Metropark and the Huron River. The land is mostly wooded, much of it planted in Norway spruce trees some of which are quite old and large. The topography is very hilly with bluffs overlooking the river and a total elevation difference of 100 feet. Previous owners dammed a small stream to create a shallow pond out of which a stream flows perennially, audibly dropping over rocks toward the river. Some trails cross the property now but it is mostly untracked. Scio Township will be installing a parking area and trails in the future.

The City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt program and the Washtenaw County Parks Natural Area Preservation Program each contributed one-third of the purchase price of \$772,000.

A number of other projects are in the works and several more closings are anticipated for 2015 so stay tuned!

Van Curler Preserve, courtesy of Barry Lonik

Volunteers Needed

The Township is looking for ways to develop our parks with volunteers and grants until it is determined that a permanent source of revenue is needed.

Land Preservation Successes

As mentioned in the Land Preservation article on page 3, Scio Township recently added to its parkland with the purchase of the 90-acre Van Curler Preserve. This brings the total of preserved and recreational land in Scio to over 2,100 acres! This total includes the land owned and managed by the Huron Clinton Metro Parks, Washtenaw County Parks, the City of Ann Arbor and Scio Township. It also includes conservation easements on farmland that, while not open to the public, guarantees the land will remain undeveloped into the future.

Of the protected 2,121 acres, the Township owns 261 acres and holds conservation easements on 945. Some of these easements provide for public access but, as previously mentioned, the majority is on private land most of which is being actively farmed. The Township residents have strongly supported our preservation efforts by enacting a 10-year preservation millage (“Prop J”) in 2004 and renewing it ahead of schedule in 2012. Both times the preservation millage was approved by an overwhelming margin.



Sloan Preserve, courtesy of Barry Lonik

Scio’s Land Preservation Millage

Since its inception, the Land Preservation millage has brought in approximately \$6M. To date, we have spent \$4.1M on property and easements worth almost \$10.5M. We have been able to do this with the help of grants from the City of Ann Arbor (the “Greenbelt”), Washtenaw County Parks, the State of Michigan and the use of Federal funds. This was made possible through the efforts of our consultant, Barry Lonik. His efforts have allowed us to leverage our preservation funds more than 1.5 to 1. Currently, we have almost \$1.9M in the Land Preservation fund, and with several promising opportunities we might close on in the near future, one or two might add to the Township owned parks/preserves.

The Land Preservation Commission (LPC) has received many applications from residents nominating their property for consideration of the purchase of either the development

rights (also known as a conservation easement) or the property itself. When the Township uses land preservation funds to purchase a property, it automatically becomes a preserved property that is accessible by the public. We can then use it either for recreation purposes, a nature preserve or a combination of both.

Recreational Use Land Purchases

The Township has purchased the 50-acre Sloan Preserve on Baker Road and the 90-acre Van Curler Preserve on Huron River Drive. Both of these properties have been designated as preserves with only passive recreation (hiking, bird watching, cross-country skiing, etc.). Other Township owned properties were either donated or purchased using General Fund monies.

The 54-acre Wild Preserve on Liberty Road is one of these properties. It was purchased in 2013 using money from the General Fund. At this writing, the Board has not decided how to best utilize this property, which contains a house, a historic barn, several outbuildings, a network of trails, wetlands, and two ponds. One possible use could be the headquarters of the Township’s Parks and Rec Department. That would not happen for a long time yet (if ever). You, the voters, will be asked to decide sometime in the future if that should happen.

Future Recreation Use: You Can Help!

The preservation millage provides for the acquisition of land to be used for “new parks, recreational facilities and trails”. However, while the land preservation funds may be used to purchase parks and preserves, per millage language none may be used to develop or maintain them. The Township is looking for ways to develop our parks with volunteers and grants until it is determined that a permanent source of revenue is needed. This, too, will be put to a vote but not until we have a significant catalog of parks and preserves that will require development, active management and maintenance.

Until that time, the Board has decided that we should enlist the help of a volunteer Parks and Rec Committee made up of Township residents who have an interest in the development and management of parks and preserves. This group will be asked to develop the rules of operation, recruit volunteer Park Stewards, help design and layout trail networks, organize volunteer workdays and recruit volunteers.

If this is something that interests you, please forward a letter of interest to the Township Supervisor, Spaulding Clark, 827 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, 48103 or esclark@sciotownship.org.

For more information on the Township’s protected properties, go to the **LPC’s** page on the Township’s website and click on **Preserved Properties**.



Get involved in your community

Scio Township Information

Scio Township Hall
827 North Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48103
(734) 369-9400; ScioTownship.org

Township Office Hours

Monday to Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Utility Department Hours:

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Utilities emergency: (734) 651-4770
Utilities Administration: (734) 369-9350

Township Board of Trustees

Spaulding Clark, Supervisor
Nancy Hedberg, Clerk
Donna Palmer, Treasurer
Richard DeLong, Trustee
Christine Green, Trustee
Jack Knowles, Trustee
David Read, Trustee

Board meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the Township Hall. E-mail sent to townshipboard@ScioTownship.org will be forwarded to all members of the township board.

The Scio Township Community Report

Is published quarterly by the Scio Township Board of Trustees for the residents of Scio Township.

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Scott Martin – Utilities Director
James Merte – Assessing

Other Phone Numbers

Emergencies 911
Fire Department Administration (734) 665-6001
Sheriff's Department,
Zeeb Road Sub-Station (734) 994-8105
County Building Inspection Services . . . (734) 222-3900

Washtenaw County Information:

www.ewashtenaw.org

Water Resources Commissioner:
(734) 222-6860; drains@ewashtenaw.org

County Road Commission
(734) 761-1500; werc@wcroads.org

County Commissioners:
District 1 – Kent Martinez-Kratz
Martinez-KratzK@ewashtenaw.org

State Information:

www.michigan.org

State Representative

District 52 – Gretchen Driskell
(800) 627-5052 ; gretchendriskell@house.mi.gov

State Senator:

District 22 - Joe Hune
(517) 373-2420; SenJHune@senate.michigan.gov

Governor:

Rick Snyder
(517) 373-3400; rick.snyder@michigan.gov

Federal Information:

www.usa.gov

U.S. Representatives:

District 7 – Tim Walberg
(202) 225-6276; e-mail via www.walberg.house.gov

District 15 – Debbie Dingell
(202) 225-4071;
www.debbiedingell.house.gov/contact/email

U.S. Senators:

Debbie Stabenow
(202) 224-4822; senator@stabenow.senate.gov

Gary Peters
(201) 224-6221;
www.peters.senate.gov/content/contact-gary

President of the United States:

Barack H. Obama
(202) 456-1111; president@whitehouse.gov



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BY SUSAN BRYANT, WASHTENAW COUNTY WATER RESOURCES OFFICE

Water Quality Survey

Share your views

Take a survey on landscape practices and keeping pollution out of the river – and enter to win a \$15 gift card. Washtenaw County needs your help getting a wide number of people to share their views. This information will guide our work to keep rivers clean.

One \$15 card will be given away every two weeks between April 15-August 31, 2015. Take the survey early for the most chances! Go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/RainGardenSurveys>

Enter **SCIO** in the Response Code



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Go to our website: <http://www.sciotownship.org/>
and click on *Subscribe to our Email List* under *Quick Links*. Optionally, you can also sign up for electronic “delivery” of this newsletter. You will need your Mail Code (Example: SMIT1234MAINST), which can be found on this newsletter’s label.

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