

Scio Township

Fall 2015

COMMUNITY REPORT

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

Township Updates

The Township has now adopted a civil infractions ordinance. This gives the Township the opportunity to identify or designate specific ordinance violations that constitute civil infractions, which may then be handled through a less formal process, as opposed to taking such matters directly to a Washtenaw County Court through that legal process. The germination of this idea stemmed from a desire to address the secondary effects of oil and gas drilling. See related article on page 4.

Housing and businesses are expanding

As I write this newsletter, development activity has picked up within the Township. We expect Menards to open in the near future and residential housing is underway on Zeeb south of Jackson. Plans for additional residential units on Liberty and West Jackson Road are in the midst of seeking approvals.

Roads, roads, roads...

The work continues in the effort to improve our local roads through a township-wide road millage. Projects that are either underway or completed include work on E. Delhi, W. Delhi, Railroad, Pratt, Marshall, and with work scheduled in the fall for North Delhi. The Washtenaw County Road Commission with the use of the 2015 countywide road millage proceeds, made improvements to Scio Church and Huron River Drive. The Township continues to work with various subdivisions in an effort improve their roads, with several projects slated for work this fall. We have been

advised that the County Board of Commissioners may be contemplating another one-year special assessment for road improvements, similar to what was in effect for this year, however no final decision has been made.

Transit proposal to be voted on

Finally, the Township has authorized a ballot proposal to be placed on the November ballot, which contemplates a millage for transportation services, and specifically, for AAATA to provide bus service on a regular basis along Jackson Road, eventually reaching Baker Road. The full details will be provided before the November election, explaining the proposal and the reason why it has been placed on the ballot. AAATA has estimated that the cost of the proposed and improved bus service will eventually reach approximately \$403,000 annually when full service has been implemented along the length of Jackson Road from Wagner Road to Baker Road. This will include dial-a-ride service adjacent to the Jackson corridor. The millage proposal that will be found on the November ballot is for a maximum of 0.3627 mills, which is expected to raise \$403,000 (the eventual cost). This millage, when fully levied, would cost the owner of a \$250,000 home approximately \$45 per year. However, the Township does not expect to levy the full amount of the authorized millage in the first few years. The millage will be set according to the amount needed to provide the initial level of service and then will increase (but only to the maximum of 0.3627 mills) as the level of service increases. More to come.

BY NANCY HEDBERG, CLERK

A Big Round of Applause...

...for our crew that helps out with Recycling at the Township every third Saturday. We have a few hardy souls who come out rain or shine, wind or snow, and on beautiful Saturdays too. Thanks so much to Rich Kato, Eric Schultz, Charlie Nielsen, Bob Walsh, and Scott Anderson, and many others who have volunteered over the years. If you appreciate the service, please let them know. And, if you'd like to volunteer (we can always use more volunteers!) let us know at the Township. More information on our recycling program can be found here: sciotownship.org/community/recycling/



From L to R: Josh from Ann Arbor Recycling, and Rich Kato, Eric Schultz, Charlie Nielsen, Bob Walsh, and Scott Anderson from the Township

Photo credit: Scott Hedberg

Absentee Ballots & Presidential Primary

Don't forget to **VOTE** November 3

Presidential Primary on March 8

This November, Scio Township voters will have to opportunity to decide whether or not to extend AATA bus service into Township along Jackson Road. You will find information on-line and more importantly, there will be several informational meetings throughout September and October.

Absentee Ballots will be available in January

We will be starting off 2016 with a Presidential Primary on March 8. Some of our residents have been 'johnny-on-the-spot' and have already requested Absentee Ballots for the Presidential Primary. Please know that State Law stipulates that an absentee ballot cannot be requested more than 75 days in advance of the election, so if you can wait until the first of the year, you'll save all of us some headaches. You can plan to vote at your regular polling place on March 8, August 2 (Primary Election), and November 8 (General Election). It is easy to find information regarding your registration, polling place, and to see sample ballots by checking the Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center". The State's website address is: webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/. There are links on the Township's website as well.

Tell us if you'll be gone

Are you a 'Snowbird'? Every spring a number of applications are returned because voters on the Permanent AV list

have headed south and forgotten to let me know. If you plan to be gone, please call the Township offices to tell me where your application should be sent. I will be mailing Presidential Primary Election AV applications in mid-January.

Remember to sign TWICE

Here's another pointer when filling out your Absent Voter application: be sure to read the application thoroughly and fill out every applicable blank. For the Presidential Primary you MUST check which party ballot you are applying for. Please 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. If anything is missing, we will need to call you to come in to complete the missing information. Since many residents are only using cell phones now, it is sometimes impossible to track one down.

Don't forget to register

February 8, 2016 will be the last day to register to vote in the Presidential Primary. If you have a change of address please be sure to update your information with the Secretary of State's office, or here at the Township offices as soon as possible. You can check your registration status by going to: webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/. Address changes must be made within 6 months of your permanent move.

Sign-up for Email Notification!

Learn about Township events and meetings via email

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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Scio Land Preservation: Ten Year Review

14 projects have been completed using millage proceeds, protecting over 900 acres of land



Scio Township's Land Preservation Program recently passed its ten-year anniversary, which provides an opportunity to review accomplishments to date.

Millage first approved in 2004

Township voters approved the 0.5 mil property tax to fund the program in November, 2004 with a tremendous 75% favorable vote. Since then, the Land Preservation Commission (LPC)—the seven-member volunteer advisory group to the Board of Trustees—has met nearly 150 times to develop and direct the program, visit and score all 63 nominated properties and make recommendations on how to spend the public investment in the most efficient and impactful manner possible. Three of the LPC members (Irwin Martin, Leslie Desmond and Bruce Manny) have served since the first meeting in May, 2005. Other current members Jim Crowfoot, Anne Kreykes, Alec Jerome and trustee David Read also have long records of dedication to the program.

Over 900 acres preserved

To date 14 projects have been completed using millage proceeds, protecting over 900 acres of land. In ten of those projects, the township acquired conservation easements which are permanent deed restrictions that limit the use of the property to agriculture and open space (woods, wetlands, streams and meadows). While all ten properties are privately owned, two of them (Botsford and Green) allow (and encourage!) public access. Six of the other eight are actively farmed, helping to maintain the agricultural heritage of Scio Township and support local farmers with land to grow crops.

The other four projects are ones where a public agency purchased the property. Two of those—the Scio Church Woods on Scio Church Rd. west of Wagner Rd. and the Fox Science Preserve on Peters Rd. north of Miller Rd.—were purchased by Washtenaw County Parks. Both have small parking areas and trails that are open to the public during daylight hours. Scio Woods is 90 acres of mature forest with spectacular Spring wildflower blooms, while the Fox Preserve is an abandoned gravel pit that is reverting to a natural state. Both have been used extensively by school groups for study of natural systems.

The Township owns two Preserves

The other two publicly owned properties were purchased by Scio Township. The Sloan Preserve is located on the west side of Baker Rd. north of Marshall Rd. The township has purchased 50 acres and installed a parking area and trail network. The preserve features 2,000 feet of frontage on Mill Creek, a state natural river. The second Township property, the 90 acre Van Curler Preserve, was purchased last December and features woods, rolling terrain and a perennial stream. It is located off of Huron River Drive and plans are underway for also making it accessible to the public.

Many partners have helped

Scio Township is pleased to have had funding partners for every one of the 14 completed projects. While the value of the land or conservation easements (determined by an independent appraiser) is over \$10.7 million, the township's share is just over \$4.1 million (39%). The largest contributor has been Washtenaw County Parks at \$2.4 million. A federal program to assist in purchasing agricultural conservation easements has contributed \$1.8 million and the Ann Arbor Greenbelt program has contributed over \$1 million. Also significant is that landowners have discounted the purchase price of land and easements by over \$1 million.

Part of the LPC's charge is to develop and manage the program's budget. Expenditures are made for property valuation appraisals, boundary surveys, environmental assessments, document review by legal counsel and program staff. Through attention to detail, the LPC has limited program expenditures to less than 10% of the total, so over 90% of the revenues collected have gone to acquisitions of land and conservation easements.

Township voters renewed the land preservation millage for a second ten years in November, 2012 with 70% support. Many other projects are in the works with several expected to close in 2015. The Board of Trustees and Land Preservation Commission thank Scio Township's citizens for their outstanding support of the work of protecting land for all of its benefits and for present and future generations. More information is available at sciotownship.org/boards-commissions/land-preservation-commission/preserved-properties/.

BY IRWIN MARTIN, LPC CHAIR

Dedication of New Scio Preserve

Join us on October 2 at 5pm at the new Scio Township owned Sloan Nature Preserve on Baker Road, about 1 mile North of Marshall Road, for the official dedication of our Township's first Preserve. Join Township officials and guests for the ribbon cutting ceremony and guided tours of the Preserve. The Land Preservation Commission will

also dedicate a bench in memory of former LPC member Allison Arscott that they have placed at the Preserve. A small parking area is available at the Preserve. Additional parking will be available at the BLOOM! Nursery just south of the Preserve on Baker Road. A trail will lead you through the woods to the Preserve.

Join us
October 2 at 5pm
Sloan Nature
Preserve

Land Preservation: Easement Protects Organic Farm

Nature and Nurture utilizes the concepts of ecology to restore ecological functioning and bring biodiversity back to the land

Scio Township Land Preservation Program's first 2015 project is a conservation easement purchase on a new organic farm.

Local Couple protects Local farm

The property is located on the north side of Marshall Rd. east of Baker Rd. and features a mature oak-hickory forest, southern hardwood swamp, wetlands, two seasonal watercourses (tributaries to Mill Creek), steep slopes, scenic views from the public road and prime, locally important agricultural soils. It was previously owned

by Edwin Egeler, from a long-standing Scio Township farm family with members still living in the area. The current owners, Erica Kempter and Mike Levine, had been dreaming of creating a model sustainable agricultural operation and were searching for a property near Ann Arbor for many years.

Nature and Nurture farm

Nature and Nurture Farm grows vegetables, fruits and shiitake mushrooms, which are currently sold to local restaurants. Starting in 2016, these goodies will be made available to the community for on-farm pickup. Gardeners can find Nature and Nurture farm heirloom vegetable seeds online at NatureAndNurtureSeeds.com. The business also sells fruit trees and berry bushes edible from the farm (by appointment only). On the farm and through their landscape gardening business, Nature and Nurture utilizes the concepts of ecology to restore ecological functioning and bring biodiversity back to the land including the use of native plantings, orchards and edible forest gardens. As with all agricultural conservation easements, the property remains in private ownership and is not open to the public.

The Washtenaw County Parks Natural Area Preservation Program contributed one-half of the purchase price of \$192,000.

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



Erica Kempter and Mike Levine
Photo courtesy of Barry Lonik

Civil Infraction Ordinance

Residents will benefit from the certainty of the amount of the fine and the direction provided in the citation itself.

The Township Board recently passed a Civil Infraction Ordinance, which imposes monetary fines for violations of various Township Ordinances. Violations of ordinances are currently criminal offenses (misdemeanors) and will remain so unless specifically made subject to the Civil Infraction Ordinance. The ordinances subject to civil infractions include zoning, nuisances, and private roads.

Township will have more leverage

The new system will give the Township additional leverage in enforcing its ordinances, since violators will be subject to a monetary fine, which in most circumstances will be collected without the need for further action or costs. Residents will benefit from the certainty of the amount of

the fine and the direction provided in the citation itself.

Most violations will result in a fine of \$100, but that fine may be imposed for each day the person is in violation of the ordinance. Certain violations that could jeopardize the public health and safety in a more dangerous way (e.g. Handling of Hazardous substances; facilities used in oil and gas drilling; private roads) will be subject to higher fines.

Please contact the Scio Township Hall with any questions about the new Civil Infraction Ordinance.



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
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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

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District 22 – Joe Hune
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Governor:

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

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www.usa.gov

U.S. Representatives:

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

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(202) 225-4071;
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BY NANCY HEDBERG, CLERK

Zeeb Road Pathway Update

In 2011, Scio Township was awarded a \$250,000 Connecting Communities grant toward construction of the Zeeb Road Pathway. The project languished until this past spring following the Township's request for an extension on the time allotted for beginning construction. Officials recognized that a good portion of the path traverses publicly owned land, and crosses the wetland, a serious chokepoint on Zeeb Road for those who currently bike, jog and walk there. A non-motorized bridge now spans the wetland:

The new bridge has an overlook to provide viewing of the wetland and its occupants (geese, ducks, herons, etc). There are two benches to provide a convenient place to pause for a few minutes:

The path is intended to eventually connect to the proposed Border to Border Trail (B2B) near the Huron River. Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Commission has been working diligently on portions of the B2B for several years. Many of you have already experienced the segments that are constructed in Dexter to Hudson Mills and Dexter-Huron Metropark. The Scio Township portion is very complex, not only because of the close proximity of the railroad, but the complicating factors

imposed by the Huron River and Huron River Drive. WCPRC has currently engaged a consultant to explore the possible routes of the B2B.

While they are working on that we will continue to explore the best means to reach our goal of connecting to the B2B. Engineering work has begun on the second half of the First Phase, which will take us to Dexter Ann Arbor Road, one of many links in the Township. There are bike lanes on Jackson Road, Dexter-Ann Arbor Road, Scio Church Road, and South Wagner Road. And, while it isn't the best link, there is a sidewalk on the Zeeb Road bridge over I-94 providing a north-south link to Jackson Road.

