

the STAR

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WINTER 2020

Texas Tomorrow Master Plan Updates

The Texas Tomorrow planning process has been moving along over the last several months, but there's much more to come!

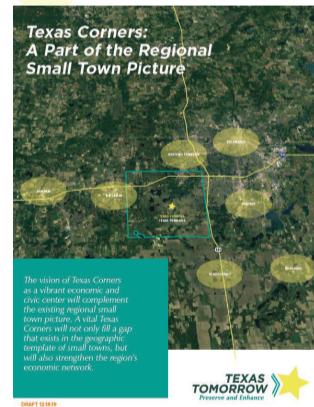
Following the public engagement open house at Pretty Lake Camp in October, a draft Parks and Trails Plan has been completed. The draft is available for review and comment at the Master Plan website, texas-tomorrow.com, until January 10. On January 14, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to discuss the plan. We encourage all of our residents and community members to review the plan and comment online or at the public input meeting to share your thoughts and comments.

Meanwhile, the Texas Corners Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is putting the finishing touches on a brochure demonstrating its successes and value to the community. That document will be used to support the renewal of the DDA and its continued contributions to our Township's core. After the holidays, the DDA will transition to working on its 10 year plan, including a vision for the future of development in the Corners, as well as its plan for improvements and investments.

The Township's Master Plan is also moving along. The Steering Committee met with the Kalamazoo County Road Commission, MDOT, and Metro to discuss transportation issues and concerns, as well as how to ensure an efficient mobility system in the Township going forward. The Steering Committee is also discussing land use issues, such as where farmland should be preserved, and where new housing and business developments could occur.

There are several opportunities to get involved with the Texas Tomorrow process and make your voice heard:

- There are several short surveys available on specific planning issues where we'd like your feedback on www.texas-tomorrow.com.
- On January 16, planning team members will be coming to you! On January 16, we'll be at Starbucks on 9th Street near I-94 from 8:00 - 10:00 a.m. and at the Texas Corners Brewing Company from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. to get public input from residents and community members (check www.texas-tomorrow.com for more details). We will also be holding business roundtables by invitation that day.
- In April, look out for opportunities to participate in the planning process during the annual Texas Corners Mac 'n Cheese Bake-Off!



UPCOMING DATES

- » **January 10**
End of Comment and Review period for Parks Plan
- » **January 14**
Parks Plan Public Hearing at 5:00 p.m. at the Planning Commission
- » **January 16**
Master Plan Public Input sessions
 - Starbucks on 9th Street: 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.
 - Texas Corners Brewing Company "Happy Hour": 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
- » **April**
Public Input Opportunities during the Mac 'n Cheese Bake-Off (date and time TBD)

6th Street Park Updates

Kalamazoo Pickleball Outreach partnered with the Township to fundraise for the construction of 8 pickleball courts in Phase I of the 6th Street Park. However, they had a limited amount of time to reach their goal in order for the courts to be included in Phase I. They eagerly took on this challenge, and on September 23, 2019, Kalamazoo Pickleball Outreach presented the Township with a check for \$75,000. The total cost of the pickleball project as bid is \$140,000. The remaining is being funded by Texas Township (\$50K) and Friends of Texas Township Parks and Trails (\$15K).

Construction on Phase I of the 6th Street park began late this summer but due to the higher than average rainfall, the construction progress has been delayed. Construction will start up as soon as possible in early Spring 2020 with plans to complete the pickleball courts around July 1st, weather dependent. The multi-purpose sports fields will need the summer for the grass to properly fill in. This too is weather dependent; however, the walking track should also be completed in the summer. We are very excited to finish Phase I of this park project!



2020 ELECTION DATES

March 10
Presidential Primary

May 5
Special (tentative)

August 4
State Primary

November 3
General Election

2020 Elections are Coming - Are You Ready?

Next year will be a busy one with multiple elections throughout the year, including the election of the President of the United States, our US Senators, our Township Board of Trustees and Officers, as well as other offices and proposals. The Clerk's office is already busy getting ready for the March 10th Presidential Primary, with other elections on August 4th, November 3rd and possibly also May 5th.

Proposal 3, passed in November 2018, made a lot of changes to Election Law in Michigan, allowing all registered voters to request an absentee ballot without a reason required and also allowing same-day voter registration at the local clerk's office.

Visit the Michigan Voter Information Center at www.michigan.gov/vote to:

- Check your registration status and make sure you're registered at your current address
- Find your polling place
- See your sample ballot for the upcoming election
- Request and Track your Absentee Ballot
- Find answers to Frequently Asked Questions, and more!

Learn more at www.michigan.gov/vote



NOW HIRING ELECTION WORKERS!

Interested in the political process and how our voting system works? Want to make a little extra money and fulfill your civic duty, too? Texas Township is looking for Election Inspectors to work the 2020 elections!

Please contact the Clerk's Office at 269-375-1591 or visit www.texastownship.org/elections to learn more or complete an Election Inspector Application.

Skip the Lines - Vote Absentee!

Anyone can now vote by absentee ballot! Thanks to the passage of Proposal 3 in November 2018, a reason is no longer required on Absentee Voter (AV) applications.

Absentee Voting allows you to:

- Skip the lines on election day
- Vote even when you're away from home on election day
- Review and vote your ballot in the privacy and comfort of your own home, when it works in your schedule

Join our Permanent Absentee Voter Application list to receive your AV application in the mail for every election! Call the Township office at 269.375.1591 or complete the form online at www.texastownship.org/elections.



Absentee Voters will notice a difference in their AV ballot envelopes in 2020, as the Bureau of Elections has made recent changes

March 10 Presidential Primary FAQs

Presidential Primary elections are different than other elections, as voters are required to select either a Democratic Party Ballot or a Republican Party Ballot to vote for presidential candidates. There is also a No Party Declaration Ballot which includes Proposals only but no candidates.

Here is a list of frequently asked questions, and more information is available at www.Michigan.gov/Elections. (See Presidential Primary Information)

Do I have to be a registered Democrat or Republican to participate in Michigan's Presidential Primary?

No. Michigan's Presidential Primary has been designated a closed primary. There is no political party registration requirement in Michigan Election Law. Any Michigan registered voter can participate in the primary. By law, you must make your ballot selection in writing by completing the Application to Vote/Ballot Selection Form on Election Day; or on the Absent Voter Ballot Application form if voting absentee.

Why do I have to select a party ballot?

Michigan Election Law (MCL 168.615c) guides the conduct of the Presidential Primary. The law requires that voters indicate in writing which political party ballot they wish to vote. This requirement only applies to Presidential Primary elections, and voters will not be required to select a political party ballot type at other types of elections.

When I select a party ballot for the Presidential Primary, does that mean I have to vote in the same party primary in August?

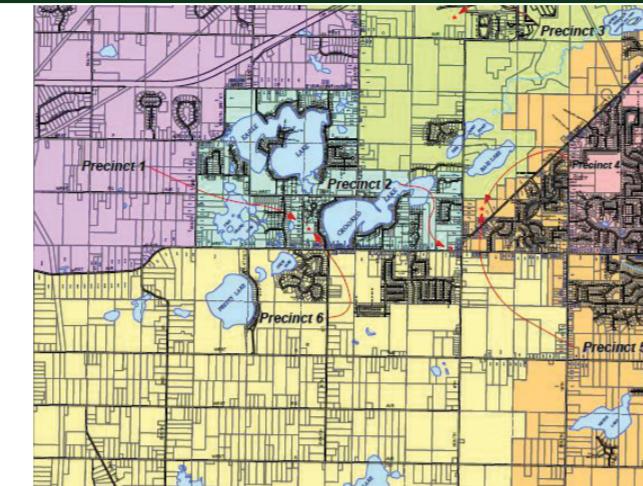
No. The written selection made by a voter at the Presidential Primary has no bearing on how a person votes in the State Primary election.

I already voted and returned my absentee ballot; the candidate I voted for has since suspended his/her campaign. Can I change my vote?

You may request and vote a replacement ballot. You must submit your request in writing to your city or township clerk no later than 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, 2020 or appear in person at your local clerk's office prior to 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 9, 2020. All ballots must be received by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. In this situation, your city or township clerk will void your original ballot and issue you a new ballot. Contact (or visit) your local clerk immediately if you are interested in doing so. Your local clerk is also required to have office hours the weekend prior to the election.

Where can I find more information?

For more information on your voter registration status, polling place, issues that will appear on your ballot, the absentee voting process and more, please visit the Michigan Voter Information Center at www.Michigan.gov/Vote. For a detailed history of Presidential Primaries in Michigan, please visit www.Michigan.gov/Elections. (See Presidential Primary Information)



WHERE DO I VOTE?

- Precinct 1 - Calvary Reformed Church
- Precinct 2 - Texas Township Hall
- Precinct 3 - Kalamazoo Valley Groves Campus
- Precinct 4 - Southridge Reformed Church
- Precinct 5 - Southridge Reformed Church
- Precinct 6 - Calvary Reformed Church

Flooding Update

Many of our residents continue to be impacted by flooding. To date, we are aware of 16 houses that have had to be abandoned temporarily or permanently. There has been significant loss in property values to many of the homes impacted by the flooding, as well as hundreds of thousand dollars spent to prevent or repair flooding damage. The health impacts to those affected are overwhelming. In addition, we have had to raise 8th Street, S Avenue between 8th and 6th Streets, N Eagle Lake Drive, Treasure Island Drive, O Avenue, and the Treasure Island cul-de-sac due to the flooding. Currently, O Ave between 6th and 4th Streets is the only road that remains closed due to flooding in Texas Township. The Township, the Flood Mitigation Task Force, the Lake Associations, and the community as a whole continue to work together to help resolve this unprecedented issue.

The short term pumping project provided some relief over the summer when we were able to pump at the 2,000 gallons per minute (gpm) maximum rate allowed by the permit and the summer evaporation was assisting in the draw down rates. Unfortunately, we continue to have higher than average rain fall (we received 12.5 inches of rainfall in the months of September and October), and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy (EGLE) reduced the pumping rate due to negative impacts on the downstream wetlands, causing the water surface levels to begin to rise back up. The Task Force continues to work with EGLE to increase the pumping rate and has been able to get two increases since the reduction. As of December 13th, we are pumping at 1400 gpm out of Crooked Lake and 875 gpm out of Eagle Lake.

Both the Eagle Lake and Crooked Lake Associations were successful in their petition drive for the Legal Lake Level. The petitions were turned in to the Drain Office before the end of the year. Once the signatures are verified, the County Commission will receive the petition and determine whether to move forward with establishing a Legal Lake Level for both lakes. Once established, the Long Term Solution can start to be implemented.

At the same time, the Township contracted with Prein & Newhof to submit a FEMA Flood Mitigation Grant in the amount of \$1,000,000. If awarded, this will help offset the cost of the long term solution. We have garnered support from Congressman Upton, Representative Iden and Senator McCann to mitigate the flooding crisis. The Township expects to be notified in August 2020 on whether the FEMA Grant will be awarded.

Members of the Texas Township Flood Task Force continue to diligently work at resolving the many problems that have come up during the short term and long term solutions. The flood mitigation has been challenging, but the Task Force members remain committed to resolving it.

Winter Safety Tips

Texas Township Fire & Rescue would like to remind residents of some important safety tips during the winter season.



Car Safety

- Drive safely! Slow down, and leave plenty of space between vehicles
- Be especially aware of school buses, snow plows, and emergency vehicles.
- Make sure to keep your gas tank above half-full and clear your exhaust pipe of snow before you drive
- If you get stranded in your car, turn on the hazard lights. Stay in your car unless shelter is within sight.
- Pack an emergency supply kit to keep in your vehicle at all times.

Home safety

- Clear snow from all exhaust vents (dryer, furnace, etc).
- Clear snow from around your gas meter.
- Make sure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- If you lose power, turn your water on so it is a slow drip to prevent waterlines from bursting.

- Clear all exits of ice and snow in case of an emergency.
- Clear fire hydrants on property of snow so that they are accessible to the Fire Department and emergency personnel.

Ice safety

- Stay off ice unless it is at least 4 inches deep. Check ice thickness every 20-100 feet (depending on ice conditions)
- Avoid cracks.
- Avoid vegetation through the ice, as it weakens it.
- Don't go out on the ice alone.
- Make sure you have a phone to call 911 in case of an emergency.
- Take ice picks with you if you go out.
- Don't attempt to rescue pets or others - call 911!
- If you fall through the ice and are able to get out, crawl away from hole, get to a warm place, remove wet clothes, and call 911!

Winter Taxes due February 14

Your 2019 Winter Property Tax bill (and any unpaid Summer Taxes previous billed) are due in the Township Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 14th. Any payment placed in our Drop Box (located on the west side of the Township Hall Parking Lot) will be recognized as an "on-time" payment. Any payments received after 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 15th will incur a 3% penalty on the total balance owed.

We do not honor postmarks, so please mail early if paying by mail!

On March 1, 2020, any outstanding Summer and Winter Taxes will be transferred to the Kalamazoo County Treasurer, and payments must be made at their office (201 West Kalamazoo Avenue). If you have any questions, please contact the Treasurer's Office at 269.375.1591.

To pay online, visit www.texastownship.org; Click the "Pay Property Taxes" button and follow instructions.

OPTION #1- CHECK (ACH) PAYMENT - \$3.00 flat charge for each transaction up to \$10,000.00; if over \$10,000.00, a \$10 fee is charged.

#2-CREDIT CARD – third party convenience fee of 3% on total amount paid will be added. The Township does not earn any revenue from ACH or credit card transaction fees.

Leaf Drop-off

This year, the Township partnered with Kalamazoo Landscape Supplies (KLS) on 9th Street to offer leaf drop-off to residents at no charge during the month of November. This was a change from previous years, in which one leaf drop-off day was offered.

Thanks to this partnership, Texas Township residents dropped off 467 cubic yards of leaves! We are grateful to KLS for working with us to provide this service to our residents and hope to continue this option in future years.

KLS also offers Christmas tree drop-off for a small fee. Call 269.375.8000 for details.

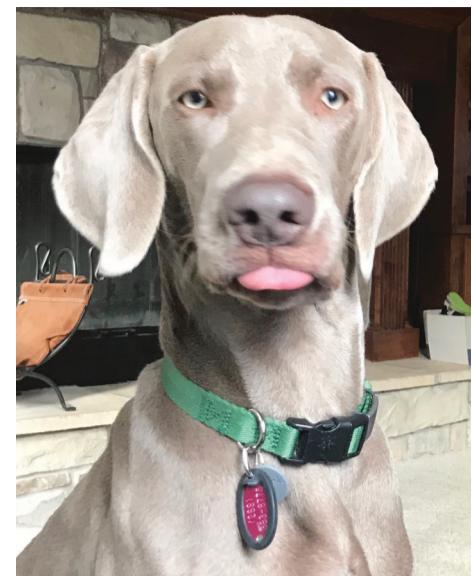
Planner/Zoning Administrator Opening

The Charter Township of Texas is seeking to hire a full-time experienced Planner and Zoning Administrator to provide a wide range of ongoing planning, zoning and economic development services. This is a high-level professional position within the Department of Planning and Zoning.

View the Job Posting and Description at www.texastownship.org/careers.

Please submit cover letter and resume by Friday, January 24th, 2020 at 11:00 a.m., to Julie VanderWiere, Township Superintendent, 7110 West Q Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49009, or email to juliev@texastownship.org.

The Charter Township of Texas is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



Farmers' Market

Thanks to all who attended this year's Holiday Farmers' Market and Tree-Lighting Ceremony on November 23 and made this year's event our greatest yet! We also appreciated all of the vendors and patrons whose support made this year another successful season for the market.

Market your calendars for the 2020 farmers' market season, which kicks off Mother's Day weekend on Saturday, May 9 from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in the Joyce I. Neubauer Farmers' Market Pavilion!

Saturdays, May 9 - October 17
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Tuesdays, June 2 - August 25
4:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Snow Removal

Please note that the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) is responsible for all snow removal on public roadways in Texas Township. RCKC manages snow and ice removal for more than 1,266 miles of county roads all together.

According to RCKC, snow removal priorities are as follows:

1. Snow route roads
2. Balance of primary roads
3. Local Roads
4. Subdivision/plat streets
5. Dead-end and cul-de-sac roads

If you have a question or concern about snow removal on your road or in your neighborhood, please contact the Road Commission at 269.381.3171.

You may also submit a service request online at the RCKC website: www.kalamazooccountyroads.com

Additionally, we'd like to ask all residents with public sidewalks to participate in winter maintenance and clear sidewalks adjacent to your home of snow and ice. These sidewalks provide safe routes to schools, bus stops, and other important destinations.

The Fire Department would also appreciate your assistance in clearing any snow around fire hydrants located near your home. Clear access to fire hydrants is imperative so that, in an emergency, firefighters may immediately attach the fire hoses that are used to fight fires.

Dog Licenses

The Township Office is selling dog licenses now through March 1st. All dogs in Kalamazoo County are required to be licensed after four months of age.

Stop in with proof of a current rabies vaccination and get your dog's license today! After March 1st, licenses can only be purchased at Kalamazoo County Animal Services, 1316 Lamont Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49048

- **Altered License Fee: \$15**
- **Unaltered License Fee: \$45**

Please note a 3% service charge applies to all credit card transactions

SUBSCRIBE TO THE E-NEWSLETTER



To receive regular updates on the flooding, as well as other Township events, subscribe to The Star E-Newsletter

www.texastownship.org/newsletter



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Kalamazoo, MI 49009

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Trustee Nick Loeks
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2020 Meeting Schedule

Texas Township Board Meetings are held on the second and fourth Monday evenings, unless otherwise noted by an asterisk, at the Texas Township Hall (7110 West Q Avenue) at 6:00 p.m. and are always open to the public

January 13	July 13
January 27	July 20
February 10	August 10
February 24	August 24
March 16*	September 14
March 30*	September 28
April 13	October 12
April 27	October 26
May 18*	November 9
June 8	November 23
June 22	December 7*
	December 21*