

Be Ready to Vote this 2020 Election Season!

The August 4, 2020 State Primary Election is coming up quickly! Precincts will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on election day for in-person voting, and COVID-19 precautions will be in place to protect both voters and the election inspectors working in the polling places.

All registered voters in the state of Michigan received an Absent Voter Ballot Application by mail for both the August 4 and November 3 elections. Voting by mail is easy, convenient, and secure. During the outbreak of COVID-19, it also enables you to stay home and stay safe while still making your voice heard in our elections.

After you have signed the form, you can submit it in any one of the following ways:

- Option 1 – Scan or take a photo of the form that clearly shows your signature, and email it to election@texastownship.org
- Option 2 – Mail or drop-off the form to the Township Office at 7110 West Q Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49009. There is also a secure drop box located at the West end of the parking lot.

You can now also complete and submit your absent voter ballot application online at www.michigan.gov/vote. In the Michigan Voter Information Center, you can:

- 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!

**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 August 3 and November 4 2020 elections.

Election Inspectors are paid \$175 per election day, or more for precinct chairs and co-chairs, as well as being compensated for election training.

Precautions will be in place to protect workers from COVID-19 in the polling place for these elections, including plexiglass guards, face masks, gloves, and sanitizer.

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.



Learn more at www.michigan.gov/vote

Absent Voter Frequently Asked Questions

I've never voted by mail before. How does it work?

Voting by mail is easy! Simply complete and sign an Absent Voter Ballot Application (either what was mailed to you or the application posted on our website at texastownship.org/elections), then return it to the Clerk's Office. You can email, mail or fax it back, or complete the application online at www.michigan.gov/vote. We'll mail your ballot to you, which you will vote, then secure in the secrecy sleeve inside the green envelope. Don't forget to sign and date the envelope!

Ballots can be returned by mail, in person, or via our secure drop box, before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. If you know you'll be out of the area approaching election day, you can provide an alternate address where we will send your ballot. Please note that ballots do not forward! Mail takes time, so please allow adequate time for delivery, as ballots received after election day do not get counted.

You can also come to the Clerk's office with your photo ID before the election to get your ballot in person.

I signed up to be on your Permanent Absent Voter List. Why do you keep sending me applications?

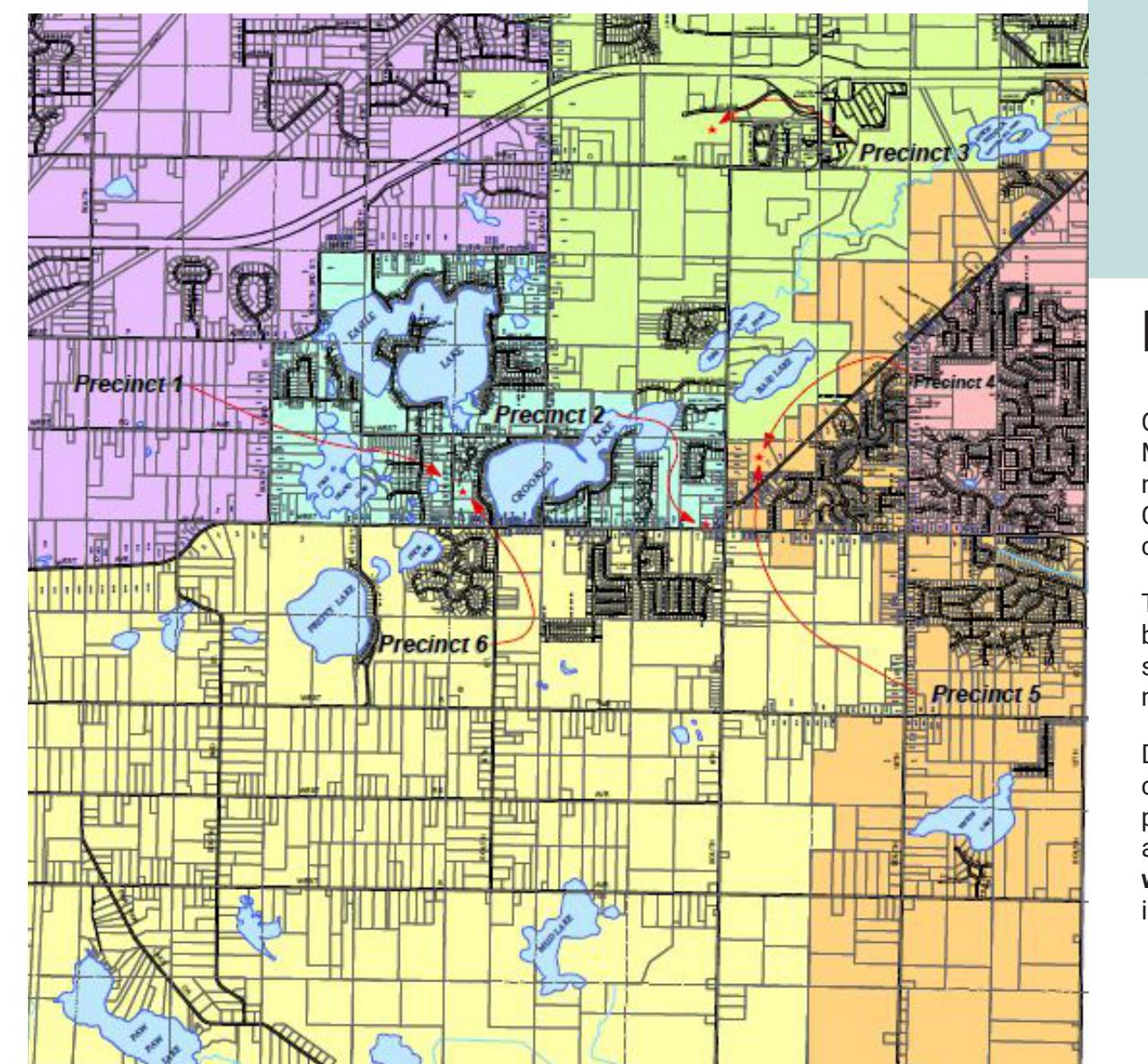
An application to vote is required for every ballot, for every election, whether you vote in person or by mail. Being on the Permanent List means that we'll automatically send you an application for every election so that you can request an absentee ballot, but we still need that signed application back in order to send your ballot to you.

I haven't gotten my ballot yet!

You can check the status of your absentee ballot at www.michigan.gov/vote or by calling the Clerk's office.

I made a mistake on my ballot! How do I fix it?

If you made a mistake (for example, voting for candidates from more than one party during a primary election), you can request that we spoil your ballot and issue you a new one. That request must be made in writing. Do not attempt to use white-out or "X" over the mistake.

**Texas Township Master Plan Public Input**

A new Master Plan has been under development over the past year that will outline the future vision for Texas Charter Township. A master plan is a policy document that assists the Township in making decisions that affect the physical, social, and economic development of the Township. It analyzes existing conditions to create a desired vision for the future. This vision is achieved through a specific set of goals and strategies related to land use, infrastructure, transportation, housing, recreation, the natural environment, economic development, community appearance and design, and regional coordination.

An important component of any master planning effort is community outreach and input. Several outreach efforts have already occurred as part of the planning process, which included a community survey in the summer of 2019, an outreach meeting at Pretty Lake Camp in October 2019, additional meetings at Starbucks on South 9th Street and Texas Corners Brewing Company in January 2020, and a future land use survey during the COVID shelter at home time period.

As part of the final adoption process for the draft Master Plan, the Planning Commission will be completing their review of the document and requesting the Township Board open the required 63-day public comment period. We anticipate this comment period will occur through the months of August and September. At the close of the public comment period, the Planning Commission and Township Board will also hold public hearings for final adoption, which will likely occur in October and November.

We welcome your input on the draft Master Plan! The document can be found on the Texas Tomorrow webpage at: <https://www.texas-tomorrow.com/documents>. Comments can be provided to the Township at any time either through a letter to the Planning Commission or by email to planner@texastownship.org. Please access the Township's website or the Texas Tomorrow webpage for additional information on the upcoming public comment period and public hearings, when posted. If you would like to be included in our email list related to the Master Plan, please provide your email address to Julie Johnston, AICP at planner@texastownship.org.

LOL 5K Race Goes Virtual on August 8th, 2020

Feeling cooped up and ready to run out of your house screaming??!! We've got JUST the event for you! Due to COVID-19, the 6th Annual LOL5k in Texas Corners will be VIRTUAL this year! That means you can run YOUR race anytime, anywhere, with a mask, without a mask, whatever your preference might be! AND the best part.... EVERY participant will receive the awesome race prizes, including a t-shirt and medal at packet pick-up on Friday, August 7!

The virtual LOL5k is scheduled for Saturday, August 8, and you can complete your 5k wherever and however you choose! Walk, run, skip, scoot, jump, jog, wog or bike....be a part of the LOL5k (COVID-19 ain't got nothing on us) fun this summer and support your community! Register at LOL5k.net.

Summer Safety Reminders**Drive, Bike and Walk Safely!**

- Share the road! Many people are out this summer utilizing roads, sidewalks and trailways. Be aware of bikers and pedestrians if you're out driving, and use extra caution on winding and hilly roads.
- Don't leave children or pets in vehicles unattended. The temperature in a vehicle can quickly rise to lethal levels during the summer, even with a window cracked.

Water Safety

- Make sure that children are always closely supervised when playing in the water.
- Pools should always be fenced or covered when not in use to keep children, inexperienced swimmers and pets safe.
- Wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket when out on the water.
- Use caution, and never leave a fire burning unattended!

Fire Safety

- Obtain a Burn Permit from the Fire Department each time you plan to burn brush, leaves, or grass clippings. You can apply for the permit online at texastownship.org/burning-permits or by calling the Fire Department at 269-375-4610. If it is too dry or too windy, a permit may not be issued.
- Use caution, and never leave a fire burning unattended!

New Building Department Fee Schedule, effective August 1, 2020

On June 23, 2020, the Township Board approved a new Electrical and Mechanical Fee Schedule for the Township Building Department. This new schedule updates these fees based on the 2017 Bureau of Construction Code Permit and Inspection Fee Schedule; the Township is currently using fees based on the 2001 fee schedule.

These new fees will be comparable with other local Kalamazoo area building departments, as well as the State of Michigan. The new fee schedule will take effect on **August 1, 2020** for any new electrical and mechanical permits.

Doing a summer project? Did you get your building or zoning permit? Many common projects, like remodels, re-roofs, sheds, barns, decks, fences and pools require a permit and inspections. Contact the Building Department at 269.978.0715 or visit www.texastownship.org/building or www.texastownship.org/planningzoningdevelopment for more information.



Shed or Barn

Deck

Re-roof



Fence

Pool

Outdoor Fireplace

Dumpster Days

Texas Township offers dumpster service to its residents several times per year. This service is an excellent way for residents to dispose of extra household junk & debris.

The 2020 Dumpster Dates are as follows:

- Saturday, August 1st | 9:00am-12:00pm
- Saturday, October 3rd | 9:00am-12:00pm

Event Location: Texas Drive Park, 6603 Texas Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

Please note that drop off is ONLY available on the dates specified above during the hours of 9:00am-12:00pm. Anyone who leaves items outside of the specified dates and times may be prosecuted. All residents choosing to partake of this service are required to unload their own vehicle, and there is a 10 minute time limit.

Visit <http://www.texastownship.org/dumpster-service/> for a list of acceptable and non-acceptable items.

In addition, the Township has a contract with the Kalamazoo County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center to provide residents household hazardous waste disposal services for items like electronics, batteries, automotive products, cleaning products, and other hazardous items. Visit <http://www.kalcounty.com/hhw>.

Shred Day**SATURDAY, AUGUST 1ST**

As a service to our residents, Texas Township hosts a Shred Day for both residents and non-residents to dispose of sensitive documents in a safe and secure way. We contract with Rapid Shred, who provides a large shredding vehicle to dispose of documents quickly. Please note that there is a six standard file box limit. In 2020, Texas Township will only be hosting ONE Shred Day on Saturday, August 1 from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Texas Drive Park. This year's event will be held in coordination with the August 1 Dumpster Day.

Event Location: Texas Drive Park, 6603 Texas Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49009

**Upcoming Events**

August 1 - Dumpster Day and Shred Day at Texas Drive Park

August 4 - State Primary Election

August 25 - Last Tuesday Farmers' Market

September 7 - Labor Day (office closed)

September 14 - Last Day for on-time Summer Tax Payments

October 3 - Dumpster Day

October 17 - Last Saturday Farmers' Market

November 3 - General Election

For a full list of events, visit www.texastownship.org/calendar

**Deadline to Connect to Existing Public Sanitary System: April 1, 2023**

Sewer Ordinance #328 was approved November 13, 2017 by the Texas Charter Township Board of Trustees following prior published notices and the convening of a published public hearing.

The ordinance applies to all existing improved parcels with sewer line available within 200' of existing structure. The 200' distance was recommended by the Township Engineer as this is the threshold suggested by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Michigan Legislature Section 12752 of the Public Health Code (MCL 333.1101) legislatively determines and declares the necessity of public sanitary sewer systems and that they are essential to the health, safety, and welfare of the people of the state. The legislation further states that failure or potential failure of septic tank disposal systems pose a threat to the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of this state as well as its surface and subsurface waters.

In many cases the parcel charge or assessment of \$8,600 has been paid but there is a group of parcels where that is not the case. Please contact the township's treasurer department to verify your situation. Both the parcel charge and connection fee of \$1,800 must be paid in full, or a payment plan executed between the township and owner in order for the owners' private installer to be able to apply for a permit with the State of Michigan.

The Township Board recently amended the payment plan which allows for 15 installment payments billed on the Winter Tax Bill beginning in the year the payment plan is executed. The payment agreement entitled "SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PETITION & WAIVER OF RIGHTS" carries the Prime Rate established the 1st of each calendar year. Effective for Calendar Year 2020, the interest Rate on the payment agreement is 4.75%.

All funds generated by these connection charges are restricted for future repair, maintenance, and replacement costs of the Texas Charter Township sewer system.

Flood Mitigation Efforts

Flood mitigation efforts continue to be a high priority to assist with providing relief to over 630 impacted properties within the Township. These efforts are being funded primarily through a special assessment district. As of June 2020, approximately 845,000,000 million gallons of water has been pumped out of the lakes and into a natural outlet that eventually makes its way to the Kalamazoo River. The large rainfall events and 30% higher than average rainfall in the last four out of six years would have been catastrophic for the majority of our impacted homes, had we not been pumping. This in turn would have had a significant impact on the property values in the Township. However, the additional rain has impacted the draw down rates for the lakes.

The Flood Mitigation Task Force was meeting monthly until the Stay-At-Home order was issued. We have been able to hold meetings in May and June via Zoom. The Task Force is currently working on an EGLE pumping permit one-year extension which will be contingent upon approval from each of the property owners that provided a temporary easement for the pumping equipment.

We are concurrently working with Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE, formerly MDEQ) and the Kalamazoo County Drain Office to implement the permanent long-term solution as we do not want anyone else to have to suffer from this tragic flooding again. The long-term solution involves setting a Lake Level for both Crooked and Eagle Lakes, then to construct a weir set at that level for each lake. Eagle Lake would be permanently connected to Crooked Lake through a gravity flow system and Crooked Lake would be permanently connected to the wetland through a gravity flow system. The wetland flows into Bass Lake which already has a natural outlet. This system will ensure Crooked and Eagle Lakes never get to this stage again. This system has been designed utilizing gravity flow so electricity and mechanical equipment will not be necessary to run the equipment and it also will utilize the subsurface soils to filter the water, thus not requiring a filtration system. The permanent solution could be installed and operational by fall 2021 if there are no delays. Once the permanent solution is constructed there will be little cost involved in maintaining the system.

This project been a great example of public/private partnerships that have successfully worked together to mitigate the flooding crisis. We have made progress but still have work to do and are committed to continuing to work together.