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Here's a brief overview of what's happening in Texas Township.

THE STAR

Feb 2023 eNewsletter

FEATURED NEWS

- [Township Hall Project](#)
- [Key Leadership Changes](#)
- [Flood Mitigation Long-Term Project Update](#)
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- [Curbside Bulk Item Collection](#)
- [Riparian Ordinance Update](#)



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Township Hall Project

Framing is underway!



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Newsletter Schedule

February | eNewsletter

(adjusted for 2023)

April | Print

Newsletter (adjusted for 2023)

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If you haven't been through the Corners recently, you'll notice some big changes! Construction of the new 10,600 SQFT Township Hall is underway. Framing is in progress and all categories of work have been bid and contracted.

Investments include additional office spaces for future growth, upgraded AV components for enhanced streaming of Township meetings, additional meeting spaces to accommodate committees, and security upgrades. We are confident that this new facility will help us elevate the services provided to the township.

The current timeline for project completion is August/September 2023, but that is contingent upon availability of HVAC equipment. We remain hopeful that we'll have occupancy in fall of 2023.

[Click here](#) to learn more about the project.



Important Numbers

Building Department

269-978-0715

Fire Department

269-375-4610

Kalamazoo County

Dispatch

269-488-8911

Road Commission

269-381-3171

Drain Office

269-384-8117

Passport Service Available By Appointment Only

Traveling somewhere in 2023? We can help! Texas Township is once again offering passport service by appointment.

Appointments are available Mon - Thu and can be scheduled online at: www.texastownship.org/passports.

Note: We do not process passport renewals.

[Schedule Now](#)

Flood Mitigation Efforts Still Underway

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▼](#)**in 2023****Flood Updates****Thank You to Former Superintendent Julie VanderWiere**

In October 2022, Julie VanderWiere resigned as Township Superintendent. Julie served as the Township's first Superintendent and held that position for ten years. Her contributions to the Township are innumerable and we are extremely grateful for her leadership and accomplishments over the past decade. Julie helped the Township accomplish numerous key projects, including:

- 6th Street Park: Land acquisition and Phase I development
- Texas Drive Trailway: Design and construction of Phase II trailway
- Texas Drive Park: Crowdfunding and design of Maple Hill Splash Pad
- New Township Hall Project: Oversight of feasibility study, acquisition of property, and design process with Progress AE
- Flood Mitigation: Coordination of public/private partnership and management of monumental project

Erik Wilson to Serve as Next Superintendent

On February 15, 2023, the Texas Township Board of Trustees unanimously approved a three-year contract with Erik Wilson to serve as the next Township Superintendent.

Erik is the current City Manager at the City of Plainwell and has served in that capacity for the past twenty years. He holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from Eastern Michigan University.

In November 2022, the Township contracted with Walsh Municipal Services to lead the recruitment process for our next Superintendent. Eighteen candidates applied for the position and four finalists were selected for interviews by the Township Board. The finalists were:

- Adam Kline, Township Manager at Oakland Township
- Haley Snyder, City Manager at the City of Albion
- Erik Wilson, City Manager at the City of Plainwell
- Justin Lakamper, Village Manager at the Village of Edmore

Interviews were held on Monday, January 30 at 9:00 AM. During the interviews, it was apparent that Wilson was the top contender for the position. His managerial style and approach aligned with what the Board is seeking in a Superintendent, and his experience lends itself to the

Upcoming Events**February**

Feb 20 | Township Offices Closed

Feb 23 | DDA Meeting

Feb 27 | Township Board Meeting

Feb 28 | Parks & Trails Committee Meeting

March

Mar 13 | Township Board Meeting

Mar 14 | Planning Commission Workshop

Mar 22 | Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting

Mar 23 | DDA Meeting

Mar 28 | Parks & Trails Committee Meeting

Mar 27 | Township Board Meeting

Mar 28 | Planning Commission Meeting

April

April 10 | Township Board Meeting

Apr 11 | Planning Commission Workshop

Apr 22 | Shred & Electronics Recycling Event

Apr 24 | Start of Curbside Bulk Item Collection

Apr 24 | Township Board Meeting

Apr 25 | Parks & Trails Committee Meeting

Apr 26 | Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting

Apr 27 | DDA Meeting

Please visit

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"Erik distinguished himself among a field of talented candidates. I am confident that he is the right person to lead Texas Township and help us navigate the opportunities and challenges that lie before us. His knowledge of West Michigan is advantageous, and he values building connections in the community and working to provide exceptional service. I look forward to his contributions to our community." - Supervisor Nick Loeks.

Wilson has a proven track record in public service with many impressive accomplishments during his tenure at the City of Plainwell. His selection was unanimously approved by the Township Board and he will begin as Township Superintendent on March 20.

When asked about the opportunity, Wilson stated "I am both humbled and excited to be selected as Texas Township's next Superintendent. I look forward to joining a phenomenal team and building upon the accomplishments that make Texas Township exceptional."

Please join us in welcoming Erik to Texas Township!

Wendy Mazer Elected to Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners

In November 2022, former Trustee Wendy Mazer was elected to serve as District 8 representative on the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners. Wendy was first elected to the Township Board in 2012 and served as a Trustee for ten years. We would like to extend our gratitude to Wendy for her exceptional service and wish her well on her new endeavor.

Michelle O'Neill Appointed as Township Board Trustee

Following Wendy's resignation, the Township began the process of appointing a new Trustee. A public application process launched in December 2022. The Township Board was pleased with the response and the depth of the candidate pool. Nineteen individuals applied for the position and four finalists were selected for interviews. Public Interviews were conducted in an open meeting on January 16, 2023. On January 23, 2023, the Township Board appointed Michelle O'Neill as Township Trustee; she will serve the remainder of the term ending in November 2024. Learn more about Trustee O'Neill [here](#).

[View the
Township
Calendar](#)

We're Hiring!

Part-Time Maintenance Assistant Job Opening

[View details & apply](#)

**Public Safety
Reminder:
Keep Vehicles
Locked &
Remove
Valuables
From Inside**

New Park Improvements Planned

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Texas Drive Park Swing Set

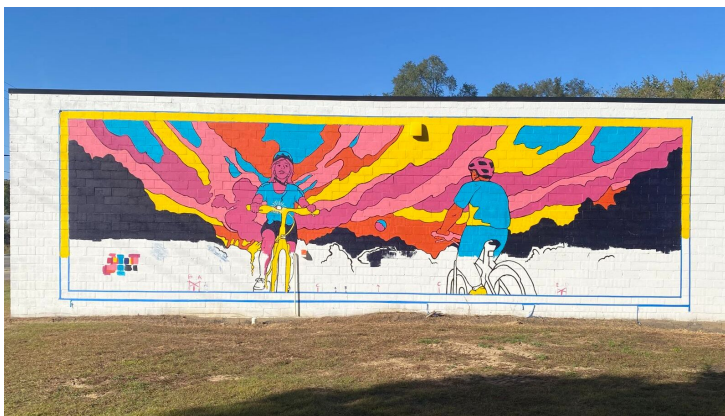
Installation est. Spring 2023

The Township approved the purchase of a new swing set for Texas Drive Park. The new swing set will be installed adjacent to the play structure and feature two toddler swings, two ADA compliant swings, and two standard swings.

6th Street Park Multipurpose Fields

Opening est. Spring 2023

The Township is in the process of finalizing the multipurpose fields at 6th Street Park and anticipate having them ready for use this Spring. The last remaining improvements include the installation of goals and the striping of the fields.



Texas Drive Park Pavilion Mural

Installation est. May/June 2023

Local artist Ellen VanderMyde was recently commissioned for installation of a mural on the Texas Drive Park pavilion structure. Most recently, Ellen completed the Bike Friendly Kalamazoo mural installation on Lovers Lane (see image above). The mural will be adjacent to the Maple Hill Splash Pad and design work will begin in February 2023. The project will include a public engagement component

upgrades to the pavilion including fresh paint and signage.

MDNR Spark Grant



In December 2022, the Parks & Trails Committee coordinated the submittal of an MDNR SPARK grant application for the construction of the restroom facility, pavilion, and play structure at 6th Street Park. The SPARK grant is a new initiative using state ARPA dollars to help improve and redevelop existing public recreation spaces. Unfortunately, the Township was not awarded funding during Round 1 - however, the Township Board does plan to move forward with design of the restroom facility and our hopeful construction can begin in mid-to-late 2023.

Flood Mitigation Long-Term Project

\$1.7M FEMA Grant Awarded | Permit Issued



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project and issued the permit for construction. The Township has received \$1.7 in FEMA grant funds to assist with funding the construction of the long-term project, this is an increase of nearly \$1M over the initial award of \$0.7M. The construction drawings have been finalized and were released for bidding on February 1st. Bids are expected back on March 1. At this time, the Township and Drain Commission anticipate that construction will start this year, however, the timeline will be clearer after bids have been submitted and reviewed. While the additional FEMA grant monies will help with funding the project, there is a strong likelihood that additional funds will be needed. The Township has budgeted funds to contribute to the project; the remaining project cost will be shared by the property owners in the special assessment district that was established by the Kalamazoo County Drain Commission in 2021. The Drain Commission will begin preparing the assessment roll for the district once we have final bid results. A public hearing will be held as part of the assessment roll process and property owners in the district will receive a mailed notice from the Drain Commission in advance of that hearing. We will communicate that date as soon as it becomes available.

While there is still much work remaining, the project is moving forward as quickly as possible and we would like to thank EGLE, Prein & Newhof, the Kalamazoo County Drain Commission, the Flood Task Force, and the Lake Associations for their tremendous work and support over the past several years. We are confident in the final project design and look forward to the start of construction.

Shred & Electronics Recycling Day

Sat Apr 22 | 9am - 12noon | Township Hall Parking Lot



Our annual combined Shred Day/Electronics Recycling Event is coming up on Saturday, April 22 from 9am to 12noon at the Township Hall. This is the perfect way to

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Shredding

A large shredding vehicle will be onsite to dispose of documents quickly. Please note that there is a six standard file sized box limit.

Electronics Recycling

The Township has partnered with Comprenew to provide this recycling service. We'll be collecting items such as old monitors, TVs, computers, and various electronic devices.

Mandatory Sewer Connection

Deadline to Connect Extended to October 1, 2023.

It's been over five years since Sewer Ordinance #328 was approved and we are nearing the five-year deadline (April 1, 2023) for connection to the public sanitary sewer system if a lead is located within 200' of an existing structure originating sanitary sewage.

Progress has been good. Of 4,090 parcels with sewer available there remains 137 (3.3%) who have not connected. Many of you have participated at our meetings and we have learned the variety of reasons you do not want to connect or what has limited your ability to connect. While it is unlikely the Ordinance requirement to connect will be amended, there are changes the Board is considering and has implemented facilitating the connection.

On February 13, the Board adopted a resolution allowing for the following:

- An extension to the mandatory connection deadline. The new deadline to connect is October 1, 2023.
- Reduced the cap on the connection fee financing agreement to 5.5% from 8%.
- Any household that previously signed a 2023 agreement will have their interest rate lowered to 5.5%.

During February/March, the Board will explore our ability to provide the following:

- Will the township be able to finance an individual installation at a nominal interest rate?
- Will there be parameters for deferments and exemptions, up until a private system fails?

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based deferment?

- Waivers / deferments based on household income?
- Identity parcels that may not be allowed deferments or exemptions. For example,
 - Riparian: Improved parcels that remain unconnected: Crooked (7); Eagle (12); Pretty (3)
 - Parcels in the Wellhead Protection Zone
 - Parcels within 1,320' distance of named water bodies.

The Board understands that the changes in the economy over the past year have greatly affected residents' ability to fund their connection. There is also an increased demand for contractors which has limited their availability. However, the Board also considers that the State and area municipalities utilize an 18-month time frame, and your Board hoped the longer five-year term would allow residents to better plan.

Please stay engaged and join us via zoom or attend in person beginning at 6:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The agenda is posted on our website (texastownship.org) at 5:00 p.m. on the Thursday before the scheduled Board meeting.

All questions should be directed to the Treasurer's Department. Please ask to speak with Treasurer Roberts or Deputy Treasurer Meinema.

Maple Hill Splash Pad

Coming to Texas Drive Park Summer 2023



The Katerberg Verhage team was able to start construction early last fall. The first phase of construction included installation of the underground storm chamber

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The Parks & Trails Committee has been working on amenities for the site and will finalize those early this year.

Construction is slated to be completed by mid-June 2023, with opening shortly to follow!



Curbside Bulk Item Collection

Program to Continue in 2023

In 2023, Texas Township will once again be partnering with College Hunks to offer one curbside bulk item collection service. The township will be divided into four zones of ~1,500 homes per zone. Each zone will have five designated days for collection. The zone boundaries will remain largely the same as in 2022.

Service Availability

This service will be available for single-family homes and condominiums located within the Township. It will not be available for vacant parcels, commercial or industrial buildings, apartments, or manufactured home communities.

How it Works

Residents can place accepted items at the curb the Friday-Sunday prior to the start of collection in their zone. College Hunks will pick up the items during the designated collection period (within five days) and recycle or dispose of the items.

Schedule

Collection will begin on Monday, April 24. Please view the schedule below:

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Zone 1 - Collection begins: Monday, April 24

Zone 2 - Collection Begins: Monday, May 1

Zone 3 - Collection Begins: Monday, May 8

Zone 4 - Collection Begins: Monday, May 15

[View online zone lookup map](#)

View Program Information

College Hunks will only be stopping at each qualifying household one time. Once a street has been completed, there will not be a second pickup. If items are not at the curb by 11pm on Sunday (prior to collection starting) we cannot guarantee pickup.

Riparian Ordinance Update Project

On Wednesday, February 15, the Planning Department held a public listening session for the purpose of learning more about current riparian challenges and discussing the upcoming riparian ordinance process. There were approximately 25 in-person attendees and over 30 Zoom attendees. We'd like to thank all who attended and provided input on this process.

The Township has been discussing the need for updates to the current riparian regulations since before the flooding in 2018, when groundwater and lake levels did not recede following rain events as they had in years past. Now that the Township is in the home stretch with final permitting and eventual construction of a long-term solution, the Township Board has directed the Planning Department and Planning Commission to resume work on updating riparian regulations to protect lakes, ponds, and streams within the Township, in addition to centralizing the regulations within the Zoning Ordinance for simplicity.

This is a multi-month process with the next step being the likely circulation of an online survey to collect additional information and validate feedback received at the listening session. There is also a strong possibility of a community workshop following the survey. The continued process is focused on engagement - it is unlikely that the Planning

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For more information on this project, please visit www.texastownship.org/riparian-ordinance.

Concert in the Corners on Replay for 2023

Concert in the Corners is presented by TemperaturePro

We are pleased to announce that "Concert in the Corners" will continue in 2023 with the launch of a new mini-series! Our 2023 series is made possible by the generous support of our title sponsor: TemperaturePro. We are planning two events; one to be held in July and the other in August. Please stay tuned for more information to be released soon!

[Please click here for more information on sponsorship opportunities.](#)



This activity is supported by the Michigan Arts & Culture Council, administered by the Kalamazoo Arts Council Inc.

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