

Scio Township

Summer 2014 COMMUNITY REPORT

In this issue:

From The Supervisor's Desk..... 1

Land Preservation . . . 2

Clerk's Corner 3

From The Treasurer's Desk . . . 3

Contacts. 4

Update on Oil Exploration. 5

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

Township Updates

Oil exploration in the Township

In the news in Scio Township, as most residents are likely already aware, the Township was advised in May of a proposal to drill for oil within the Township. As I write, the permit to drill in the area of Miller Road and West Delhi is under consideration and will have likely been approved and issued by the MDEQ. Under the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act (the Act), townships and counties are precluded from regulating the “drilling, completion or operation” of oil or gas wells or other wells drilled for exploration purposes. The permit request by West



Bay was filed with the MDEQ and they are the approving entity. This permit does not request or contemplate hydraulic fracking, a far more concerning activity. The Township has now engaged the services of a law firm experienced in oil and gas matters to advise us, particularly in those areas where a township might still regulate some of the activities associated with oil drilling. All of our local state legislators have joined us, along with the City of Ann Arbor, in opposing the drilling. However,

as noted, it is expected that the permit will be issued nonetheless. A discussion of the Act can be found here:

http://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/index.ssf/2014/06/the_michigan_zoning_enabling_a.html

Park Road, Marshall Road, Streiter Road, Stein Road, Liberty Road, West Delhi from Dexter-Ann Arbor to Miller, Scio Ridge, Uplands, Jackson Plaza, Aprill Drive and East Delhi at the RR crossing. At least three subdivision roads are slated for work which is not funded by the township-wide road millage but rather by local SADs, including Honey Creek Subdivision, Jackson Industrial and Interface Drive, Brook n Ridge Subdivision, and the Baker Heights Court neighborhood.



New business in the Township

Construction has begun on the long-anticipated Menard's store on the site formally know as Grant's Farm as well as the Holiday Inn Express and Suites behind Big Boy, McDonalds and the BP gas station. In addition, Haley Mechanical has begun a building expansion. Site plans and/or zoning requests have been submitted for Scio Square (restaurant/coffee drive-thru on one of the Meijer's outlots), PinRose (interior gun range, safety training and retail), Touchstone Cohousing community center and West Washtenaw Medical Development on Jackson Blvd on the site currently occupied by Alpha House.



Road Improvements

On other fronts, the Township has begun the process of road improvements contemplated under the Township-wide road millage instituted last year and dedicated to local road improvements. While we would like to tackle all of the 29 segments slated to be worked on, time will permit us to do about 10 – 12 projects this year. Those projects include improvements to portions of



Two farmland Projects Completed

Many people know the large barn marked “Meadowcroft” that the Moores have owned for over 40 years.

Scio Township’s Land Preservation Program has started 2014 with two conservation easement purchases on prominent farmland properties.

The Moore farm

The first of these projects is on a 24-acre parcel owned by Tom and Ellie Moore on N. Delhi Rd. Many people know the large barn marked “Meadowcroft” that the Moores have owned for over 40 years. The barn dates to the 1870s and was badly damaged in the tornado that hit the nearby

Village of Delhi in 1917. It was turned 90 degrees and re-built and is now maintained for horses, while the rolling farmland is planted in hay. The parcel is a key property in a developing string of protected lands running from Delhi Metropark east to beyond US-23. The City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt program contributed 30% of the purchase price of \$84,000. The Moores have long sought to protect the historic, scenic and natural features of their property, finally realized through the conveyance of a conservation easement.



The property was a high priority for agricultural preservation along Scio Township’s southern boundary.

The White farm

The second project involves a farm on S. Zeeb Rd. that has been in the same family for nearly 100 years. The farm was purchased about 1918 by Martin and Pauline Keck, who were German farmers and had a number of farm animals including horses, cows, pigs, sheep and chickens. The conservation easement was conveyed by Maria White, a descendent of the Keck family. The property is 66.25 acres and features over 1,700 of frontage on a busy paved road, providing outstanding scenic views. Mrs. White

subsequently sold the fee simple interest to a young farmer who had been working the land for a number of years. The easement includes a four-acre building envelope in which a house and barns may be built. The property was a high priority for agricultural preservation along Scio Township’s southern boundary. The City of Ann Arbor Greenbelt program contributed 30% of the purchase price of \$130,000.

A number of other projects are in the works and several more closings are anticipated for 2014 so stay tuned!



Gubernatorial Election Year



One must be registered 30 days before an election date to vote in that community.

2014 is a Gubernatorial Election year, and we are really looking forward to your participation at the polls in August and November. You can plan to vote at your regular polling place, but if you have forgotten what your regular precinct polling place is, it is easy to check it on-line. Please note that the polling place for Precinct 9 has been permanently moved to WISD. If you have questions, you can either call me here at the Township, or check the Secretary of State's "Voter Information Center". The State's website address is: <https://webapps.sos.state.mi.us/mivote/>. Finding out if your Absent Voter ballot has been sent or received by the Clerk can be checked by visiting the State's website. If you don't have computer access, you can always call the front desk here at the Township.

Absent Voters

When filling out your Absent Voter application be sure to read the application thoroughly, and fill out every applicable blank. 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 anything is missing, we always try to call you. If required information is missing from the application, your ballot cannot be sent. With the demise of land phone lines, it is sometimes impossible to find a phone number for you.

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 Township, be sure to register before July 7, 2014, for the August Primary election. October 6, 2014 is the last day to register for the November General 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 6 months of your permanent move.

Would you like to help?

Looking for a day of excitement with some of your friends and neighbors? Do you want to feel good about doing your civic duty? We are always looking for folks to help out on Election Day. Election Inspectors are crucial to ensure a smooth election process. We offer a breakfast snack and dinner as well as a small stipend. We are in need of about 90 folks to help us out on election day and have about 60 signed up so far. Training is provided and you'll get to spend the day with like-minded neighbors looking to ensure that the right to vote proceeds flawlessly. The job is not difficult but does require some attention to detail. Contact me at 734-369-9400 for further information. Thank you.

A New Tax Year

It's the beginning of a new tax year. The first week in July everyone should receive their tax bill unless your taxes are paid from an escrow account. Call the office if you do not receive your bill.

A big "thank you" to all for helping us keep the records accurate. Continue to check the billing for any errors and

look for a possible message "2013 Taxes Were Sent to the County as Delinquent". It's another way of trying to keep people informed.

As always, remember we "do not accept postmarks" as the "paid date". We must receive payment by September 14th.



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: SMIT-1234MAINST), which can be found on this newsletter's label.



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.

Editor
David Read

Graphic Design
Julie Tanguay

Photographer
David Read

Scio Township Department Heads

Carl Ferch, Fire Chief
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 18 – Rebekah Warren
(517) 373-2406; senrwarren@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 – John Dingell
(202) 225-4071

U.S. Senators:

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

Carl Levin
(202) 224-6221; e-mail via www.levin.senate.gov

President of the United States:

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

Update on Oil Exploration in Scio Township

The state Zoning Enabling Act prohibits a county or township from regulating or controlling the drilling, completion, or operation of oil or gas wells.

In the fall of 2013, agents representing West Bay Exploration, a mineral extraction company from the Traverse City area, began knocking on doors in Scio Township asking residents to sign oil and gas leases. Some of these leases would permit drilling on the premises, subject to MDEQ approval, and some leases entitle landowners to share in the revenue from extraction. The Township's authority with respect to this matter is constrained by Michigan law. The state Zoning Enabling Act prohibits a county or township from regulating or controlling the drilling, completion, or operation of oil or gas wells (or other wells drilled for oil or gas exploration purposes). The Township similarly has no jurisdiction over the issuance of permits for the location, drilling, completion, operation, or abandonment of such wells. However, there may be some limits the Township can impose to help control these activities. Here is a recap of recent events:

Public Forums on Oil Exploration

On April 24, the Scio Township Board of Trustees hosted a forum at the WISD, which was attended by over 300 people. The forum's panel included Pat Gibson and Tim Baker, from West Bay Exploration, Hal Fitch from the MDEQ, Curtis Talley from Michigan State University Extension Services, and representatives of the Michigan League of Conservation Voters, the Sierra Club, and the Michigan Environmental Council. On May 20, Christopher Grobbel, former DEQ official, gave a presentation at the Scio Township Hall on oil and gas extraction and the permitting process. On May 1, an application was submitted to the MDEQ (#A140053) seeking a permit to drill on the property at West Delhi and Miller Road.

Letters of Opposition

Shortly thereafter, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners, the City Council of the City of Ann Arbor, and the Scio Township Board of Trustees passed resolutions opposing the drilling. Senator Rebekah Warren and Representatives Gretchen Driskell and Jeff Irwin also sent a joint letter to the MDEQ requesting the denial of permit application #AI40053. These resolutions and communications site potential damage to the public health and natural resources. Among the concerns raised in these documents were the release of hazardous substances into the environment in the area, alteration of ground water and surface water, noise and other disturbances from heavy truck traffic, and potential contamination of the Huron River, which supplies drinking water to 150,000 area residents. The letter from Senator Warren and other elected officials to the MDEQ called for a full environmental assessment before issuing a permit to drill.

However, on June 18, the MDEQ notified Spaulding Clark, Scio Township Supervisor, that it is prepared to approve this application. In spite of this development, the Scio Township Board of Trustees and neighborhood organizations continue their work to regulate oil and gas activity that

is not subject to the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act and to address the health, safety and welfare of the Township and its residents.

Township is looking for Regulatory options

The Scio Township BOT has retained attorney James Olson to represent the Township in its consideration of regulating ancillary oil and gas activities that are not subject to Michigan's Zoning Enabling Act and address health, safety, and welfare concerns. Members of the Planning Commission and the Board of Trustees are reviewing the Township's Master Plan, as well as its ordinances, for this purpose.

Although West Bay has represented that they will not be using either vertical or horizontal fracking methods (high-pressure, hydraulic fracturing), the Township will consider the advisability of including ordinances concerning activities related to fracking (e.g. high volume water withdrawals; disclosure of chemical disclosures, etc).

At least two neighborhood organizations are actively opposing drilling in Scio: Scio Mineral Rights (<http://www.scio mineralrights.net>) and Citizens for Oil Free Backyards (<http://www.oilfreebackyards.org>) which is involved in a statewide initiative to repeal the Michigan law that prohibits townships from regulating oil and gas drilling.

Residents are encouraged to attend Board of Trustee meetings as well as Planning Commission meetings to ask questions, or to submit questions in writing to be addressed at BOT meetings. Additional information, including summaries of presentations and contact information, as well as updates may be found on the Township website: <http://www.scio township.org/forum-on-oil-exploration-in-scio-township/>





Scio Township Hall
 827 North Zeeb Road
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Postmaster: leave with current resident

PRE SORTED STD
 US POSTAGE
 PAID
 PERMIT NO 308
 ANN ARBOR, MI

House Calls for your ailing computer

Get help from Andrew Dixon, your Microsoft Certified Professional and source of affordable onsite PC troubleshooting and repair. Call (734) 668-1788 for a free consultation or visit:

www.personalcomputeradvisor.com

Personal
Computer Advisor

Hands-on help with your home or office PC
 ASD Computing LLC, 5076 Hensley Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Susan Cobb-Starrett Insurance Agency Inc.

Susan Cobb-Starrett, CLU®, Agent
 734-741-1237
www.susanstarrett.net



*The greatest compliment
 you can give is a referral.*



TRB Painting

*Prompt, Professional Service
 for all your residential
 & commercial needs*



We specialize in:

- Interior and Exterior Painting
- Faux Finishing
- Wallpaper Removal
- Expert Drywall Repair
- Finish Carpentry and Repairs
- Ceramic Tile Installation
- Power Washing & Deck Staining

Licensed and Insured

Call today for your free estimate:
734.761.5090 | 734.846.2900
www.trbpainting.com



DEXTER FARMERS MARKET

The Dexter Farmers' Market (on Alpine next to the Dexter District Library) is now open - hours are Saturday, 8 am to 1 pm and Tuesday, 2 pm to 6 pm. New vendors are always welcomed. Applications can be downloaded from our website:

<http://www.dextermi.gov/farmers-market>