



News You Can Use!

Peninsula Township

Fall 2017

www.peninsulatownship.com

FROM THE TOWN BOARD

With Fall color right around the corner and the kids back in school, the Peninsula seems to be a little more relaxed for local residents. In this issue, the Township Newsletter reviews frequently asked questions about the Old Mission Peninsula School; brings you up to speed on the Township's Purchase of Development Rights program; outlines the Town Board's effort to hire a new Fire Chief; discusses the plight of oak trees at Pelizzari Natural Area; and reviews upcoming events taking place across the Peninsula this Fall.

IN REMEMBRANCE...

This summer, two of our long-term residents passed on. Representing the excavating industry for over 50 years, "Jack" Monson, operated a gravel pit and farm. Norm Buchan, blueberry, peach, apple, and cherry farmer, was the patriarch of Buchan Blueberry Farm. Both men were in their 80's, and known for their general interest and involvement in the community.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE OLD MISSION PENINSULA SCHOOL...

I heard that our school is becoming a charter school. What is a charter school?

Charter schools are part of Michigan's public education system. They are tuition-free public schools founded by educators, parents, community groups, and others who have a compelling vision for a new school to serve children in their community. Charter schools operate under a performance-based contract (the charter) granted by a public education institution (an authorizer) and are governed by a local school board appointed by the authorizer. They are also subject to virtually all the same requirements as all other public schools, so charter students take the M-STEP and school leaders will report information to the Michigan Department of Education the same way that all public schools do. Each charter contract is performance based and contains rigorous educational goals expected to be achieved. Schools that meet these goals can continue to serve kids. Schools that do not meet these goals are subject to corrective measures to help them improve. Schools that consistently underperform can be closed. OMPS was authorized for charter in July 2017, by Grand Valley State University (GVSU) and is working closely with GVSU and the National Charter School Institute to organize our school.

When will our school open as a charter school?

The "new" Old Mission Peninsula School ("OMPS") is scheduled to open in September, 2018.

Who can enroll in OMPS?

Enrollment is open to all Michigan students in the grades that we serve.

Will OMPS offer special education services?

YES! OMPS provides special education services to any student who requires them. We will work in partnership with TBAISD to provide appropriate services for all learners for special education support services such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech/Language Therapy, Social Work, as well as, a School Psychologist and Teacher Consultants. Special education teachers partner with regular classroom teachers to reach every student.

How much is tuition?

As a public school, OMPS will not and cannot charge tuition. OMPS will receive state funding to operate.

Will my property taxes increase because of OMPS?

No. OMPS cannot levy property taxes for any purpose. This creates a win-win situation. Our community's school will remain open, and no one's taxes will go up as a result.

What happens if more students apply to OMPS than there are seats available?

If more students apply than seats are available, seats will be distributed by a lottery to ensure everyone has a fair opportunity.

As a charter school, will OMPS still be part of Traverse City Area Public Schools ("TCAPS")?

No. OMPS will be independent of TCAPS and will be governed by its own school board. Just like TCAPS board, our board members will be public officials and will have all the same powers and duties as all other school board members in Michigan. The first official meeting is expected to be in December. Though we will be independent, know that our relationship with TCAPS and the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District ("TBAISD") is strong. Old Mission Peninsula is still in the TCAPS district and our job is to fully prepare our students for their transition to the district's middle and high schools. We look forward to working with them to serve all children. We have and will continue to maintain a positive relationship to ensure our students transition smoothly.

What is your curriculum like?

The curriculum is a collaboration between Harvard Graduate School of Education and Outward Bound. It is a comprehensive, standards-based literacy program, that engages teachers and students through compelling, real world content. The curriculum has received the highest marks from EdReports.org, Educators Evaluating the Quality of Instructional Products (EQuIP), and several states. The curriculum addresses an expanded definition of student achievement-building, students' academic knowledge and skills, habits of character, and high-quality student work.

The K-2 EL Language Arts curriculum aligns with the State of Michigan's standards, and honors primary learner's needs for movement, stories, imagination and comprises a full year of instruction. Students are engaged in content-based lessons that build literacy skills as they learn through the deep study of compelling topics. Phonics instruction is taught explicitly.

Grades 3-5 EL curriculum comprises a full year of instruction and honors students' growing capacity to read complex texts, write with depth, and explore pressing issues in the world around them. Students build literacy skills through complex text analysis and the additional literacy block accelerates the achievement of all students.

Math in Focus will serve as the math curriculum. As an authentic Singapore Math® curriculum, problem solving serves as the center of math learning and concepts are taught with a concrete–pictorial–abstract learning progression through real-world, hands-on experiences. This approach is research based, focuses on classroom learning, discussion and practice and is applauded for its ability to balance conceptual understanding, visual learning, and problem solving.

How can I stay updated on OMPS' progress?

Look for monthly public updates published on the Old Mission Peninsula Education Foundation (OMPEF) website at www.ompef.org. OMPEF provides updates for Township residents, through the township newsletter, the Old Mission Gazette, Old Mission Living Magazine, and other news sources. Send your questions to info@ompef.org

--Allison O'Keefe, OMPEF President

NEWS FROM THE PARK COMMISSION...

Pelizzari Natural Area, Oak Wilt Treatment to Begin. During a walkthrough for siting a potential Universal Access Trail System in Pelizzari earlier this summer, Oak Wilt was discovered at the west edge of the PNA forested area. Fortunately the infestation will be treated this year to prevent its spread in the park and to any adjoining private properties. But unfortunately, one of the center pieces of the trail system will be lost. The 'great oak' at which the wooded trails meet the prairie trails is a casualty of Oak Wilt and will have to be cut down.

You may have read about Oak Wilt recently as it has been a problem in Northwest Michigan for years. Oak Wilt is spread by root grafts that occur between red oak trees or overland by beetles that land on the fungal spores of infected trees and transport them to a fresh wound on healthy tree that could be a mile away. The remedy is drastic - removal and destruction of any spore producing trees plus the treatment of all oaks within the potential root to root transfer zone around these spore producing trees.

The spore producing trees (about 10) will be cut down and the wood will be stacked and covered over the winter in the prairie section of the park. This will kill off the spores. Moving infected wood aids in spreading of the disease. The remainder of the treatment to be utilized in Pelizzari will be the herbicide treatment of oaks within the 'infection area'. This will prevent the spread of the disease within the park and to its neighbors.

This treatment is not without cost. But fortunately a state of Michigan Grant will assume up to 85% of the cost of the initial treatments. But as bids are still to be received as of this date, the state grant may require cost compromises as a number of sites are included in this year's grant list.

Only infected trees will be cut and removed. We are employing expert tree specialists for this task in order to minimize any collateral damages and to prevent the spread of the Oak Wilt. These activities will take place in mid-October and November.

The process of identification, quantifying the problem and finding an Oak Wilt solution involved a number of people from our Township, the Grand Traverse Land Conservancy, Grand Traverse Conversation District, Park Commission and others. Special recognition goes out to: Steven Lagerquist, Grand Traverse Land Conservancy James Scarlata, Arborist.

The person who led the application process for treatment funding, arranged numerous resources and represented our Township's needs during the grant applications process is Kama Ross, District Forester, Leelanau, Grand Traverse and Benzie Conservation Districts. Without Kama's help, we would not have been able to secure outside funding and may not have been able to treat the infestation this year, and thus, would have suffered greater losses next spring and summer. We thank her for getting Peninsula Township Parks on this year's grant list.

The contracts for treatment are out. So when you hear the saws and see the activity, keep in mind that we are hopeful that the treatment will save the remaining oaks in Pelizzari Natural Area and its neighbors including those along the East Bay shoreline.

PLEASE NOTE: during the cutting and lumbering project, the Pelizzari Natural Area will be closed for about 2 weeks for safety reasons. Please observe the closure as we do not want to place anyone in danger during this project, as the trees are felled and hauled. These actions may not be enough to ensure that the spread of oak wilt on the Peninsula will be ended. The Park Commission encourages every landowner with red oaks go to www.michiganoakwilt.org for information on identification, treatment and recommended practices to reduce Oak Wilt spread.

--Mike Skurski, Park Commissioner

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY...

Almost everyone knows by now that Peninsula Community Library (PCL) is raising funds for a new home at the corner of Island View and Center Roads. In less than a year, over \$1,300,000 has been gifted to the library's building fund. Another \$300,000 is in the works. Two grants have been received, from Acentek and the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation. Several others are soon to be submitted. Dozens of people have worked hard on committees, at events and as support. Donations have come from over 300 people. The board and staff have been overwhelmed with the love of our community for our small rural library. Naming rights have been purchased for the building (Bill and Nancy Davy), the local history room (Tim Carroll), the fireplace (in honor of Mary Johnson), the coffee bar (Jon and Sue Kinne), the children's garden (Mack and Lorraine Beers), the reception/circulation desk area (Paula Kelley in memory of reading dog Bear) and the group meeting room which will forever hereafter be known as the Neahtawanta Room. Our community is making this happen. Our goal is \$2,500,000. A rendering of our beautiful farmhouse style building is on display in the library. Call the library at 223-7700 to find out how you can contribute!

Varied programming is offered throughout the year. Check our website at <www.peninsulacommunitylibrary.org>. Regular programming includes *Pageturners* on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM. *Gentle Yoga* happens Wednesdays at 9:30 AM for \$7. *The Great Start Collaborative* offers their 5 to One playgroup on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 9:30 AM. *Story Stew* for kids is offered the 2nd, 4th & any 5th Thursdays at 9:30 AM. Our *Reading Therapy Dog Zeb* loves to listen to kids read – call for times. Notary service & help with mobile tech devices are available too – just call. Kids enjoy crafts & play in our Imagination Station. Bring your project to *THREADS* at PCL on the 2nd and 4th Mondays at 10 AM & work among friends! *Chapter Chicks Mother Daughter Book Club* for tweens meets 11/18 at 9:30 AM. We also have large print materials, audio-books and DVDs!

For more information on library activities or to support the new library with a financial gift, contact the Peninsula Community Library, 2699 Island View Rd., (231)-223-7700, <vshurly@tadl.org>.

--Vicky Shurly, Head Librarian

FROM THE FIRE DEPARTMENT...

The Town Board is in the final negotiation phase for hiring a new Fire Chief. The process which started in late Spring, began with the posting of the job description in trade journals and newspapers (both local and statewide). Twenty-eight applicants applied for the position, and the Town Board went into its first round of review to identify five to seven of the best qualified individuals for the job. Brent Strom of the Peninsula Fire Department, assisted Board members in the review process by describing the significance of various fire fighter certifications and course work as well as outlining the type of runs the Peninsula Fire Department conducts on an annual basis.

From 28 applicants, five individuals were selected to go into the second round which consisted of a 30 minute on-site or Skype interview with questions and answers. Following the interviews, the Town Board identified two candidates that they wanted to interview further for the Fire Chief position—current Interim Fire Chief Randy Rittenhouse and Wayne Assistant Fire Chief Fred Gilstorff. Township Clerk Jo Westphal and Township Treasurer Brad Bickle conducted telephone interviews with the references provided by each of the two candidates. Treasurer Bickle also conducted a background check on each finalist, as part of the normal review process.

In September, the two candidates were interviewed for the position at a Town Board Special meeting that preceded the Town Board Regular meeting. At the conclusion of the regular meeting, the Board was asked to vote on the candidates, and Fred Gilstorff was selected as the new Fire Chief on a 5-2 vote. Township attorney Steve Schwartz, who handles personnel, human resource, and union negotiations, has worked with the Board to put together an acceptable package for the new Fire Chief. It is anticipated that the new Fire Chief will begin work on December 1, 2017.

--From Clerk's notes on the process

FROM THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT...

Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program

The Township Master Plan was revised in 2003 to include a map titled "Agricultural Preserve Area" and another titled "Prime Scenic Views". The Master Plan included proposals to preserve the farmland and the scenic views that contribute to the character of the Township and maintain property values.

In 1994 the Voters approved an increase of 1.25 mills in property taxes for fifteen years to create a fund to buy the development rights from willing farmers in the Agricultural Preserve Area. In 2002 a second vote was approved to increase the millage to 2 mills and extend the program for an additional 20 years. The current voted millage will expire in 2021.

Since 1994 the Purchase of Development Program has preserved over 5,000 acres of farmland from development using the voted millage along with grant funds from the Federal Farmland Protection Program and other sources. The State of Michigan, American Farmland Trust and Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy also have acquired conservation easements on township parcels. The Purchase of Development Rights Program (PDR) has encouraged property owners to donate conservation easements on additional lands. The existence of the PDR has also resulted in donation of land for the MDOT scenic turnout on M-37, designation of Center Road as a Scenic Byway by the State of Michigan, and preservation of Scenic Views in the Underwood Farms and Chateau Grand Traverse areas.

There are a number of farmers who would like to sell their developments rights; however the remaining millage funds will not cover all the requests so additional grants and other sources of funds will be necessary to accommodate the remaining farmers' desires.

Purchase of Development Rights

The Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Citizen Advisory Committee met in September. The membership of the committee now includes Chairperson Virginia Coulter, Harold David Edmondson, Susan Tarczon, Mary Manner, Karen Cline, Dennis Arouca, and Annie Floater.

At its September meeting, the Advisory Committee authorized the township appraiser to begin working with the next three highest priority applicants.

As noted in the summer newsletter, we've renewed our partnership with the Land Conservancy to continue to implement the preservation program. Laura Rigan, the Land Conservancy's Farmland Protection Specialist, will be working closely with interested landowners. The Conservancy has allotted \$1 million in grant funding to support agricultural preservation on the peninsula and supplement the PDR fund.

Donation of Development Rights

While funding only goes so far for PDR, please remember that you can also preserve the peninsula's agricultural heritage by donating development rights. Federal tax incentives were expanded as of 2015 for donations of development rights on qualified land and now allows:

1. Deductions of up to 50% of adjusted gross income in any year for conservation agreement donors;
2. Deductions of up to 100% of adjusted gross income for qualifying farmers and ranchers; and
3. Carry forward period of 15 years for any unused deduction.

A brochure which explains tax incentives for donated easements can be located on the front page of the township website <www.peninsulatownship.com>.

Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Update

As many residents know, the Planning Commission has been working on an update to the zoning ordinance. A subcommittee has met regularly to review remaining discussion points, and has brought larger issues back to the full Planning Commission for review when necessary.

By the time you receive this newsletter, we hope to have returned the draft zoning ordinance to the consultant for a final clean up. When the final draft is returned, we will have a series of public meetings to explain changes, answer questions, and accept public input on the revised zoning ordinance.

--Brian Van Den Brand, Planner

FROM THE ZONING DEPARTMENT...

Peninsula Township is a "Zoned Township". The Zoning Ordinance, adopted by the Township Board in 1972, and amended as needed since that time, implements the Master Plan for the Township. The Zoning Ordinance creates zoning districts (residential, agricultural, and commercial) and establishes procedures, rules, and regulations for uses and activities that may take place in each district.

The Zoning Department is staffed with a fulltime Zoning Administrator (Christina Deeren) and a part-time Ordinance Enforcement Officer (Dave Sanger). The Zoning Board of Appeals, within the Zoning Department, is staffed with 4 citizen-volunteers appointed by the Township Board and a Township-elected Trustee. The ZBA gives citizens the ability to request a "variance" from a requirement of the Ordinance, as well as providing an interpretation of the Ordinance and an appeal process for a decision made by the Zoning Administrator.

Key Sections of the Zoning Ordinance

Land Use Permit: A Permit from the Zoning Administrator is required prior to erecting or moving any structure or changing the use of any premise. After obtaining a Land Use Permit, a Building Permit from the Grand Traverse County Construction Code Office usually is required.

Signs: The Ordinance contains strict control on the type, size, and location of all signs. Important rules:

- Signs are not permitted in the Right-of-Way, except traffic control signs placed by the Road Commission. The Right-of-Way generally is 66 feet wide (33 feet from the centerline of the roadway); some portions of M-37, a State highway, have a ROW that is 100 feet in width. All signs (except those placed by the Road Commission) are not allowed and are subject to impound by the Road Commission or the Township Code Enforcement Officer.
- Real Estate signs are allowed without a permit. Only one sign is allowed per parcel for sale and the sign must be physically on the property for sale. The sign may be no larger than 6 square feet in size and no more than 4 feet in height.
- Garage Sale or Yard Sale signs are allowed only on the property where the sale is being held; the sign may be posted for a maximum of 3 consecutive days and a total of 10 days per year. The sign may not be in the road ROW and must be no more than 6 square feet in size.
- Construction site signs are allowed on the property only during the time of actual construction, renovation, or repair.
- Signs on "for sale" cars, boats, trailers are allowed under the same rules as Garage sales. The items for sale must be on the owner's property and cannot be located in the road Right-of-Way

Rental of Homes or Rooms in a Home: The rental of a home or room in a home for period less than 30 days in Peninsula Township is a "commercial" activity that is strictly regulated:

- For a non-owner occupied residence, the Ordinance prohibits the rental of a room or the entire home for period less than 30 days.
- For an owner-occupied residence, the Ordinance does permit the renting of a room by the day provided that the owner has obtained a Special Use Permit to operate a "bed and breakfast" operation. The qualification requirements are very specific and a SUP must be approved by the Township Board.

Beachfront Regulations: The Ordinance places strict limitations on property owner actions along the Great Lakes shoreline. Structures (storage sheds and other structures) are not allowed within the 60 foot setback from the Ordinary High Water Mark. Decks are permitted only within specific requirements.

Removal of shore cover (clear cutting") is strictly controlled within a strip of land bounded by the shoreline and a 35 foot wide line parallel to the shoreline. Within this strip of land, no more than 30% of the length of the strip may be "clear cut". The remaining 70% must provide sufficient cover to screen structures as seen from the water and to control erosion.

The entire Zoning Ordinance is available for review on-line at the Township website. The Township has adopted other Ordinances (Noise Ordinance, Fireworks Ordinance, Large Events Ordinance, Dangerous Building Ordinance and others) that are also available on the Township website.

The Township encourages voluntary compliance in a case where the Ordinance has been violated. A Violation of the Zoning Ordinance is a Municipal Civil Infraction, with fines set by the District Court; each day that the Violations occurs is regarded as a separate offense. The Zoning Administrator and the Ordinance Enforcement Officer have the authority to issue a Citation for a Violation. However, the Zoning Department encourages every property owner to become familiar with the Zoning Ordinance. Please do not hesitate to contact the Zoning Office before taking any action on your property that could result in a Zoning Violation.

--Dave Sanger, Code Enforcement Officer

FROM THE CLERK'S OFFICE...

New Voting Equipment for the 2018 Election Cycle.

In July, Peninsula Township received a grant for over \$17,000 from the state and federal governments to purchase new voting equipment. Part of a county-wide initiative, spearheaded by County Clerk Bonnie Sheele and Deputy Clerk Sarah Lutz, the effort began last fall, as the State identified three potential vendors for the voting equipment. Review of each vendor's equipment followed in a day-long assessment of performance, which culminated in each Township voting for the vendor of choice. ESS received the majority of votes from Township clerks in Grand Traverse County. Peninsula Township supported the ESS vote because of the ease of operating the equipment and its "user friendly" features that insured secrecy while enhancing the accuracy of the vote. Township Clerk, Joanne Westphal, requested the Town Board pass a resolution supporting the grant request for the equipment in spring on behalf of the Peninsula Township, and this Resolution was then transmitted, along with similar resolutions from the other townships, to the State as a county-wide request by Ms. Sheele. The equipment arrived the last week of September and has been tested by company representatives. Election inspectors will be trained on the equipment this fall and winter.

Citizen Cemetery Committee To Form

The Clerk's office is anticipating resurrecting (excuse the pun) the cemetery committee to:
1) review current policy and procedure relating to the sale of cemetery lots on the Peninsula; and
2) to consider moving the cemetery records onto a digital platform. Anyone interested in serving on this committee is encouraged to contact the clerk's office.

--Joanne Westphal, Clerk

HELPFUL NEWS BITS...

Recycling Household Hazardous Waste-October 14, 2017

2017 Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Drop-off Events include: oil-based paint, solvents, automotive fluids, household cleaners, lawn and garden chemicals, pesticides, batteries, and fluorescent light bulbs. HHW drop-off events are by appointment only. The last household hazard waste event for the county is scheduled for Saturday, October 14 from 9:00 am-2:00pm. Register to bring your waste by calling 231-941-5555 or go online at www.RecycleSmart.info. Sarah Archer is the program manager.



Peninsula Township Newsletter
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