SALEM TOWNSHIP

MESSENGER

January 2010

Volume XVII Issue I

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TOWNSHIP NEWS
BY SUPERVISOR ROBERT HEYL

The holidays are over and a new decade begins. The Township now has a new legal firm, the arbitration decision is in, and the Township is the new owner of 9550 Six Mile Road.

The firm of Johnson, Rosati, LeBarge Aseltyne & Field, P.C., has been retained by the Salem Township Board as the new Township Attorney. Johnson Rosati has offices in Farmington Hills, Lansing, St. Clair Shores and Marshall. The firm has significant litigation and trial experience and specializes in the areas of municipal law, municipal litigation defense, zoning and land use issues, employment litigation, general tort defense and police-related lawsuits. The firm offers full-service capabilities to municipal corporations, and Johnson Rosati is looking forward to serving the interests of Salem Township.

Further information on the law firm and its attorneys can be viewed at their website. www.johnsonrosati.com

On December 30th 2009 the arbitrators rendered a decision in the ***Salem Springs, LLC v Salem*** Township matter. In February Salem Springs alleged that the Township breached the development agreements by not requesting Federal Stimulus funds to assist in the development of water and sewer infrastructure for the Salem Springs property in the Urban Services District. Salem Springs requested damages in the amount $30.5 Million dollars plus actual costs and attorney fees. The arbitrators took it upon themselves to fashion an amendment to the development agreement to effectuate the intent of the parties.

The Arbitrators Ruled:

1. With respect to the water system, Salem Springs is permitted to design and install a fully-permitted, expandable municipal

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Is Your Neighborhood "Ready to Resist Crime?"

At the December 8th, 2009 regular board meeting, the board voted unanimously to seat Trustees Brien Witkowski and Susan Bejin as co-chairs of the Neighborhood Watch Committee. The committee's charge is to work with the community to enhance existing Neighborhood Watch Groups and inform residents of the Washtenaw County Neighborhood Watch Program. Together we have developed a 4-step strategy for making this one of the most successful committees the board has ever seated.

Step 1: Involve the entire township.

We understand that the Washtenaw County Sheriff has a very successful Neighborhood Watch program. We aren't trying to replace that program, but enhance the effectiveness by taking each Neighborhood Watch Group and making it a part of an overall community effort. **We have scheduled a meeting for 7:30 pm on February 23, 2010 at the township hall.** We invite anyone who already is part of a Neighborhood Watch

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2010 CENSUS JOBS

The Census Bureau is recruiting temporary, part-time census takers for the 2010 Census. These short-term jobs offer good pay, flexible hours, paid training, and reimbursement for authorized work related expenses, such as mileage incurred while conducting census work. Best of all, census takers work right in their own communities.

Call their toll-free jobs line at:

1-866-861-2010.

SALEM LANDFILL PASSES

No, you did not lose your Landfill Pass. No, you did not misplace your Landfill Pass. They have not been mailed out yet.

We are going to a new type of Pass, when they are sent out we will send a letter with instructions as to how to use it.

Continue using your 2009 card until you receive your new one.

FROM THE SUPERVISOR.....

Continued from page 1

water system, and water tower if needed. The system would be designed to be expandable by the Township. The construction of the water system for the development would be at the sole cost of Salem Springs. The cost to expand the system for the USD (outside of Salem Springs property) would lie with the Township.

2. With respect to the water system, Salem Springs would be permitted to design a downsized, expandable waste water treatment plant and sewage transmission system to accommodate its proposed development. The construction would be at the sole cost of Salem Springs. Thereafter any expansion of the waste water system to accommodate properties other than Salem Springs would be at the cost of the Township.

3. All the design for the infrastructure would be supervised and approved by the Township.

4. The system would be dedicated to the Township free of charge within 30 days of completion.

The Township was successful in the arbitration. Salem Springs' request for monetary damages was rejected, and no attorney fees were awarded to Salem Springs, however the Township did not recover attorney fees either. At this point it is unknown whether there will be further proceedings. The entire arbitration decision can be found on the Township's website salem-mi.org. .

The closing on the purchase of the property by the Township at 9550 Six Mile Road took place on December 30th, 2009. The property has now been added to the Township's inventory. The Township owned property on either side of this parcel and with this purchase now has ownership of several adjacent parcels.

SPECIAL TOWN HALL FORUM MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2010
7:30 P.M. - 9:30 P.M.
AT THE
SALEM TOWNSHIP HALL

The Board of Trustees are holding this special meeting so that residents may discuss issues pertaining to the Township. This meeting will also give the residents a chance to tell the Board what they feel is needed in the community. Should you have any questions, please call the Township Hall 248-349-1690.

FROM THE DESK OF PAUL J. UHEREK, TREASURER

Over a year has passed since I took office and I'd like to thank the voters of Salem Township once again for giving me the opportunity to serve our community as Treasurer.

Unfortunately, as I write this article, the economic conditions in Michigan have worsened, and I would like to pass along some helpful information available to Salem Township Residents, in particular, residents without internet access, regarding Property Tax foreclosures and Mortgage Foreclosure laws.

The information provided below was given to me by Catherine McClary, the Treasurer of Washtenaw County. The Timeline provided is intended to describe in general terms the major elements and deadlines of the State law regarding delinquent property taxes. You may obtain a copy of the General Property Tax Act from the Washtenaw County Treasurer's Office.

Unpaid taxes can now lead to the loss of your property as early as February 2011. Last year, unpaid 2008 taxes became "delinquent" and payable to the Washtenaw County Treasurer. A 4% Administrative Fee was added. Interest began to accrue at 12% per year. On October 1, 2009, a $15.00 fee was added. On November 1, 2009, the Parcel was added to the preliminary forfeiture list. By February 1, 2010, Mortgage lenders and banks may be notified.

This year, on March 1, 2010, a minimum of $205.00 in fees will be added. Property is forfeited to the County Treasurer. Interest rate increased to 18% per year retroactive to March 1, 2009. On June 2010, foreclosure petition will be filed in Circuit Court. Between June 1, 2010 and January 31, 2011 Title research is done to identify owners and lien holders, a personal visit will be made by the County and Mortgage lenders, banks and other lien holders will be notified.

In January 2011, a "SHOW CAUSE HEARING" will be held, and on February 2011, a Court Hearing will be held and a Judge signs a Foreclosure Order. On March 31, 2011, redemption rights expire if taxes are not paid and the property ownership is transferred to the Washtenaw County Treasurer. In July 2011, the property is sold at auction. The prior owner does not receive any of the proceeds.

There are three new Michigan Mortgage Foreclosure Laws. Public Acts 29, 30, and 31 of 2009. These new laws took effect July 2009 to give the homeowner facing mortgage foreclosure a 90-day extension to meet with their mortgage lender and modify the terms of their mortgage to save their homes.

Catherine McClary provides the following to help distressed homeowners:

Call (734) 222-9595 to work with a certified, competent, and caring Housing Counselor. This number reaches an expert Intake Specialist who can set an appointment with a Housing Counselor. **There is no charge for these services.**

The new laws **require the homeowner to contact a Housing Counselor or the mortgage company within 14 days** after the default notice is sent in order to receive the 90 day extension. If the lender agrees to modify the mortgage then the property will not be foreclosed.

The new laws **freeze foreclosure proceedings for 90 days** for homeowners who qualify and who work with their lender to modify their mortgage loan. This applies ONLY to property claimed as a principal residence (owner occupied). It will not apply to second homes, rental properties or any other commercial properties. Federal government mortgages, such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, FHA, or VA, have different modification rules.

Catherine McClary can help you keep your property if you are unable to pay your delinquent property taxes. You need to contact the Washtenaw County Treasurer office about your situation. They can offer suggestions for emergency loans and grants for various helping agencies, provide sources for legal assistance, help with budgeting and partial payment plans, provide resources for veterans and seniors, provide information for hardship extension foreclosure deadlines, help with senior deferment and hardship reduction of 2009 taxes, and provide help with automatic payment or payments using credit cards.

TAX REMINDER

Winter Taxes are due February 14, 2010. Your payments will be accepted at the Township until 4:30 pm. March 1, 2010. **Partial payments are accepted**.

Beginning March 2, 2010 real property taxes must be paid at the Washtenaw County Treasurer's office at 200 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Phone number 734-222-6600.

Should you have any questions, please call me.

Michelle Heisler
Deputy Treasurer
248-349-1690
Ext. 13

Dog Tags will be on sale at the Washtenaw County Treasurers Office all year long. Applications for Tags are in the Township Office for mail in.

State law requires that "on or before March 1 of each year", the owner must apply for a license. You must have proof of rabies shot.

You may also go on line to order them at dogs.washtenaw.org .

CLERK'S COMMENTARY …….. by David Trent

Annual Budget Preparation

This is the time of year that executive officials and department heads begin the annual task of preparing their respective budgets for the upcoming fiscal year beginning in April. A draft budget will be presented by the Supervisor at our February meeting for discussion by the Board of Trustees. The final budget is then presented at our March meeting with a public hearing that is held prior to approval.

Telecommunication Services Upgrade

Last month the Board of Trustees approved a bid from TDS Metrocom for the installation of a new Internet Protocol (IP) solution for telecommunication services. This system will be integrated this month and will provide a number of enhancements for staff members as well as the public when contacting the township office via phone. Additionally, some back up redundancy items have been identified in preparing for the transition which will enable the township to minimize the possibility of down time that has been experienced in the past.

Michigan Townships Association

At this month's Board meeting approval was authorized to join the Michigan Townships Association. Membership in this organization will provide access to critical information that will enable Salem Township officials and staff to be better informed on pertinent issues that affect local townships as well as taking advantage of various educational seminars at a reduced rate. Also, the MTA provides legislative lobbying activities and legal assistance to protect the interests of the 1,242 townships throughout the state.

Property Purchase

In November the Board authorized the purchase of 9550 Six Mile Rd. This house is located just west of and adjacent to the Village Green Park in the Hamlet. This addition of property complements the vacant land the township currently owns in the Hamlet area and enhances the opportunities for usage of the adjoining properties depending on township building

space requirements in the future. The Township will officially take possession of the house on February 1.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at my office.

David Trent
Salem Township Clerk
248-349-1630 ext. 19

REMINDER!
SALEM TOWNSHIP OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED ON PRESIDENTS' DAY MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15

The Legacy Land Conservancy Update

Save Your Bird Seed Tags and Benefit the Conservancy

Simply save the tags off of each 25 lb. and 50 lb. bag of **The Songbird Company Birdseed**, and submit them to us at Legacy Land Conservancy, 1100 N Main Street #203, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Songbird Company will donate $1.00 to the Conservancy for every tag submitted. The Song Bird Company is a local producer of bird seed. Its products are available at stores in Jackson & Washtenaw Counties.

Volunteer Fair 2010: Open House Sunday January 31, 1-3 p.m.

Discover ways you can help, meet new people and make a difference at this fun and informal Open House. Learn about volunteer opportunities during 2010 throughout Washtenaw & Jackson counties.

For additional information please contact the Legacy Land Conservancy (formerly Washtenaw Land Trust).

(734) 302-5263, or at their email address www.legacylandconservancy.org.

Creekshead Preserve

Located at the headwaters on Johnson Creek, this preserve is a great place to go for wooded wetlands and spectacular spring wildflowers. Johnson Creekshed is on Curtis Road between Brookville and Five Mile. Park on the west side of the road in front of the woods, watch out for the traffic.

Groundhog Day Hike - Tuesday February 2, 4-6 p.m.

The Conservancy, hosted by Michigan Friends Center and Friends Lake Community, invite you to a wintery hike. We'll gather at the Michigan Friends Center, located in Chelsea to read signs of spring along the trail and determine if the groundhog will see its shadow.

MARCH BOARD OF REVIEW 2010

In February our Assessor will be sending out your property values. Make sure that you look them over and if you have any questions, please call our Assessor at 734-433-9724. If you do not agree with your property value make an appointment with the Board of Review to go over this with you.

The Salem Township March Board of Review will meet on the following dates and times to hear appeals of the recent assessment on your property.

Wednesday, March 10, 2010
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Thursday, March 11, 2010
1:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

The assessing files will be available at the above times for viewing. Appointments are not necessary to view your file.

Appointments must be made in order for an appeal to be heard.

Letters of appeal are also acceptable if received by Wednesday, March 10, 2010.

Call the Township Office for information or appointment (248) 349-1690.

PROPERTY TAX HARDSHIP APPLICATION

Hardship applications for relief from some property taxes are available at the Township Office. Property owners who are facing hardships may apply for a waiver of some of their property taxes. If you would like to apply, be sure to contact the Township Office immediately for an application and find out what is needed for a hardship.

Salem Area Historical Society News

Membership News:

Salem Area Historical Society annual Memberships expire on March 31st. If you are not a member or you have not renewed your membership, please send in your membership dues. Forms are available on the "Membership - SAHS" page of the Salem Area Historical Society's web site www.sahshistory.org.

January 2010 Event:

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, January 27 at 7:30 PM at the Salem Township Hall. The business meeting will include discussions on projects and events for 2010 and the start of the 2010 SAHS Election process.

February 2010 Event:

Tickets are now available for the Salem Area Historical Society's 2010 Annual Dinner and Auction on Saturday, February 13th at 6 PM at Fox Hills' Golden Fox Club House. Cost of the pre-paid event is $30.00 per person and all are invited. This will include a multi-course buffet dinner, a live auction and **Fun** for all. Auction items will include tickets to area attractions (i.e. The Henry Ford, Grand Hotel, Plymouth Whalers), national attractions (i.e. Disney World, Pro Football Hall of Fame), historical items and restaurant gift certificates. Check our Website's "Annual Dinner/Auction" Webpage (http://www.sahshistory.org/Fund_Raising.html) for more details. All proceeds will be used to maintain the Jarvis-Stone School and the Dickerson Barn. Tickets can be purchased via an email to Salem_Area_HS@yahoo.com or by a phone call to Terry Cwik (248-486-0669).

March 2010 Event:

Attend and vote at the annual Election and Potluck Dinner of the SAHS on Wednesday, March 24th at 6 PM at the Salem Township Hall. Bring a dish to share.

The SAHS hopes that we can capture your interest in our goal of preserving the past for the future and to see you at our events. More information can be found at the Salem Area Historical Society's Website (www.sahshistory.org) or via an email request to Salem_Area_HS@yahoo.com. You can become a member or renew your membership for 2010 at any of our events or via our Website.

SALEM COMMUNITY EVENTS

Sponsored by Salem Community Events the annual Children's Christmas Party was held this year at the Salem Hills Golf Club. The children of the community were able to play games, make crafts and visit with Santa. This event was attended by over 100 people with almost 50 children able to visit with Santa and receive a gift.

This event was generously supported by funds raised from community businesses and local residents. Salem Flag Celebration will be held June 5, 2010 starting with the parade at 11:00 a.m

Visit us at www.salemflagday.com for additional information.

Mark your Calendars!

We have changed our meeting date to the third Saturday of the month. Our next meeting will be held Saturday, February 20th at 10:30 am. Hope to see you there.

To the right is a picture of the children waiting in line to see Santa.

Is Your Neighborhood "Ready to Resist Crime?"

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Group as well as anyone who would like to start a new group. At this meeting we will identify interested individuals who are willing to be a part of the committee. The names of these individuals will be recommended to the township board as additional members of the committee. The board has already approved Trustee Wayne Wallazy as a member of the committee.

Step 2: Identify existing Neighborhood Watch Groups and develop new ones.

This is the core charge of the committee. We want to identify the existing groups and direct new groups to the resources that are available for starting and maintaining A Neighborhood Watch Group. Even though Salem is a mostly rural community, Neighborhood Watch Groups are a very effective way of assisting police services in keeping our township safer.

Step 3: Build a community of Neighborhood Watch Groups.

The board was approached in October by a Neighborhood Watch Group requesting $310 to place signs in their area. I made a motion to postpone the purchase and requested a committee be charged with development of a plan for installation of signs throughout the township. I foresee this committee developing that plan, including all Neighborhood Watch Groups, and petitioning the board for funds to cover the initial signs for each neighborhood.

Step 4: Develop an Emergency Response Communications Plan.

We initially see the plan as an immediate way to inform Neighborhood Watch Groups of police related matters. This response plan may include automated phone calls, text messages, e-mails, or other forms of expedited communication. This plan could be later adapted to inform residents of other types of issues including hazardous material spills, major weather related issues, or other public safety concerns.

We are looking forward to township wide participation, so that Salem Township can be a community of neighborhoods "Ready to Resist Crime."

Brien Witkowski
Salem Township Trustee

News and Notes from the Planning Commission...

I wish all a Happy New Year and hope everyone enjoys the winter as much as possible. Over the past few months there have been some site plan reviews. The one of most interest is for the AT&T cell tower, which is still in process. While this activity has been slow over the last few months, with the slightly improving economy we may see some increased activity. So, keep your eyes on the Planning Commission agendas

The Planning Commission continues to review and update the Township's Zoning Ordinance. The Commission is taking an orderly approach and is reviewing the existing ordinance section by section. The primary goal is to bring the Ordinance up to date with the recently adopted Salem Township Master Plan. There will also be some changes in how information is presented to improve clarity and ease of use. And, of course, the Ordinance will be updated to incorporate recent changes in State law.

In our January meeting, officers were elected for 2010. Mr. Richard Muciek was re-elected as Vice Chairman. Mr. Cal Locklin was elected as Secretary. And my fellow Commissioners gave me the honor of being re-elected as Chairman.

Congratulations to Richard and Cal. I would also like to thank our outgoing Secretary, Kristen Rachwal, for her service. She did a great job and her contributions are appreciated.

Even though the effort to update the Zoning Ordinance will lead to some late meetings, the citizens of Salem are encouraged to attend Planning Commission meetings. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Dwight Shusda
Salem Township
Planning Commission

SALEM TOWNSHIP
9600 SIX MILE ROAD
PO BOX 75002
SALEM, MI 48175

Please leave with current address

TO OUR LOCAL RESIDENTS
SALEM TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

Salem Township Board of Trustees

Robert Heyl..Supervisor
Paul J. Uherek..Treasurer
David Trent..Clerk
Sue Bejin..Trustee
Marcia Van Fossen..Trustee
Wayne Wallazy..Trustee
Brien Witkowski, Trustee

The Messenger is published to inform Salem Township residents about issues and events in our community. If you have any comments or questions, contact the officials above or call the Township Office.

OFFICE HOURS
MONDAY – FRIDAY
9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Phone No. 248-349-1690
Fax 248-349-9650
Call 911 for Emergency
Non Emergency call
734-971-3954

SALEM TOWNSHIP CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2010

1	Planning Commission Meeting 7:30 pm
8	Fire Administration Board Meeting 7:30 pm
9	Board of Trustee Meeting 7:30 pm
15	President's Day - Office Closed
16	Town Hall Meeting 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
20	Salem Community Events 10:30 am
23	Neighborhood Watch Meeting 7:30 pm

MARCH 2010

8	Fire Administration Board Meeting 7:30 pm
9	Board of Trustee Meeting 7:30 pm
10	Board of Review 9:00 am - 4:30 pm
11	Board of Review 1:30 pm - 9:00 pm
15	Planning Commission Meeting 7:30 pm
24	Salem Township Historical Society - 6:00 pm

Check the website for additional information www,salem-mi.org.