

Weekly News Report

Oakland Township Sentinel, LLC

News and Information - Charter Township of Oakland, Michigan

Editors – Robert A. Yager – yagera@comcast.net & Barbara A. Yager – bayager@comcast.net

<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/>

*“Informed citizens are the foundation of
effective self-government”*

Township Meetings Next Week

(The public is invited to attend and to comment. Also you can view most meetings live on Ch 17, or see a video on the Township website a few days after the meeting)

Monday – Jan. 27, 2014

Board of Trustees, 7 P.M. – Township Hall, Board Room

(No agenda filed yet; we’ve been told the most recent Financial Report will be in the Board packet. Hopefully, we can summarize the financial report in graphic form for the 1-31-14 issue.)



In this issue:

| Topic | Page |
|--|-------------|
| State of Township Address..... | 3 |
| Information added to our website..... | 11 |
| Board of Trustees (BOT)..... | 11 |
| Historic District Commission (HDC)..... | 12 |
| Older Person's Commission..... | 12 |
| Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC)..... | 13 |
| Planning Commission (PC)..... | 13 |
| Safety Path and Trails Advisory Committee (SPTAC)..... | 14 |
| Schools | |
| Lake Orion..... | 14 |
| Rochester..... | 14 |
| Romeo..... | 15 |
| Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)..... | 15 |
| Editorials..... | 15 |
| Letters to the Editor..... | 15 |

State of Township Address Summary

(The 45 minute meeting videotape is on the Township website. View it to better understand our Township Supervisor's philosophy and priorities.)

Introductory remarks by Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Pierre Atallah (34 year resident)

"Thanks for coming to the first State of the Township Address in 187 years of Oakland Township."

Pledge of Allegiance

Invocation – Pastor Dominic Russo, Jr. – Oakland Church, Oakland Township

These remarks from Pastor Russo -

"When righteous people are in office, the people rejoice. When God-fearing, humble men of God are in office, there's a good thing that happens to a city, a township, a people...and I just say this because in any township, any group of people, we're not going to always agree on everything. I've just learned to disagree sometimes without having a disagreeable spirit, and in that God is able to bless our Township. There's a scripture that says, 'How blessed art when the people work together in unity, when they work together for unity and common ground even when they disagree.'"

Pastor Russo then talked about his experience with handling disagreement in building his church.

"You're all here today and that says something about our Township."

Psalm 23 recited by those present.

Prayer led by Pastor Russo.

Resume of Supervisor Gonser, by Dr. Atallah

B.S. Metallurgical Engineering – Michigan Technological University

U.S Army Weapons Command

U.S. Army Tank Command – M-1 Tank Armor System

M.S. Welding Engineering – Ohio State University

Allison Gas Turbine Division of GM

High-energy density welding systems (electron beams, lasers, plasma)

Production Superintendent for the aircraft plant, managed 800 employees with budget close to half a billion dollars

Superintendent of the Advance Manufacturing Development Laboratory during ultra high speed machining, machine intelligence high-development machining, machine intelligence,

Allison representative to NASA, U.S. Army, Gas turbine, etc.

GM North America, Group responsible for installation of body shops across Canada and United States

Vice President / General Manager for Ohio Aerospace Group, Cincinnati, Ohio

Dr. Atallah made some positive remarks about Supervisor Gonser and told the story of how they met.

State of the Township

By

Township Supervisor Terry Gonser

Stating, *“It’s really things “we” wanted to accomplish; the Board of Trustees is truly an amazing group of people”*, Supervisor Gonser introduced those Township Trustees in attendance, excepting Sharon McKay and Maureen Thalmann , who were ill. Also recognized by Supervisor Gonser were former Township Clerk – Judy Workings; former Supervisor of Orion Township - Chris Barnett; Township Attorney - Dan Kelly; New Township Manager - Ann Capela; former Mayor of Rochester -Stuart Dixon; State Representative Brad Jacobsen. Supervisor Gonser provided some biographical information:

- Started school at Snell School, one-room K-8 school house
- Last one-room school he went to was Stony Creek School
- Dilbert video about engineers; how he became an engineer

Supervisor Gonser said -

“I think better government is possible, it takes people getting involved and think it takes a good Christian value system and the great integrity and enough foresight to make government work and I think, we, the Board of Trustees have done a remarkable job accomplishing that.”

Supervisor Gonser used Auto theme slides to present accomplishments and plans

(The following is not duplicates of slides, but rather summaries of remarks.)

Racing Wheel Slide - Focus

- Transparency
- Technology
- Customer service

Technology

- Televised very first meeting and every meeting; to catch up with other townships in this regard
 - Meeting videos on web and 13 months archived
 - Not just BOT - all meetings (HDC, PC, ZBA, etc)
 - Website, brand new, world class, pictures welcome, lots more information, easier to access (for better communication)
 - Enhanced transparency putting things on line so you don't have to come to township hall - view taxes, ordinances, burning permits, building inspections
 - Guest Wi-Fi in Township hall
 - New IT service – IT Right -
 - New servers to replace aging ones (firehouse server went down recently, current ones are deplorable , beyond useful life, replacement plan created to avoid interruption of service)
 - On-line back-up instead of manual weekly back-up
 - You are invited to submit spectacular pictures for website - seasonal changes in photos posted
-
-

Fire Department

- *“New fire chief, Paul Strelchuk, giving new direction to our fire department.”*
- New ambulance, gas vs. diesel, had problems with diesel
- New SCBA (Self-contained breathing apparatus) purchased with federal grant, high-tech, signal to facilitate locating fireman in distress, share breathing air, brings us into 21st century many new features for safety and protection of firemen

Transparency

- Key that entire new board focused on when campaigning.
- Televising and archiving all Township Meetings
- Checkbook on-line to see where money goes
- Meeting minutes on-line , (used to FOIA) searchable
- Property tax information on –line
- Board meeting packets on-line (be able to follow board meetings)

Building Department

- New director – Tim Berger (son of Orion Twp. building director)
 - Contract with BS&A to do on-line inspection (will be available in a few weeks); so builders do not have to come into office
 - Open 5 days a week vs. 4 for better customer service.
-
-

Customer Service

- Cheerful, pleasant personnel at counter so you don't have to ring a bell; showed group photo at the counter of: Elaine Leven, Jamie Moore, Louise Crane, Litsa Didaskalos, Gina Cipriani, Ashley Judd
- Free on-line burning permits
- Board meeting packets on line
- More interface with residents, every Monday 3-5 P.M. Office Hours with Supervisor, Clerk, Treasurer (appointment or walk-in)
- Sheriff substation – desk officer 8-4:30, someone to contact 5 days a week
- Reduced taxes this year for 2014 by \$105,000 – ***“I would venture to bet that we are the only municipality in the state of Michigan to reduce taxes - \$105,000”***
- Oakland County Association of Township Supervisors – meets monthly – limited what can be done in such a large group
- 4 Township supervisors working together - Independence, Orion, Oxford, Oakland, call themselves IO³; some accomplishments:
 - IT Right \$14,000 vs. \$27,000 for former provider (suggested by Independence Twp.) ½ price - twice the service
 - Website – ahead of other townships in area, shared with other townships; Elaine and Jamie explained it to them; they want to hire Elaine and Jamie away from us.

Future Plans

- Mill race restoration
 - Increase use of Technology to be more efficient, more effective, less expensive to residents
 - Community Center at Paint Creek Cider Mill– might be another six months
 - Homeowners Association meetings
-

- Maybe receptions and retirement parties
- Electronic Board of Trustees – Trustees to use electric notebooks vs. paper packet of information to use during meeting save time and money; now lots of staff time to prepare paper copies for 7 trustees Ordinance Reviews / Codification of ordinances
 - Are our ordinances in compliance with State Law
 - Compare one ordinance to another for potential conflicts
 - Review those ordinances not in compliance with State law
 - Get Oakland Township completely legal
- Master Plans Updates
 - Planning Master Plan should be updated every five years – we are due
 - Water Master Plan – has never been done
 - Has significant impact on development
 - Meeting with county tomorrow morning
 - Adjunct to that is a sewer plan
- Pinnacle – Homearama – International event, 81 homes \$1,600,000-\$3,400,000, 6 models, September, “A chance to see these 6,000 to 8,000 square foot homes and see how the other half lives.” \$227,000,000 project - *“Just think of the impact that has on Oakland Township with jobs and the economy, It’s a huge undertaking and a huge benefit, think about what it’s going to do for the tax base ...”*

Natural Gas Extension

Allow people to get off of expensive propane or fuel oil.

Technology –

Paperless operations, Example - how do we go to paying taxes with no checks – direct from bank or credit card; elec. Board ,number of other tings

Digitize records – Tim Berger buying a digital scanner; hire intern to digitize all records and put on website, all minutes, board packets, plans, drawings what we have is susceptible to disaster

One-Stop Ready

“How do we streamline the process of starting business or building?” Get all permits with one stop. Explore with county.

Supervisor Gonser commented -

“You elected a new board for a reason, you wanted change.” I think we are giving it to you. “If there is more that you’d like, let us know. I think we’ve accomplished quite a lot for one year. ...We have moved ahead and I think we’ve made great strides for you citizens. Hope you are able to take advantage of our services” The Board thanks you for your support”. I want to thank everyone for coming, thank you for your support.

“Good government is citizen involvement; we can’t do it alone. So please give us some feedback, thank you very much.”

Applause

Information added to our website this week:

We have recently revised our “*Home*” and “*About*” pages to more clearly state what we are all about.

“**Elections**” – new page – added precincts map link and results of 2012 Township elections and precinct delegates

“**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**” - added to page, this has been updated to include earlier requests that had not yet been posted here or requests for which we have received a reply.
<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/freedom-of-information-act/>

“Parks and Recreation” page – added section on Recreation with this information from previous investigations

[Athletic Fields in Oakland Township](#) (PowerPoint presentation that takes 2-3 minutes to open, follow progress in opening on the tiny bar at upper right as it changes from black to green)

[2013-5](#) Oakland Township Parks vs. Lake Orion Parks

[2013-8](#) Do we need more athletic fields in Oakland Township?

“Political Parties and Tea Party” – links to websites of six parties recognized by State of Michigan, plus the Tea Party.

“Safety Paths and Trails”

2006 Trails Millage Levy vote (3818-YES, 3632-NO)

Board of Trustees (BOT)

Link to Township website page for Board of Trustee:

http://www.oaklandtownship.org/boards_and_commissions/board_of_trustees/index.php

Link to our webpage for Board of Trustees:

<http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/board-of-trustees/>

By-Laws Subcommittee Meeting 1-23-2014

Treasurer Jeanne Langlois, Clerk Karen Reilly and Trustee Mike Bailey edited a draft of proposed Board by-laws to present at the Monday Jan 27 Board meeting to replace our 1993 version. Two residents attended this open meeting at the Paint Creek Cider Mill. We applaud the decision to hold this in open meeting.

Historic District Commission (HDC)

Link to Township website page:

http://www.oaklandtownship.org/boards_and_commissions/historic_district_commission/index.php

Error correction.

Last week we failed to properly identify **Howard Aldridge Coffin** as the individual whose family photos Mr. David Phillips was assembling for display at Cranberry Lake Farm main house. We had incorrectly said it was the Collins family. Thanks to Mr. Phillips for providing the correct information.

Older Persons' Commission

Website homepage: <http://www.opcseniorcenter.org/>

Board webpage: http://www.opcseniorcenter.org/?page_id=150

Next Scheduled Meeting: Thursday, February 6, 2014 at 5:00pm, 650 Letica Dr., Rochester, MI 48307~ Elliott Conference Room

Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC)

Link to Township webpage:

http://www.oaklandtownship.org/boards_and_commissions/parks_and_recreation/index.php

Link to our webpage: <http://oaklandtownshipsentinel.wordpress.com/parks-and-recreation-commission/>

Open Meeting Act / “Cabal” allegations by Commissioner Ann Marie Rogers

As previously reported by us on 12/13/2013 in Patch

<http://oaklandtownship.patch.com/groups/oakland-township-sentinel-llc/p/open-meeting-act-violations-by-other-commissioners--alleges-oakland-township-parks-commissioner-anne-marie-rogers> and followed up in the first issue of *Weekly News Report* (12/20/13), Commissioner Ann Marie Rogers read a prepared statement at the 12-11-13 Parks and Recreation Meeting alleging that four commissioners had violated the Open Meetings Act via email communications. We requested said emails from Commissioner Rogers, received no response, and therefore submitted a FOIA request for them.

We received 6 pages of emails by U.S. Mail on 1/23/2014 in response to our 12/26/2013 FOIA request. We had agreed to a 10-day (business days) extension to the usual 5 days due to the “complexity” of the request.

The emails, FOIA letters and the statement by Commissioner Rogers can be seen at the following link. [FOIA-OTS-2013-10-REPLY](#).

Review them and make your own judgment.

Planning Commission (PC)

Link to webpage on Township website:

http://www.oaklandtownship.org/boards_and_commissions/planning_commission/index.php

Next **meeting** is Tuesday, **February 4, 2014, 7 PM**, Township Hall Board Room

Safety Path and Trails Advisory Committee (SPTAC)

Link to webpage on Township website:

http://www.oaklandtownship.org/township_departments/safety_path_and_trail_network/index.php

Next meeting date not known.

Schools

Lake Orion Community Schools

Budget 2013-2014 - \$ 77,093,478

<http://www.lakeorion.k12.mi.us/userfiles/3/BusinessFinance/FY14%20Executed%20Adopted%20Budget%20Resolution062613.pdf>

School system homepage: <http://www.lakeorion.k12.mi.us/>

Rochester Community Schools

Budget - \$158,404,278

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicItemDownload.aspx?ik=34787858>

School system homepage: <http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/>

Board of Education homepage: <http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/pages/175/board-of-education>

Minutes of Jan. 13, 2014 school board meeting:

<https://v3.boardbook.org/Public/PublicAgenda.aspx?ak=1001194&mk=50102994>

You can send a message to the Board of Education at this link:

<http://www.rochester.k12.mi.us/pages/5037/contact-the-board>

Romeo Community Schools

Budget – 2013-2014 - \$47,603,205: <http://www.romeo.k12.mi.us/pages/51126/monthly-budget-reports>

School system homepage: <http://www.romeo.k12.mi.us/>

FOIA form: <http://www.romeo.k12.mi.us/pages/65024/freedom-of-information-act-foia>

Minutes Jan. 13, 2014 Board of Education:

<http://www.romeo.k12.mi.us/pages/65233/board-of-education-minutes-2014>

Next Board of Education Meeting Jan. 21, 2014:

<http://www.romeo.k12.mi.us/pages/51157/notice-of-meeting-dates>

Strategic Plan: <http://www.romeo.k12.mi.us/pages/51191/strategic-plan-2011-2016>

Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

Link to webpage on Township website:

http://www.oaklandtownship.org/boards_and_commissions/zoning_board_of_appeals/index.php

Zoning Board of Appeals meeting originally scheduled for **January 21, 2014** was cancelled.

Next meeting is **Tuesday, February 18, 2014**

Editorials

None this week.

Letters to the Editors

We welcome these, especially those that add missing facts or correct factual errors. See some comments we've received on our website homepage.
