

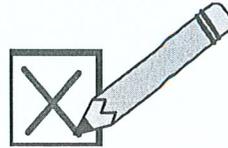
NEWSLETTER

Fall 2001

Charter Township of Oakland Volume 3, Issue 2

COME VOTE: TOWNSHIP ELECTION

on Tuesday, September 11th About Oakland
Township Land Preservation Millage Proposal



On Tuesday September 11, 2001, Oakland Township registered voters will have the opportunity to vote on a land preservation millage proposal at their normal election polling places. The proposed millage would fund the acquisition and preservation of open land within Oakland Township. The green spaces acquired would be representative of the Township's natural and rural history and would be protected from residential or commercial development.

Highest priority would be given to land containing or protecting the following features:

- Land along Paint Creek and Stony Creek
- Land that contains lakes, ponds, and wetlands
- Land with future passive recreation potential where residents could hike or observe wildlife
- Land that connects existing green spaces or natural areas
- Habitat for our native plants and animals
- Land with important natural features such as forests or prairie remnants

The Township Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) would be responsible for evaluating, recommending properties for acquisition and for managing these properties. The PRC would proactively seek, evaluate, and recommend these properties. Surveys of Township environmental areas as well as citizens' recommendations would be incorporated into this selection process. The PRC would also concurrently pursue grants to leverage millage dollars and maximize their potential value.

The Land Preservation Millage Ballot Questions will be worded as follows: Shall the Charter Township of Oakland be authorized to levy a total of 0.75 (3/4) of 1 mill for a period of ten (10) years, starting with the December 2001 levy, for the purpose of providing funds for the acquisition of land, the protection of natural habitat, and the preservation of green spaces within the Township? Approval of the proposal would authorize a tax limitation increase of 0.75 of \$1.00 per \$1,000 of the taxable value of all taxable property in the township. It is estimated that this proposal would result in the authorization to collect \$572,250 in the first year if approved and levied.

If approved, the following are examples of millage costs to property owners: \$100,000 home: Taxable Value \$50,000 = \$37.50/year or \$3.12/month \$250,000 home: Taxable Value \$125,000 = \$93.75/year or \$7.81/month \$500,000 home: Taxable Value \$250,000 = \$187.50/year or \$15.63/month.

Two open houses will be held at the Township Hall where residents can learn more (see next column). Please direct questions concerning this proposal to Maryann Whitman, President of the Oakland Township Committee in Support of the Land Preservation Millage, at (248) 652-4004 or at maryannwhitman@home.com or to the Township Parks and Recreation office at (248) 651-7810. Please address questions concerning voter registration, polling places or absentee ballots to the Clerk's Office at (248) 651-4440 x 218.

INVITATION to Millage Proposal Open Houses

Sat., Aug. 25, 9:30 a.m. &
Wed., Aug. 29, 7:30 p.m.,
Oakland Township Hall

Each to feature:

Well-respected natural resource protection and management speakers discussing the need and opportunities for land preservation in Oakland Township.

Maps, photographs, and data presented by Oakland County Planning which shows our Township's land use patterns as well as opportunities for land preservation.

Question and answer sessions with residents, Park Commissioners, other Township officials and staff, Oakland County Planning staff, natural resource planners and ecologists.

The 8/25 meeting will feature Doug Pearsall, Director of Conservation Science of The Nature Conservancy - Michigan Chapter, who will speak about plants, animals and natural communities which should be priorities for preservation. The Nature Conservancy has protected more than 80,000 acres of Michigan's finest natural areas.

The 8/29 meeting will feature John Paskus, Conservation Planning Specialist for the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI), who will speak about MNFI's current effort to identify and prioritize "potential conservation areas" in Oakland Township. MNFI is a 21-year old organization that collects, analyzes and communicates information on Michigan's rare plants, animals and natural communities

Please take advantage of these two opportunities to learn more about this millage proposal.

Oakland Township Land Preservation Millage Open House Agendas

Oakland Township Hall, 4393 Collins Road

Saturday, August 25, 2001, 9:30 am

- 9:30-9:45** Viewing of aerial photos and natural feature maps
- 9:45-10:00** **Land Preservation Millage: Purpose, Funding and Goals**
Maryann Whitman, President
Oakland Township Committee in Support of the Land Preservation Millage
&
Alice Tombouliau, Vice Chairperson
Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Commission
- 10:00-10:15** **Oakland Township's Land Preservation within the Larger Picture:
Oakland County Natural Areas Identification and Preservation**
Jim Keglovitz, Oakland County Planning and Development
- 10:15-10:45** **Oakland Township's Land Preservation within the Larger Picture:
Southeast Michigan Preservation Priorities: *Plants, Animals, Natural Communities***
Doug Pearsall, Director of Conservation Science,
The Nature Conservancy – Michigan Chapter
- 10:45–11:15** **Question and Answer Session**
Facilitator: Mindy Milos-Dale, Parks Manager, Oakland Twp.
- 11:15–11:30** Viewing of aerial photos and natural feature maps

Wednesday, August 29, 2001, 7:30 pm

- 7:30-7:45** Viewing of aerial photos and natural feature maps
- 7:45-8:00** **Land Preservation Millage: Purpose, Funding and Goals**
Maryann Whitman, President
Oakland Township Committee in Support of the Land Preservation Millage
&
Alice Tombouliau, Vice Chairperson
Oakland Township Parks and Recreation Commission
- 8:00-8:15** **Oakland Township's Land Preservation within the Larger Picture:
Oakland County Natural Areas Identification and Preservation**
Nina Misuraca, Oakland County Planning and Development
- 8:15-8:45** **Oakland Township's Land Preservation within the Larger Picture:
Michigan Preservation Priorities: *Plants, Animals, Natural Communities***
John Paskus, Conservation Planning Specialist
Michigan Natural Features Inventory
- 8:45–9:15** **Question and Answer Session**
Facilitator: Mindy Milos-Dale, Parks Manager, Oakland Twp.
- 9:15–9:30** Viewing of aerial photos and natural feature maps

OAKLAND TOWNSHIP LAND PRESERVATION MILLAGE SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001 BALLOT PROPOSAL

Frequently Asked Questions (8-28-01)

What is the purpose of the proposed millage?

The proposed millage will fund the acquisition and preservation of open land within Oakland Township. The green spaces acquired with millage monies would be representative of the natural and rural history of our Township and would be permanently protected from residential or commercial development.

What land would be considered highest priority for green space acquisition?

Oakland Township still has high-quality green spaces that contain or protect these features:

- Land along Paint Creek and Stony Creek
- Land that contains lakes, ponds, and wetlands
- Land with future passive recreation potential where residents could hike or observe wildlife
- Land that connects existing green spaces or natural areas
- Habitat for our native plants and animals
- Land with important natural features such as forests or prairie remnants

Does sufficient vacant land remain for preservation as green space?

Yes, Oakland County Planning and Development Services has estimated that there are approximately 6375 acres of undeveloped land in the Township. This represents about 27% of all Township lands, exclusive of parkland.

Will this millage stop development in Oakland Township?

No, the Township cannot prevent people from proposing developments. However, millage funds will enable the Township to work with willing sellers to take advantage of opportunities to purchase and preserve portions of the remaining green spaces.

How will the land preservation ballot question be worded?

Shall the Charter Township of Oakland be authorized to levy a total of 0.75 (3/4) of 1 mill for a period of ten (10) years, starting with the December 2001 levy, for the purpose of providing funds for the acquisition of land, the protection of natural habitat, and the preservation of green spaces within the Township? Approval of the proposal would authorize a tax limitation increase of 0.75 of \$1.00 per \$1,000 of the taxable value of all taxable property in the township. It is estimated that this proposal would result in the authorization to collect \$572,250 in the first year if approved and levied.

Which Township entity would manage the land preservation millage funds?

The Parks and Recreation Commission, having considerable experience in land purchases and donations, would be responsible for managing the land preservation millage monies. They currently own and manage five parks and also manage the Oakland Township section of the Paint Creek Trailway. The park staff includes one full-time manager and one part-time administrative assistant.

Who would evaluate and recommendation properties for acquisition?

The Parks and Recreation Commission has obtained ecologists' reports on the significant environmental areas within the Township. This information has been instrumental in the purchases of Bear Creek Park, Blue Heron Environmental Area and Cranberry Lake Park. The Commission would proactively seek available green space properties and evaluate them according to well-defined criteria, incorporating the recommendations of Township citizens. They would then work with real estate and legal professionals to pursue acquisition of the top-priority areas.

If approved, what would the millage cost property owners?

\$250,000 home: Taxable Value \$125,000 = \$93.75/year or \$7.81/month

\$500,000 home: Taxable Value \$250,000 = \$187.50/year or \$15.63/month

\$750,000 home: Taxable Value \$375,000 = \$281.25/year or \$23.44/month

How much funding would this millage provide over the 10 -year period?

The millage itself would raise about \$5 million and would enable the Township to maximize its value by concurrently pursuing grants that could add up to \$15 million more to the green space fund. The Parks and Recreation Commission has been successful in obtaining state grants totaling over \$2.5 million that funded the purchase and ensuing development of the Paint Creek Trailway, the recent purchase of Oakland Hills Park as well as the planned addition of amenities to Bear Creek Park.

Will this millage restrict private landowners' rights to sell or develop property?

No. The millage funds will enable the Township to work with willing sellers to purchase remaining green spaces and will have no effect on regulations concerning private property development.

Will any of this proposed millage pay for the maintenance of green spaces?

Yes. While a high percentage of the millage funds will be devoted to property acquisition, it will be necessary to monitor and preserve these green spaces once they are purchased. Each property's natural features will be managed to prevent degradation of the site's ecological and scenic values. After careful planning, trails will be added where appropriate. Volunteers have successfully completed many current park stewardship, maintenance and improvement projects and would also be involved, as appropriate, in the management of these proposed green spaces.

In addition to retaining our Township's natural and scenic areas, why is it preferable to purchase green spaces instead of developing them?

Green spaces owned by the Township will not need the types of services required by residential developments, including police protection, fire protection and public schools. Green spaces will not contribute to traffic congestion, whereas each new residential household averages 10 vehicle trips per day. Green spaces are a desirable amenity that will positively affect nearby private property values.

How many governmental entities have green space initiatives?

The Land Trust Alliance, a non-profit organization, has been tracking this type of initiative on a nation-wide basis. During the past three years, voters across the nation designated more than \$17.5 billion for open space protection, approving 85% of 459 state, county and local ballot proposals. Michigan voters approved a statewide initiative in 1998. Local ballot proposals in Michigan have been approved in Ann Arbor in 1999, in Washtenaw County in 2000, and in Meridian Township in 2000.

LAND PRESERVATION PROPOSAL RESULTS

September 11, 2001

Precinct 1	Yes <u>160</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>67</u> <i>OK</i>
Precinct 2	Yes <u>119</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>71</u> <i>OK</i>
Precinct 3	Yes <u>104</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>81</u> <i>OK</i>
Precinct 4	Yes <u>181</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>60</u> <i>OK</i>
Precinct 5	Yes <u>132</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>88</u> <i>OK</i>
Precinct 6	Yes <u>135</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>65</u> <i>OK</i>
Precinct 7	Yes <u>23</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>17</u> <i>OK</i>
AVCB	Yes <u>348</u> <i>OK</i>	No <u>342</u> <i>OK</i>
TOTALS	Yes <u>1202</u>	No <u>791</u>