

# Oakland Township Sentinel

Weekly Report – March 29, 2026

News and Information about

Charter Township of Oakland Township Michigan  
Government

Always free, on-line at

<https://oaklandtownshipsentinel.com>

## Contact Information

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## About Us

Oakland Township Sentinel is a DBA of Robert A. Yager and Associates L.L.C., Michigan Domestic Limited Liability Company #802404351.

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# Fire and Rescue, Oakland Township Fire Department

2026, 2027, 2028 Budgets - \$4,972,400; \$5,243,200; \$3,699,300 (Fund 207)

[Microsoft Word - Township Binder Cover 2026](#) pages 8-10

No news or reports or agenda items this week at the Board meeting. Fire Chief Paul Strelchuk says the 2025 annual report is complete and will be posted soon on the Township website, once technical hurdles are overcome.

## Sheriff's Department

2026, 2027, 2028 Budgets- \$3,570,000; \$4,147,700; \$4,211,900 (Fund 206)

[Microsoft Word - Township Binder Cover 2026](#) pages 11-12

No news or reports or agenda items this week at the Board meeting. It will be interesting to eventually hear what positive effect they have had on speed limit conformance with their new \$8,500 speed monitoring trailer.

Per email exchange, Manager Merucci will ask Lieutenant Dooley what data is available on uncontrolled dog incidents. (Oakland Township Sentinel Issue #1 on our issue list of 97 issues.)

# Parks and Recreation

2026, 2027, 2028 Budgets - \$1,740,650; \$1,870,006; \$1,962,690 (Fund 208)

[Microsoft Word - Township Binder Cover 2026](#) pages 13-16

## March 11, 2026, Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Summary

I recommend you read the entire excellent [minutes at this link: MEMORANDUM.](#)

Alos find the 296-page [meeting packet here: 753236050.pdf](#)

Knowing that all do not have time, I made the summary below. I highly recommend reading the entire entry and associated meeting packet pages to get the full story if any item upsets you or you have questions.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### In Memoriam:

#### Doug Caruso

- **Doug Caruso, OTPR’s Maintenance Foreman, passed away very unexpectedly last month. Doug was a lifelong resident of Oakland Township, a dedicated and esteemed team member of Oakland Township Parks and Recreation, and a knowledgeable and highly capable Maintenance Foreman. Doug was an ambassador for Oakland Township, and his contributions to Oakland Township’s parks and recreation system – including the Paint Creek Trail – were immeasurable. Doug’s warm smile, guidance and enthusiasm will be greatly missed. All at Oakland Township Parks and Recreation offer their condolences to Doug’s wife and family. (Minutes, Page 11)**

- **Approved Resolution 26-01 for application TF26-0004 for Marsh View Park access improvements, which is to be matched by financial commitment of \$370,500, for a total project cost of \$770,500.** (Minutes, pages 13-15, Meeting packet sheets 24-107, Resolution 26-01 wording on sheet 107). See details in Board of Trustees section.
- **Recommended that the Oakland Township Board of Trustees approve the proposed 2026 Parks and Recreation millage ballot language. Below is the exact motion** (Minutes page 16-17) meeting packet pages 108-110 for the PRC rationale)

*“MOVED BY FOSTEY, SECONDED BY QUESENBERRY, to recommend that the Oakland Township Board of Trustees approve the proposed 2026 Parks and Recreation millage ballot language placing a 0.7307 mill Parks and Recreation millage renewal before Oakland Township voters in August 2026, with the understanding that any substantive changes made by the Board of Trustees to the ballot language, millage rate, or election timing be returned to the Parks and Recreation Commission for further review and recommendation prior to final approval.”*

**Note: Parks Millage was approved by voters in 2016 at this same millage, 0.7307, but has been Headley-reduced to 0.6865 by 2025. See meeting packet pages 108-110 for detailed proposed ballot language the PRC rationale)**

- **Agreed to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the bids received and awarding the contract for the Stony Creek Ravine Nature Park project.** (Minutes page 17, meeting packet sheets 109-150)

- **Approved the prescribed burn contract with PlantWise, LLC for the 2026-2027 burn program in an amount not to exceed \$45,790. (There were four bids)** (Minutes page 17, packet sheets 151-230 contains bids; 232 to 252 is details of “Request for Quotes”)
- **Approved the proposal from PEA Group for Marsh View Park property line-taking services in an amount not to exceed \$12,600.** (Minutes page 18, packet sheets 253 -261)
- **Approved extending the contract with Peklo Portables, LLC for portable and vault toilet services through December 31, 2026.** (Minutes page 18, packet sheets 262-277)
- **Approved extending the contract with Fougny Professional Lawn Maintenance, Inc. for mowing services through October 31, 2026.** (Minutes page 19, packet pages 278-279)
- **Approved hiring of seasonal staff, including four Land Stewardship Technicians and two Maintenance Technicians** (Minutes page 19, packet sheets 280-285)
- **Appointed Bill Beverly as Interim Maintenance Foreman, and authorized staff to proceed with recruitment for the Maintenance Foreman and Maintenance Technician positions.** (Minutes page 20, meeting packet 286-296)
- **Approved the proposed compensation adjustments for Oakland Township Parks and Recreation staff hired prior to January 1, 2025.** (Minutes page 20)
- **Approved repairs to the 2023 Chevrolet Silverado in an amount not to exceed \$2,200.** (Minutes page 21)

# Board of Trustees

2026, 2027, 2028 Budgets - \$421,200; \$431,400; \$439,800 (Fund 101, Dept. 101- Board) [Microsoft Word - Township Binder Cover 2026](#) page 6 – \$5,500 is total annual Trustee PER DIEM pay for each of four trustees. The largest item is legal fees.

## To Date Meeting statistics – 3/29/36

- Number of meetings, Regular + Special = 13
- Average meeting length = 1.1 hours.
- Closed sessions in Special Meetings = 7
- Closed sessions in Regular Meetings = 1
- Absences – Buxar – 4, Elder – 2
- Lateness - Buxar - 1 (40 minutes)
- Perfect attendance – Campbell, Giannangeli, Reilly, Langlois, Casadei

## Meeting - March 24, 2026

Draft minutes: [753242128.pdf](#). Thanks to our Clerk's department for making them available so soon. Eight business days is the legal requirement; these were available in 3. Shall we thank new Deputy Clerk Corrin Hearld?

Meeting Packet: [753239738.pdf](#)

**VI.1 - Approved Resolution No. 26-03, a resolution supporting the submission of the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant application TF26-0004, for access **improvements to Marsh View Park.****

Cost is \$ 770,500 with grant covering half, if awarded.

The 26 page application plan is here: [MARSH VIEW - 8.5x11 GRANT EXHIBITS.indd](#)

Sheet 2 of 26 in the application is copied below showing the overall map of the plan. To see a closer view go to the webpage above and move in for a closer look using your fingers to expand the map.

The features to be added are:

- 10 space parking lot off Stoney Creek Road with ADA
- Rain garden
- Paths to rest of park
- Interpretive and wayfinding signs
- Restrooms
- Path to possible crosswalk across Stoney Creek Road to Bald Mountain Park

Parks Director Ben McCloskey commented that Phase 2 in the future would include Pickle Ball, Play Area, Path / Boardwalk along Adams Rd. MNRTF, who will likely make this grant, is focused on natural resources preservation. For Phase 2, alternative grant-makers will need to be approached.



**VI.2 - Approved a request from the Safety Paths & Trails Committee Chairman, Andy Zale, to retain PEA to conduct a maximum \$46,000 survey of Sheldon Road (west side) safety path possibilities in more detail.** (Video minutes 19:33 to 37:40) [Board of Trustees Meeting - March 24, 2026.](#)

Resident Barbara Barber who lives very near the also being studied Snell Road path gave her reasons for preferring a Sheldon path to a Snell path, but on the east side.

**Opinion:** It is apparent to me that all of us need an organized collection of agreed-upon facts and maps, all in one place (with photos) about these two possible paths (Snell and Sheldon) and the several proposed alternatives for each. In particular, conditions within and bordering the Stony Creek Metropark trails are important, as well as safety or road crossings,

This is a complex decision best made by employing ideas that methodically consider each alternative and how they compare to a list of MUSTS and WANTS for this project. A technique that we used in my Dupont Company career was “Decision Analysis” as presented by Charles Kepner and Benjamin Tregoe in their 1965 book, “The Rational Manager” and still taught by their consulting company, with on-line courses available.

I provided each SPTC member with a copy of this book a couple of months ago.

**VI.3 -Decided to participate in the 2026 Road Commission for Oakland County Dust Control Program. 5 applications of calcium chloride to 31 miles of dirt/gravel roads for \$83,000.** (Video minutes 37:40 to 42:00) [Board of Trustees Meeting - March 24, 2026.](#)

Trustee Jack Elder raised the question of impact of dust control chlorides on well water quality. I sent an email to him with cc to BOT suggesting we ask our environmental consultant to inform us. (Now Sentinel Issue # 97)

**VI.4 - Considered the request from the Historic District Commission for site management of the 10.6-acre Garling Barn site.** (Video minutes 42:00 to 1:19:56)

There were 38 minutes of discussion, but no decisions were made.

Below is the request for action form that HDC provided to the BOT (from page 75 of meeting packet here: [753239738.pdf](#) followed by their draft plan (page 76. Other pages in the packet detail some history and some budget projections.

**REQUEST FOR ACTION  
CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF OAKLAND BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

<b>To:</b> Oakland Township Board of Trustees	<b>Date:</b> March 12, 2026
<b>From:</b> Barb Barber, Historic Preservation Planner Oakland Township Historic District Commission	<b>Date of Consideration:</b> 3/24 2026
<b>Action Requested:</b> Site Management for 10.6 Acres on Stoney Creek Road	

**Current Action**   X                        **Emergency** \_\_\_\_\_                      **Future** \_\_\_\_\_

**Budgeted:** Yes, HDC allocated \$73,000 in account 270-901-975.020 Oakland Township threatened township structures and \$2,000 in Garling Maintenance account #270-265-930.070.

**Township Manager's Approval/Review** \_\_\_\_\_

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Charter Township of Oakland Historic District Commission (HDC) is interested in restoring the historic Garling Barn after the successful move of the structure in January 2025. The new location is 1630 Stoney Creek Road, near the NW corner of the intersection of Stoney Creek Road, Clarkston Road and Lake George Road. The HDC is interested in taking responsibility in planning, maintenance, and development for the full 10.6-acre parcel.

**JUSTIFICATION**

The Stoney Creek location has very small acreage compared to most parks. The HDC intent is to develop the 10.6-acre site around the township's agricultural history showcasing the barn and silo, offering heritage trails, with community gardens and orchards, farmers markets, and site rentals for income revenue. The HDC is requesting this small parcel be managed by one entity to streamline operations, advantageous to showcase the township's preservation mission. While the PRC has over 1,500 acres of other parkland to manage for recreation and conservation, this small 10.6-acre site that has the historic Garling Barn contributes more towards the preservation of a heritage site. At the joint HDC/PRC meeting on 11/12/25, the PRC had concern that there would be confusion naming the site a "park." A variety of names were outlined by the HDC that utilized options like farmstead, heritage site, grange, preserve, meadows, place, acres, etc.

**PROJECT OR IMPROVEMENT TASKS**

Rehabilitation of the Garling Barn, silo, addition of pavilions and picnic tables, parking areas, and more with public input in a way that contributes to the agricultural history of Oakland Twp and benefits our residents. \*\*See attached goals per year for the site.

**COSTS**

The costs are budgeted per year as capital improvements are completed through multiple years. See attached spreadsheet with estimated forecasted yearly expenses. Trail and parking maintenance would be delayed until those capital improvements were completed.

**PROJECT TIME TABLE**

Beginning Spring 2026.

### **10.6 Acre Oakland Twp Heritage Site with Garling Barn Planning Options (draft)**

The site will contribute to the aesthetic quality of Oakland Twp and serve as a community landmark for residents. We anticipate long-term (5+ years) development with implementation of the plan proceeding in phases based on funding sources. Partnerships will be researched to serve a major role in the development of the property (community gardens, orchards, farmers markets, and flea markets, programs, private rentals), including plan implementation and long-term management. The site can offer a variety of usage and be adaptable to changing trends and community needs per the approved direction of the Trustees.

1. Preserve and enhance cultural, agricultural, and natural resources.
2. Develop a place that honors the agricultural heritage and historical character of the property with a broad range of passive and active opportunities.
3. Create a site analysis and conceptual layout with public input (open house).
4. Develop a sustainable funding model for long-term operations by having site rentals for community gardens, community orchards, 1x month farmers market and/or 1x month flea market rental space, and eventually a place for private gatherings both exterior on the grounds and interior of barn space.
5. Research and discuss zoning options for township property for a trial period, compare to recreation conservation (\*\*if alcohol can ever be allowed on site).
6. Develop trails throughout the landscape connecting the gardens and orchards with "Heritage Stations" designed with small seating/ sculptures / plantings and signage that educate residents about our first settler families: Hemingway, Perry, Coleman, Baldwin, Baker, Dewey, Hunt, Potter, Tower, Thurston, Newman, Hammond, Brewster, Kline, Taylor, Flumerfelt, Cole, and Axford.
7. Design Parking areas and entrances and exits to the site. Apply for funding.
8. Water access: Hydrants, closed during winter.
9. Establish a "Loop and Meander" trail method to achieve 1.5 miles on 10 acres, using a serpentine pattern with gentle curves to keep walkers anticipating what is around the next bend.
10. Full restoration of the barn for public use with ADA access ramp.
11. Full restoration of the silo for scenic viewing from the top with either interior or exterior stairs.
12. Electrical and Lighting.
13. Vault toilet.
14. Final Phase to consider: HVAC requires insulation of the walls and ceiling. There needs to be more discussion on utilizing the space inside the barn spring, summer, and fall which retains the historic fabric of the barn and not have to insulate. Tammis Donaldson is going to be reviewing.

#### **History (very interesting)**

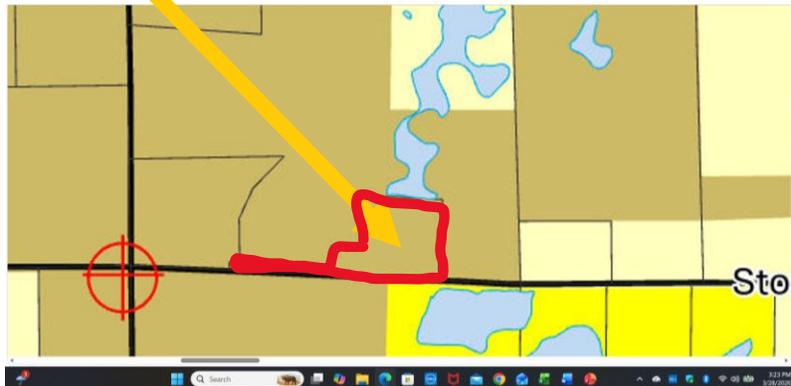
Supervisor Robin Buxar, Board of Trustees representative on HDC was absent from this BOT meeting. Perhaps she would have shed some more light on the HDC reasoning.

Some interesting (to me) comments were:

Barbara Barber, Historic Preservation Planner, who presented the HDC request, did state that if they could have a liquor license, they might be able to generate income from the property being a wedding site. But if it was re-zoned to R-C (recreation-conservation), as all of our parks are, no liquor is allowed

(just as in the current situation at Cranberry Lake.) Trustee Langlois reminded us that the property is not zoned R-C. In fact it is zoned MRD – Medium Residential Density as seen on our Zoning map [Zoning-Map\\_2026.pdf](#).

Here is zoning map segment enlarged. Garling Barn 10.6-acre site on Stony Creek just east of Lake George. (Outlined in red)



Trustee John Casadei expressed concern about Township liability with a liquor license.

Lana Mangiapane, former Trustee, commented, extolling the virtues of HDC members. About minute 1:10 on the video.

Andy Zale, former Parks Commission Chairperson, former Board of Trustees member and current Safety Paths and Trails Committee Chairperson, made a number of interesting and informed citizen comments. I recommend you watch his 3 minutes of comment starting at 1:15:55 of the meeting video.

[Board of Trustees Meeting - March 24, 2026.](#)

**Opinion:** We already have too many drunks on the road endangering my family. I will oppose, vigorously, alcoholic beverages being allowed at Garling Barn. If HDC needs more money for their truly wonderful projects, I strongly support giving them more funds from General Fund 101 or increasing the HDC dedicated millage for their fund 270. as opposed to allowing alcoholic beverages.

# Historic District Commission

## Meeting 3/18/26

### Agenda: [HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION](#)

March 18, 2026 at 7:00 PM

*Oakland Township Main Hall Conference Room  
4393 Collins Road, Oakland Twp, Michigan 48306*

1. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda March 18, 2026
4. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes: February 18, 2026
5. Approval of Special Joint November 12, 2025 PRC / HDC minutes
6. Welcome Public Comments
7. Oakland Twp Heritage Site
  - a. Garling Barn Project – Next steps
8. Cranberry Lake Farm Historic District
  - a. Maintenance
  - b. America 250MI
  - c. Programs
9. Local Historic Preservation
10. HDC Commissioner Interest
11. Preservation Planners Report
12. HDC March 2026 Invoices – for Approval
13. HDC Commissioner Comments
14. Adjournment

## **Video: [Historic District Commission - March 18, 2026](#)**

See agenda 7 and 7a on video for discussion of Garling Barn. The materials presented to BOT on 3/24/26 were approved for presentation. Supervisor said she would put on Board agenda for 3/24/26.

There was discussion about the merits of allowing alcohol (beer, wine, punch) at Garling Barn. Some claimed it would increase usage 10-fold and bring in badly needed funds. The consensus seemed to be to study it, but no motion was made. Supervisor Buxar and Planner Barb Barber expressed enthusiasm for the idea. A commissioner brought up insurance issues.

**Draft Minutes: Not yet available.**