

Spring 2024

Spring 2024:
Volume 2, Issue 1



DEXTER TOWNSHIP

Dexter Township Hall
6880 Dexter-Pinckney Rd.
Dexter, MI 48130

Tel: (734) 426-3767

www.dextertownship.org

Office Hours:

Monday – Thursday
8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Township Board

Supervisor **Karen Sikkenga**
Clerk **Michelle Stamboulellis**
Treasurer **Maris Metz**
Trustee **Karen Nolte**
Trustee **Lonnie Scott**
Trustee **Laura Sanders**
Trustee **Gretchen Driskell**

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Tax Reminder

Reminder to residents that summer tax bills will be coming your way the first week of July and will be due September 14th.

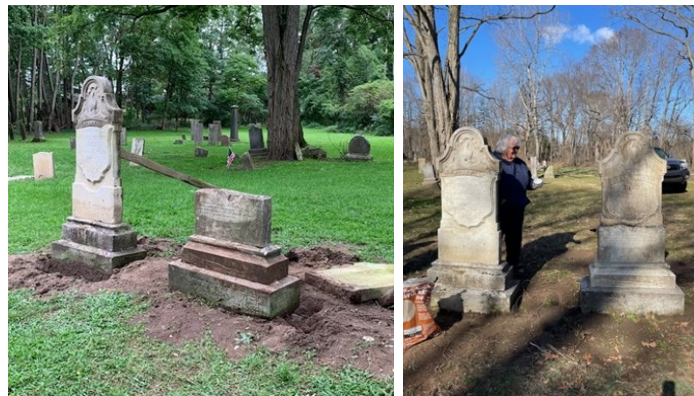
Cemetery Restoration—Preserving our History

Dexter Township has multiple cemeteries, our initial focus has been on restoring Hudson Mills Cemetery on Dexter Pinckney Rd. This cemetery is a local remnant of a Pioneer Settlement located on the banks of the Hudson River. David & Betsy Dudley sold over an acre of their land to the Township in 1841 to establish this cemetery. And our goal is to rebuild, restore and stabilize the headstones. To date, we have had considerable amounts of the foliage cut back or cleared, uncovering additional stones that had been lost in the brush for years. Many fallen stones had become buried or broken. Our journey on this project has uncovered approximately 30 stones and we are working to determine their proper location. In 2023 and early 2024, the stones were washed and sprayed with D/2, a biological solution that removes harmful biological and air pollutants that stain the headstones. The D/2 works overtime and lightens the stones, making many readable again. You may notice how the headstones have become lighter as you drive by.

In late March 2024 the Township commissioned a bobcat and we were able to tackle the repair of larger broken headstones, through coordinated efforts between the Township and volunteers. Trustee Karen Nolte will be coordinating two work sessions per month for volunteers to assist: the third Tuesday of the month from 10am – noon and the second Saturday of the month from 10am - noon, weather permitting.

We do work at additional times sporadically, if you are interested in joining, please email info@dextertownship.org to be added to the cemetery volunteer notification email list. There is an array of tasks, some lighter in workload than others. Please join us in helping to preserve our Dexter Township history.

Below is an example of our restoration: We are pleased to have both Rev. & Mrs. Walker standing tall again.



Below is a pictorial of rebuilding a headstone – we had 3 parts of the stone identified. As we dug around the base, we luckily unburied 3 additional parts and were able to reconnect all six parts and have it stand tall.

We may see supports on stones for a few days as the epoxy dries and stabilizes.



Supervisor Sikkenga's Township Update

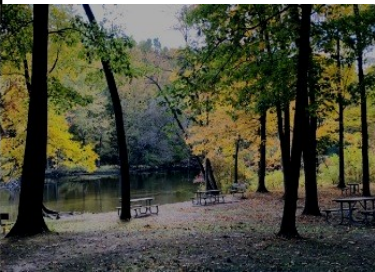
Happy spring! I hope you are out enjoying the parks, lakes, and rivers that make Dexter Township such a special place to live. More of you than ever are connecting with nature at Hudson Mills MetroPark, thanks to township park pass program. Almost half our homesteads took advantage of this great new program. 2025 park passes will be available at no charge to Dexter Township homesteaders from November 1 to December 31, 2024.

Mark your calendars also for the Dexter Bicentennial celebration. Did you know that Dexter Township is the oldest municipality in the area? Come by our booth on Saturday, June 22, where you can see historic assessment records. We will be collecting oral histories from long-time residents. If you know anything about the history of our three cemeteries, please come and share.

Thank you to everyone who voted to renew our public safety millages. Over 84% of participating voters during the February primary election voted "yes" to continue funding our police, fire, and emergency medical services, a testament to the outstanding paramedics, deputies, and firefighters who take care of us every day. We appreciate you! On the topic of fire safety, the Board of Trustees is improving fire safety in Dexter Township this summer. The board voted to install two dry hydrants in hard-to-reach areas, and to improve water access at Fire Station 2. We're also improving emergency preparedness with upgrades to our warning sirens. Please reach out any time with questions and suggestions!

Hudson Mills Metropark Pass Update

In late 2023, we began offering households a free 2024 Hudson Mills Metropark pass. The program expired on March 29, 2024, we had 1,327 Dexter Township households take advantage of the offer, with 41% being senior citizen (62+) households.



Hudson Mills Metropark is a great resource to our community, offering over 1,500 acres to explore, waterways, biking and walking paths, disk golf and more.

A thank you to the park staff for helping us spread the word to our community and making allowances for residents whose passes were in processing. While a labor-intensive program, it proved to be well worth the effort. Total expenditures for the Metropark passes were slightly over \$40K, much less expensive than building or maintaining a separate park in our township. This program has been approved in the Township's 2024-25 budget. We look forward to opening the offer for the Hudson Mills 2025 annual pass in November and December of 2024. Stay tuned, for details later this year.

See you in the park!

Cell Tower Update

Trustee Lonnie Scott has been working on addressing cell service issues in the Township, engaging with telecommunications providers to improve connectivity for residents. He has a call scheduled with Verizon, where he will review their findings on service issues and discuss potential next steps for remedy. Last week, Trustee Scott spoke with AT&T, learning that Dexter Township's service improvements are not currently scheduled within their two-year plan. He will continue to work with the providers to enhance coverage and accessibility for our community.

Community Recycling

Removing your boat's shrink wrap? Please drop that big ball of plastic off at Chelsea High School outside door #4. You'll be helping Chelsea High School work toward their goal in their Trex competition and keeping all that plastic out of the landfill. It's a win-win!

Dexter Township Hall does NOT accept Styrofoam recycling. If left in the parking lot it will be put into the dumpster. If you're looking to recycle Styrofoam, please bring it to the Dexter Mill between noon-2:00pm every Sunday. Thank you for recycling and choosing to protect your environment.

Volunteers Needed



Would you like to support your local community and the environment? If so, we are looking for volunteers that can assist with our film plastic recycling every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Sunday. We need your help to keep this program running, so if you are interested in learning more, please email officemanager@dextertownship.org.

Private Road Group

Trustee Karen Nolte has formed a small informal group of township residents living on and maintaining their own private roads to share ideas, vendors, techniques, and more. This is really a group of residents helping residents. If you have any interest, please send an email to info@dextertownship.org and we will add you to this list to stay informed on topics and meeting times.

Multi Lake Water and Sewer Authority Updates

Undergoing new project construction this season? Adding an addition, decks, or remodeling? All MLWSA sewer customers prior to starting any additions/decks/remodeling must: provide a copy of your plans to MLWSA for review and approval and obtain all necessary approvals and permits from your respective township building authority.

Single Hauler Update

The information research and data gathering continues this topic. Our goals include finding ways to reduce our residents' costs and reduce wear and tear on our infrastructure, i.e. roads. First, thank you to the 600 residents who answered the questionnaire posted on the township website regarding their trash services. From these responses we found, we have 7 separate trash providers servicing the township, with some neighborhoods having 3-5 trucks per week in their area. Approximately 80% of respondents support the single hauler concept with about 50% seeking curbside recycling also. Additionally, 13% of respondents answered their preference to opt out of any services provided.

Second, thank you to all the residents who attended our Coffee Chat in March on this topic. Hosted by Trustee Karen Nolte and Matt Naud from Recycling.com, we were pleased to listen to and learn residents' concerns and thoughts. Good suggestions came forward and will be incorporated into the RFP. Ideas included but not limited to offering multiple sizes of carts, how to assist disabled residents, how may this effect commercial businesses, how to handle HOA's that have already created mini single hauler zones, disconnecting from current contracts, senior discounts and more.

Additional community engagement events will be scheduled in the future. We expect an RPF to be prepared by late summer and sent to bid. Again, sending out a bid proposal does not lock us into launching. It is simply additional information to review to help

make the decision if/when to move forward. We will continue to keep you informed of the status of this project. Many have asked about a timeline and generally we feel if this moves forward, it will not occur until 2025. If you have comments or questions, please email info@dextertownship.org or knolte@dextertownship.org



Local Roads Committee Report - Gravel Road Projects for Summer 2024

The Township Board and the Washtenaw County Road Commission (WCRC) reached an agreement in March for road projects for Summer 2024.

The local gravel collector roads currently scheduled for repair this year include:

- Dancer Road (from Island Lake to the Township Line), Colby Road (Riker Road to Dexter Townhall), Donner Road (Island Lake to Colby), North Lake Road (Hankerd to the Township Line), and Quigley Road (Dexter Townhall to Madden)

Some projects are starting very soon !! Work on North Lake Road and Dancer Road will begin by the end of April. PLEASE NOTE that these roads will be closed during the day, and re-opening at the end of each work day. (Dates are estimated and dependent on the weather.)

- Work on North Lake Road is expected to begin on April 29, with a project timeline of 9 days.
- Dancer will close on April 30, with a timeline of 3 days to complete the project.

Road projects near the ongoing North Territorial/ Dexter Townhall Road safety project will start after that project is complete. The estimated amount to be paid by Dexter Township for the 2024 projects is \$469,917.

Dexter Township partners with the WCRC for road work because all primary and local public roads in the county located outside of city and village limits are maintained by WCRC crews. Work was completed in 2022 on McKinley, Huron River Drive, Riker, Fleming, and Wylie; and in 2023 on Waterloo, Brand, Toma, and Stinchfield West.

The Township and the WCRC are currently discussing whether additional roadwork can be added to this year's list. A reminder that residents can report road concerns at any time – including potholes, water on the road, sign requirements, dust control requests, and fallen trees – at

<https://www.wcroads.org/residents/report-an-issue/> You can also call the general WCRC phone number at (734) 761-1500, or email wrc@wcroads.org.



Broadband

Spectrum continues to lay cable in their RDOF awarded zones. Many areas on the map are now coded "activation pending" in the township. Enter your address on the map, (<https://www.dcstechnology.com/washtenawmap>) and if it appears in the lime green color, it means Spectrum activation is pending. Activation pending generally means cabling is near complete or completed in this area and Spectrum sales staff will be notifying residents of their options and how to connect to Spectrum in the next few months. Please have patience. We discourage residents from calling the general Spectrum customer service number, they do NOT have the proper information to provide to residents. A link for township residents to check their address and availability is: <https://www.spectrum.com/cp/build> or call (616-741-4655) for new Spectrum connections. You may also email: DL-GL-GR-ConstructionBuildteam@charter.com.

On the Mercury awarded RDOF areas, we regret we do not have solid information to share with you currently. Mercury has not begun laying cable in our township. The county project manager and township officials are working to gain a better understanding of their plan. Mercury is not out of compliance yet in terms of their RDOF award. Stay tuned, we will provide updates as we learn solid information.



Free Smoke Detectors Installation

The Dexter Area Fire Department (DAFD) has joined the MI Prevention statewide fire safety campaign through the State Fire Marshal, the Bureau of Fire Services and Michigan's fire safety organizations to reduce the high number of fire deaths, injuries, and property loss in Michigan. **Upon the request, DAFD personnel will install the 10-year life expectancy alarms. Homeowners can request a fire safety home visit at no charge, by calling 734 426-4500 or by email at dafd@dexterareafire.org.**

Elections

We want to thank our residents for an overwhelmingly positive turnout at the primary elections on February 27, 2024. Thanks to you, the Dexter Township police and fire proposals passed with an incredible 84.95% of voters choosing to vote yes. We are also pleased to report that Dexter Township precinct 1 saw a 37.41% voter turnout, precinct 2 saw a 35.87% turnout, and precinct 3 saw a 35.22%. The next set of elections in Dexter Township will be August 6, 2024 for the primary election and again on November 5, 2024 for the general election.



Want to stay "in the loop" as to what's happening in Dexter Township?
Simply enroll by sending your name, email address, and phone number to info@dextertownship.org . Please join us!



DEXTER TOWNSHIP
6880 DEXTER-PINCKNEY ROAD
DEXTER, MI 48130



FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION BOARD UPDATE

Dexter Township's land preservation program is fortunate to have a dedicated millage to permanently protect farmland and natural areas from development. The millage has been levied for two of the ten years authorized by voters in November 2022, generating about \$244,000 from last Winter's tax collection. With development rights valued at \$8,000/acre or more, however, it is essential to match our limited funds with those from other sources.

We're pleased to report three large matching grants have just been awarded for two properties. The federal Agricultural Conservation Easement Program—funded through the omnibus legislation commonly called the Farm Bill—has made awards for both properties, one for \$249,600 (39% of estimated appraised value) on 80 acres and one for \$392,000 (49% of estimated appraised value) on 100 acres. In addition, the State of Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund made an award of \$200,000 for the second property. The grants will be essential in conserving these high quality, visible properties.

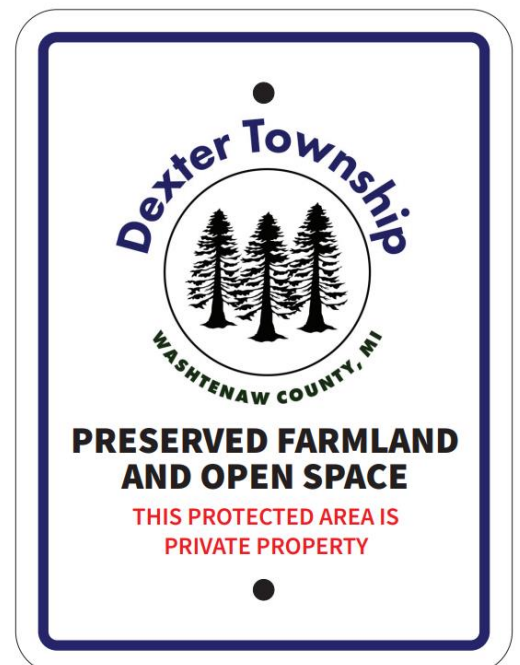
In addition to State and federal grant programs, a couple local sources will also be approached for contributions. The Washtenaw County Natural Area Preservation Program—funded through a dedicated millage most recently approved by voters in 2000—has funds available for both farmland and natural area preservation. Depending on the features of a property, one or both of those elements could contribute. The Ann Arbor Greenbelt program—funded by a millage paid by property owners in the City of Ann Arbor—recently expanded the area in which its funds can be expended to include anywhere in Washtenaw County upstream of Barton Pond on the Huron River, from where the city gets 80% of its drinking water. All of Dexter Township is in that area.

The location of all properties under consideration is kept confidential both to protect the privacy of the landowners and to not allow for developers to gain inside information. For those with grant awards, the next step is to commission appraisals to establish the value of development rights to be purchased. If the landowner agrees to the value, other matching funds will be sought. There are many steps to conserving land in perpetuity, and the process typically takes a year and sometimes several to reach fruition. The patience and dedication of landowners is as essential as having a dedicated millage.

If you have any additional questions, please reach out to Trustee Laura Sanders at Lsanderson@dextertownship.org.

New Land Preservation Signs!

The Board of Trustees approved the purchase of signs to be placed on properties conserved through our land preservation program. The first of these will be installed along the western boundary of the Monier-Van Gorder property where it will be seen by visitors to the popular Washtenaw County Parks West Lake Preserve. More will be popping up on roadways later this year as we bring conservation easement projects to a close.



OAK TREE WILT

Oaks are an incredibly important natural resource in Michigan, and they are being threatened by a fungus. Oak wilt is a destructive disease that can infect all oaks, but mainly kills those in the red oak family. It is spread overland by beetles attracted to fresh wounds, and underground via root grafts between diseased and healthy oaks. If you enjoy oak trees and want to play a role in reducing the spread of oak wilt, only prune your oaks (yes, even "just" deadwood pruning) during specific times. The safest time to prune oaks is November 1st-March 14th, but if weather and beetle development allows it may be extended to April 15th. If pruning must occur outside of that timeframe, wound sealant should be applied immediately after a cut is made. Once a tree is infected, its chances of survival are zero if within the red oak family but are higher if it is in the white oak family. If you're concerned your oak has contracted oak wilt, contact an ISA Certified Arborist, preferably one who is also an Oak Wilt Qualified Specialist and has dealt with it before, to consult with you. Lab tests are required to accurately ID oak wilt, and once a case is confirmed, containment planning can begin. Containing oak wilt can be very disruptive and costly, so your best line of defense is prevention.

([https:// www.michiganoakwilt.org](https://www.michiganoakwilt.org)) has a plethora of helpful information and resources to learn more.



Photos from the Michigan Oak Wilt Coalition - [https:// www.michiganoakwilt.org](https://www.michiganoakwilt.org)

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT FOOD TRUCKS FROM OUR DEXTER AREA FIRE DEPARTMENT (DAFD)

- All Food Trucks must have a current Washtenaw County Health Department permit - DAFD will honor a documented inspection from a mutually approved organization
- Our Fire Department (DAFD) is working to ensure the safe operation and use to protect our residents.
- Food Trucks that use vegetable oil or animal fats in the cooking operation must have an operational automatic fire suppression system.
- Operators must submit the Food Truck Registration form to the Dexter Area Fire Department at least 2 weeks prior to the planned event and must arrange for any needed inspections prior to the planned start of operations.
- The department will not be requiring inspections of Food Trucks utilized in non-public events on private property, however they still must register if they will be operating within our service area.
- The Dexter Area Fire Department recognizes the benefits of "Food Trucks" (Mobile Food Service Units - MFSU) and supports their operation at special events throughout the Dexter area. DAFD is committed to ensure that all events utilizing Food Trucks will be enjoyable and safe. Please contact us at **734 426-4500** or visit **dexterareafire.org** for more information.