

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER



Making sense of your assessment

What's your home worth? It may hold a million dollars worth of memories but it does have value that can be measured in cash.

That's important, obviously, especially if you want to sell your house, memories and all. It also plays a big role in how much property taxes you pay.

That's where Darrin Kraatz comes in. Kraatz is Director of Assessing for Bloomfield Township. He and his staff of five take stock of property values for commercial, residential and industrial properties.

"It's important because the resident wants to know what their house is worth," Kraatz said. Two times the assessed value determines the estimated market value of the property.

Determining property values is not a simple task, as many factors have to be considered, including the age and condition of the building, the surrounding neighborhood and overall economic conditions.

Certified Property Appraisers Warsha Kulkarni, James Allen, Mitchell Elrod and Kathy Bono and Equalization Coordinator Sharon Beslock make valuation determinations annually and keep track of the numbers.

It's not a simple matter. The

economy can be a huge factor in determining value, as we saw so painfully in the economic crash of 2008. Tens of thousands of homeowners saw the market value of their houses plunge in that period when home values sank "under water," meaning the mortgage exceeded the value of the home.

Further complicating the mat-

were prior to the economic crash," Kraatz said.

The taxable value is the basis for the calculation of property taxes. Most homeowners pay less in property taxes today because of the real estate crash. This also means the Township has less revenue to work with to provide services the residents expect. Yet the cost to maintain even the present level of services continues to climb. The average Township homeowner pays about \$7,000 a year in property taxes.

Some homeowners are not aware that they are missing out on a big tax break by not claiming a principal residence exemption on their primary residence. "Principal residence" means the dwelling that you own and occupy as your permanent home. Vacation homes, seasonal homes and income properties may not be claimed as your primary residence.

If a resident feels that their property assessment is not accurate or overvalued they can protest the assessment at the Board of Review meetings held annually in March.

Sound a bit complicated? "Come in and talk to us," Kraatz said. "If the homeowner has any questions regarding their principal residence or property assessments the Assessor's Office staff can help."

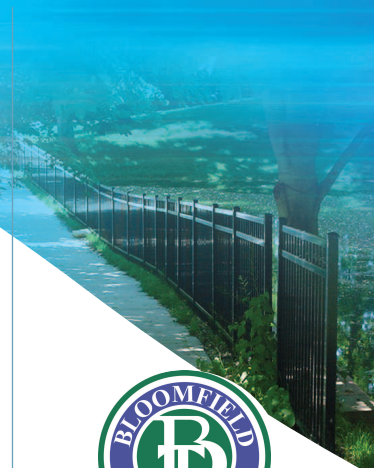
For more assessing info see page 4



Township Assessor Darrin Kraatz goes over some numbers with Equalization Coordinator Sharon Beslock. Next to them is appraiser Warsha Kulkarni.

ter is that the economic recovery from that is a slow process for communities like Bloomfield Township because increases in the taxable value are limited annually to 5 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is lower. In recent years the inflation rate has been under 2 percent.

"Assessed values have been going up about 6 1/2 percent annually on average since 2012," said Kraatz. The taxable value has been held way below that. "It will be years before the taxable values will get back to what they



BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP BOARD 2017

ELECTED OFFICIALS

ADMINISTRATION

Leo Savoie, Supervisor
Janet Roncelli, Clerk
Brian Kepes, Treasurer

TRUSTEES

David Buckley
Neal J. Barnett
Michael Schostak
Dani Walsh

APPOINTED POSITIONS

PLANNING COMMISSION

Thomas Petinga, Chairman
Jeff Salz, Vice Chairman
Lisa Seneker
Richard Mintz
Neal Barnett
Richard Atto
Bruce Selik

BOARD OF APPEALS

Carol Rosati, Chairman
Tracy Leone, Vice Chairman
David Buckley
Brian Henry
Lisa Seneker
Robert Taylor, Jr.
James Aldrich
Claudine Bacher, Alternate
Jocelyn Giangrande, Alternate

Save the date...

October 1
Township Open House

October 7
Household Hazardous
Waste Drop-Off Day

October 19
Senior Services Health
Fair and Flu Shot Clinic

December 15
Last day for yard waste
pick-up



Board of Trustees

TIME: 7:00 P.M.
DATE: 2nd and 4th Monday
LOCATION: Township Auditorium

Planning Commission

TIME: 7:00 P.M.
DATE: 1st and 3rd Monday
LOCATION: Township Auditorium

Zoning Board of Appeals

TIME: 7:00 P.M.
DATE: 2nd Tuesday
LOCATION: Township Auditorium

NOTE: The Charter Township of Bloomfield will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services at all meetings to individuals with disabilities. All such requests must be made at least five days prior to said meeting. Please contact the Bloomfield Township Clerk's Office, 4200 Telegraph Road P.O. Box 489 Bloomfield Hills MI 48303--0489 248-433-7702 Fax: 248-433-7714

Public comment at Township meetings

The public comment period of a meeting is often misunderstood. Under the Open Meetings Act, MCL 15.263, a person is permitted to address the public body under the established guidelines as to time and place on the agenda. The guidelines allow a public meeting to be conducted in an organized, productive and business-like manner.

Township board meetings are scheduled for the board to do its business in public. People can observe the process, but not interrupt the board in their deliberations. However, the public is entitled to express their opinions and questions at a board meeting during the public comment section and a public hearing. When public comment occurs, the board listens to the public. Answers to questions may be directed to specific staff or officials to address after the meeting or during normal busi-

ness hours. When the comment period is closed, the board attends to its business on the agenda. Where once the public had to be present at a meeting or wait for the min-



A resident addresses the Board of Trustees at a Township meeting.

utes to be published, technology allows the public to watch the board meeting live on the local cable network or our website, or via our website's video-on-demand-section, available 24/7.

We welcome the public to interact with the township at any time. Visiting township offices, phoning or emailing the township departments and elected officials, accessing the township website or convers-

ing with board members at outside events are all useful venues for issues that do not require board action.

Some issues rendered in public comment are better handled by township officials or staff in their offices. More in-depth conversation, attention to detail and group input by interested residents can be accomplished in a setting that is conducive to securing additional resources not easily accessible nor considered during public comment. After meeting, if the issue introduced by public comment warrants township board consideration, both the board and the public benefit by presenting the matter as a future agenda item with appropriate documentation. Thus, the process involves decision-making at a township board meeting in view of the public. And, public comment becomes available once again.

Township water gets good rating

Bloomfield Township is pleased to inform you that in 2016, as in past years, we have surpassed the water quality standards required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality.

The 2016 Annual Water Quality Report describes the source of our water, lists our test results, and contains important information about water and health. This report

is intended to provide consumer understanding of drinking water and to heighten awareness of the need to protect our precious water resources. We hope this report addresses any drinking water quality concerns you might have.

Please go to www.bloomfieldtwp.org/WaterReport to view your 2016 Annual Water Quality Report and learn more about your drinking water.

If you would like a paper copy of the 2016 Annual Water Quality Report mailed to your home, call the Department of Public Works at (248) 594-2800.



Sign up for the weekly eNewsletter to keep up with what's happening in the Township and to receive news bulletins. Go to the Township website, www.bloomfieldtwp.org, and click on the box at the upper left of the page, or email gkowski@bloomfieldtwp.org and ask to be added to the subscription list.



A NOTE FROM

Leo Savoie, Bloomfield Township Supervisor

Building an even better community

The very thought of it is frightening.

What would happen if a person with a gun went on a rampage in one of our schools? The results would be horrifying. And don't think such a thing can't happen here. We have already seen such mass shootings in schools around the nation, some in areas that never imagined that they could be the victims of such violence.

But we are not just hoping that it won't happen here. We are taking steps to deal with such a situation. In August Township firefighter/paramedics joined forces with police officers in a special training seminar on how to react to a potential shooter – or active assailant, as they are now called because they don't always use guns – in a school. Conant Elementary School on Quarton Road was the site of the training that spanned four days. During that period all shifts of the police and fire department personnel were put through the rigorous and realistic training. They were taught the latest procedures in responding to a call for help.

The Bloomfield Hills Public

Schools deserve high praise for taking this proactive stance in facing a potential threat in their buildings and fostering this training exercise. Such exercises have been done in the past, but this was the first time that police and fire personnel worked together



Police and Fire personnel participate in a training exercise at Conant School.

er in this kind of training.

That's significant in itself, but there's another story here that goes far beyond the doors of the school buildings. Few people in the Township probably were even aware that the training was being held. In fact, the Township is active every day in a variety of ways to maintain and upgrade the community.

Often it has to do with public safety, as when the fire department explores new ways to serve the residents, as in the cooperative program with St. Joseph Hospital in Pontiac that uses Internet links to doctors to allow them to remotely connect

with patients in ambulances or at home.

And even on a more traditional level, the Township is constantly at work, whether it's improving roads, expanding the safety path network, looking at ways to improve financial processes or getting the best deal on salt to spread on the roads during the winter. We are always at

work on a variety of projects all designed to make things better in our Township.

It's what we do as part of our commitment to customer service. Our job isn't just to maintain the status quo – although it's a pretty good status quo. We are also looking out for ways to improve the quality of life in the Township. That may not always be readily visible but it never stops. And it can be challenging. It involves exploring possibilities that may be new and different from the ways things have traditionally been done. But you can never get better if you never change.

So we continue to explore options, always looking for alternatives that can make this an even stronger community. And the effort is paying off. We have a AAA bond rating, the Township is continually recognized as one of the safest communities in the nation and we remain an extremely desirable place to live.

You don't get that kind of recognition by standing still.

Check the dashboard

How does Bloomfield Township stand financially compared to other communities?

You can find out at a glance by looking at the dashboard. It can be found on the home page of the Township website, www.bloomfieldtwp.org. Just look for the box labeled "Munetrix – Citizens' Guide and Dashboard."

A wide array of financial information about the Township – and information about communities across Michigan – is available on the site. Learn about the Township's revenue, long-term debt and pension obligations, as well as general information about the Township, including population growth and more.

Minor home repairs offered to seniors

You may qualify for grant funds for minor home repairs. Bloomfield Township Senior Services is using funds received from HUD's Community Block Grant program to offer minor home repairs to qualifying seniors. Applicants must be 60 years of age or older. Maximum household income for a one-person household is \$37,450, and for a two-person household, \$42,800. Services available include cleaning, repair or replacement of furnaces; replacement of hot water heaters, garbage disposals, toilets, tub/sink faucets, entry doors; sidewalk and driveway repairs, storm doors and windows, and more.

Since 2009 the program has funded close to \$500,000 in home repairs. The Township's Building Division works closely with Senior Services, with staff visiting sites and approving the projects. The average age of homeowners participating in the program is 80, average annual income is \$22,215 and average length of home ownership is 32 years.

To see if you qualify, call Denise Kolkmeier at (248) 723-3500.



Health fair and flu shot clinic coming up

The Bloomfield Township Senior Center, 4315 Andover Road, will host a health fair and flu shot clinic from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Oct. 19.

Limited flu shots will be available to township residents ages 50 and over. Shots are free for seniors age 65 and older with Medicare B; all others are \$25.

The health fair will also include checks on blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol; measurement of body mass index and hearing test. Health information will be offered. The event is sponsored by St. Joseph Mercy Oakland.

This fair is open only to Bloomfield Township residents age 50 and over, and appointments are required. Register by phone at 248-723-3500 or at the senior center beginning September 21. Participants must bring proof of residency and Medicare card to their appointment.

People are welcome to just attend for the free screenings if desired, no appointments needed if you are not getting a flu shot.

Assessing Dept. conducts field inspections

The Bloomfield Township Assessing Department conducts frequent property reviews (both residential and commercial properties) to verify and update the assessment records. Any time there are changes to your property such as an addition or removal of structure(s), fire and/or water damage, newly issued building permit, recent transfer of ownership, etc., the Assessing Department will review the assessment record and property.

Bloomfield Township appraisers will conduct field inspections Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. They will have photo identification and will be driving a Township marked vehicle. When an appraiser arrives at the property, they may ask the homeowner to review the interior of the structure and verify the accuracy of the assessment record. If the homeowner is not present at the time of this review, the appraiser will review the exterior of the property. The appraiser will leave a notice on the door with their contact information and reason for their visit.

Any changes to the value of property (increase or decrease) will be reflected on the Assessment Change Notice which is mailed annually in February.

If there are any questions, please contact the Bloomfield Township Assessing Department at (248) 433-7710 to verify that all property information is correct and updated.

It's time to 'Shake Your Mailbox'

Harsh as it may seem, we have to talk about a winter chore.

Every year some Township residents see their mailboxes topple over as a result of snowplows piling snow against weak posts or hardware. In an effort to reduce the likelihood of this happening, the Bloomfield Township Department of Public Works is encouraging residents to "Shake Your Mailbox."

This will tell you whether your mailbox posts are sturdy and the hardware is holding them in good shape. If not, you will be able to correct any problems before damage from snowplows occurs. Repairing or replacing mailboxes now could also present delays in mail delivery.

Call the Public Services office at (248) 594-2800 with any questions.



Annual Open House to be held October 1

Come to the Township Open House, Sunday, Oct. 1 from noon to 4 p.m. to enjoy plenty of fun! There will be patrol car rides, firefighting demos, snowplow rides, K-9 demonstrations, a helicopter landing and much more. Kids can visit the animal shelter, build a doghouse, and see fire trucks, police cars and road equipment. There will be lots of food, including pizza, hot dogs, tacos and cider and donuts. Best of all, it's all free.





From the Fire Department

MDA ambassador visits fire station (and finds a new friend)

Jessica Hetzel expected to see a group of Township firefighters when she stopped by the Bloomfield Township Fire Department Central Station Tuesday, July 18.

What she didn't count on was the hedgehog.

Let's back up a bit. Jessica, 15, is a Michigan ambassador for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. In that capacity she represents the MDA and makes guest appearances all over, including fire departments, which conduct annual Boot Drives to benefit MDA. Boot Drives are those events where firefighters stand in front of businesses with boots held out for donations from persons passing by. The Township Fire Department has been especially successful in garnering donations for the MDA, having raised nearly \$20,000 in the last two years. Jessica was scheduled to stop by the Main Fire Station and say thanks for the department's efforts, which she did.

"Thank you for your support," she said "Without it I would not get stronger."

And that's when the hedge-



Jessica Hetzel gets her first look at Henry, the hedgehog, in a carrier held by Firefighter/paramedic Michelle Figurski. Mom Kristy Hetzel and Firefighter/paramedic Chris Hull enjoy her reaction.

hog entered the scene.

Firefighter/paramedic Chris Hull, who is one of the coordinators of the Boot Drive in the Township, learned that Jessica is passionate about hedgehogs. After checking with Jessica's mom and dad, Kristy and Eric Hetzel, who gave the OK, Hull tracked down a place in Saline, MI, that raises and sells hedgehogs. Firefighters attending the kickoff for the annual MDA Boot Drive held in Lansing contributed money to

pay for the hedgehog, and the Bloomfield Township Fire Department Charities donated a gift card to get pet supplies.

So after her presentation at the fire station, the department brought out a pet carrier occupied by a hedgehog and gave it to Jessica. She was delighted, and promptly named it Henry.

That wasn't the only good news of the day. Mom Kristy told the firefighters that Jessica is receiving a new

treatment that has brought about a dramatic improvement in her condition.

Other members of the MDA were on hand to also express thanks to the Township firefighters for their support in raising money for the cause.

Jessica has been battling a form of muscular dystrophy since 2012. "MDA has been there since day one," Kristy Hetzel said. "She (Jessica) has never let MD determine who she is. We never let limitations hold us back."

Although Jessica is confined to a wheelchair, she had no difficulty maneuvering through the fire station, meeting with the firefighters.

"We certainly support their efforts," said Fire Chief Mike Morin. "It has been a good charity for us."

MDA began its collection campaign in 1953 when it took in a few thousand dollars. Last year 100,000 firefighters collected \$24 million nationally. Proceeds are used for a variety of services, including sending kids to camp.

Lifetone alarms still being offered

Lifetone smoke alarm clocks are still available to residents for free from the Township Fire Department.

The Township acquired the alarms through a \$28,000 grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These devices are designed to alert persons who cannot see or can't hear if a smoke detector in the house goes off. The alarm picks up the sound of an

ordinary smoke detector. It then flashes the word "Fire" on a bright orange screen as a voice shouts "Fire! Get out!" Simultaneously, it emits an extremely loud alarm.

Additionally, a small device that looks like a computer mouse can be placed in a bed. When the alarm sounds the device pulsates with enough force to wake a deep sleeper or someone who can't hear.

Fire Lt. Ryan Husch said firefighters will help install the device for those who need it. "It's simple to install," he said.

For more information, call Lt. Husch at (248) 433-7745 or email rhusch@bloomfieldtp.org.



Lt. Ryan Husch demonstrates a Lifetone alarm.



BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP

4200 TELEGRAPH ROAD
PO BOX 489
BLOOMFIELD MI 48303-0489

TOWNSHIP DIRECTORY

Water/Sewer Emergency 433-7730	
Administration	433-7700
Accounting	433-7712
Assessor's Office	433-7710
Building Division	433-7715
Clerk's Office	433-7702
Community Cable	433-7790
Engineering & Env.	594-2800
Fire Non-Emergency	433-7745
Ordinance Division	594-2845
Planning Division	433-7795
Police Department	
Administration	433-7750
Non-Emergency	433-7755
Animal Welfare	433-7757
Investigations	433-7760
Alarm Info	433-7775
Property	433-7777
Records	433-7776
Public Works	
Road Division	594-2800
Water & Sewer	594-2800
Senior Services	723-3500
Adult Day Service	723-3530
Treasurer's Office	433-7705



Joining forces to fight terror

The story has become too familiar. A deranged person with a weapon enters a school and goes on a murderous rampage.

It has happened in seemingly safe neighborhoods and communities where violent crime is rare.

What can be done to prevent such things from happening? No one seems to have the complete answer to that question. But progress is being made on dealing with an incident when it begins in order to take control of the situation as soon as possible and prevent or at least minimize injuries or deaths.

A lot has been learned about responding since the horrific shooting at

Columbine High School in 1999 when two students killed 12 other students and a teacher, said Township Police Captain Phil Langmeyer. Back then the procedure of first responders was to surround the school and seal it off before entering. Today, the emphasis is on speed and rapid response. Get to the attacker before he can do more harm.

And now, it's not just the police who go into the school – it is a combined force of

police and firefighter/paramedics. Together they form a force that has the weapons to



First responders cautiously enter Conant School.

face an attacker and the resources to treat the injured immediately.

But moving in under fire or the threat of fire takes special skills that have to be learned.

That was the reason for a joint operation held in July and August at Bloomfield Hills Conant Elementary School on Quarton Road.

For four days police and firefighter/paramedics trained together on how to enter a school where there was an “active assailant,” neutralize the attacker and treat the wounded in one cohesive, efficient operation.

Personnel from all shifts of the police and fire departments trained over a four-day period learning the safest, most efficient way to enter a school under attack and save as many inside as possible.

“We learned that teamwork is essential,” said Langmeyer.