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**With Residents
Contributing**

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Special points of interest:

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- Party on Nov. 20! See p. 4

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Road Expenditures: the North versus the South

The Civil War lives in Superior Township. We even have our very own Mason Dixon Line, Geddes Road dividing the Urban South from the Rural North. So when the Washtenaw County Road Commission presented their 2007 road project expenditures and presented their recommendations for local road projects to the Superior Township Board and residents, April 21, 2008, we all fully expected that the Board would perpetuate the war between the North and the South and they did not let us down. The costs, compiled in the Road Commission's Annual Report, revealed a failure by both the county and the township to equitably expend resources

between the dirt roads in the North and the asphalt roads in the South.

In 2007, the Washtenaw County Road Commission spent \$472,542.66 on Primary Road Projects and \$264,964.01 on Local road projects. A look at the line item expenditures shows that more money was spent on asphalt roads in the south than on the dirt roads in the north. The imbalance did not improve in 2008. The Road Commission proposed spending less money, \$325,600, in 2008 for local road projects, and still most of this went towards repairing or replacing asphalt. The Road Commission recommended \$38,400 for 3" asphalt



Warren Road between Curtis and Vorhies.

for Nottingham Road and the bid was actually \$47,300.00, and \$66,600 for Arlington Drive, from Ascot to Andover, and the bid actually came in at \$82,000.00. In both of these instances the Superior Township Board said they would supplement the Road Commission's expenditure with their own revenue to be sure the paved roads in the south were maintained.

The residents of Warren Road were thrilled to have won the resource expenditure lottery this year. They were the recipients of \$5,900 worth of work proposed by the Washtenaw County Road Commission. Slated for such improvements as grading to restore the crown to the road, berm removal to facilitate storm water run

-off, and an application of limestone and dust in trouble spots. They were also the unwitting recipients of an archaeological find. This rusted out culvert was unearthed by the grader and left on the shoulder. Residents were unsuccessful at getting it removed.

Quality Work



Developers to Get Taxes Reduced on Vacant Parcels

The Superior Township Board has voted to raise taxes for Superior Township residents .8566 %. Supervisor McFarlane says the increase was needed to raise \$11,000 in order to pay down "charge backs" to developers who own vacant parcels and who he expects to appeal to the tax tribunal next spring. The Board made the decision, following an unpublicized and poorly attended public hearing Monday, September 15. Only six residents were in the audience and two walked out frustrated. Clerk Williams asked them "Aren't you going to stay and have your voice heard about the tax increase?" To which the two residents looking at the pathetic turn out said, "We're not going to change anybody's mind."

McFarlane said during the public hearing, "We're expecting developers who own vacant land to complain to the tax tribunal this spring, so we want to ask for the money now so we'll have it in our budget to give it to them."

When asked what they would tell constituents who wonder why their property taxes are going up when the value of their property is plummeting?" McFarlane replied, "It's precisely because property values are plummeting that we need to

increase taxes. State Revenues are flat and revenues from taxes aren't keeping up with inflation. But don't worry, it's a miniscule amount and the residents won't mind because we reduced the fire millage by half a percent, so they're still getting a tax decrease."

Headlee Amendment 's intent is to prevent property taxes from rising faster than the rate of inflation.

Supervisor McFarlane frequently mentions that the board has chosen not to override Headlee out of respect for the taxpayer, preferring instead for the board to tighten its fiscal belt and live within its means. Except apparently, their respect ends when it comes to making residents pay out of pocket to refund property taxes to developers.

According to the web site "Michigan in Brief," "The Headlee Amendment limits revenue from property-assessment increases. If the assessed value of a local unit's total taxable property, excluding new construction and improvements, increases by more than the inflation rate, the maximum authorized property tax rate must be

reduced so that the local's total taxable property yields the same gross revenue, adjusted for inflation, as collected on it at its prior assessed value. (However, the assessment on individual property still could increase more than the inflation rate, because the limit applies to all property *combined*, not each parcel.)

This section has had a restraining effect on local revenue. Most governmental units have been required on several occasions to roll back millage rates so as to offset assessment increases. Many government units, particularly school districts, have asked voters to override "Headlee rollbacks"; they have only sometimes been successful. The rollback provision's importance has been reduced by Proposal A, because the latter imposes a limit on assessment increases that is more restrictive than that imposed by the Headlee amendment."

Source:
<http://www.michiganinbrief.org/edition06/text/issues/issue-31.htm>



Your Money: Township Board Appoints Full Time Trainee

Most people have to qualify for a job BEFORE they get hired. But presumptive Township Clerk-in-Waiting David Phillips is luckier than most. At the Sept. 2 meeting, his buddies on the Township Board voted to hire him full time at \$15 hour to learn how to do



the job, with the title of Deputy Clerk. So let's see, that's \$2,400 for 160 hours until Nov. 20, when he gets sworn in to earn double that hourly wage. Congrats to Mr. Phillips—it sure beats watching jailbirds pee in a cup!

P.S. We called the State Attorney General to see if you can be a Twp. Trustee and a full time twp. employee at the same time. Yup, you CAN be your own boss and even vote to give yourself a raise. No conflict of interest—it's one of the perks of elective office!

Top Ten Edition

Reasons why Supervisor Bill McFarLANE (if you please) hates the Park Commission:

10. Those pesky nature lovers think they should have some new parks in this township.

9. And they want to have a say over their budget (imagine the chutzpah).

8. Clerk Williams told them to step down and de-commission themselves, and they actually refused.

7. Parks attract little children, and they make messes, so you have to hire people to clean.

6. Teenagers might want to play sports in parks, and everyone knows they are all criminals.

5. Dogs poop in parks.

4. Bill was once bitten by a wild animal in a park (we think it was a squirrel). What was he doing to the animal?

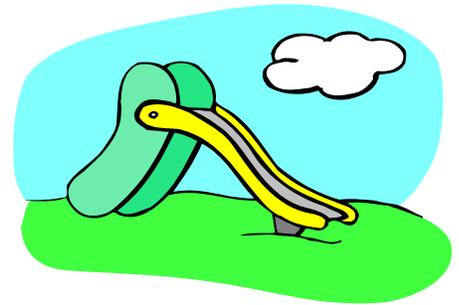
3. The Michigan Townships Association confirms that Park Commissioners have the authority to hire and fire parks staff, which could seriously impinge on the Supervisor's leeway for cronyism.

2. There are great state and federal grants for park development, but

the folks at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources won't let the Township name a funded park after a person (aww, Bill...)

And the number 1 reason:

Parks take land off the tax rolls!



Only a few parks have play equipment for kids.

How Many Superior TWP Officials Does it Take to ...

Watch a recount?

On Tuesday, Sept. 9, all three elected Township officials appeared at the meeting of the County Board of Canvassers and spent a half day at taxpayer expense. (12 hours @\$35 = \$420 not counting benefits.) With no job-related reason for being there, they mooched the pizza provided to the recount workers by the

County Clerk, and sat around schmoozing with Gable and Hoppe, the two Republican members of the Board of Canvassers. Oh, wait! Aren't the Twp. officers Democrats? The best part came at the end, when Treasurer McKinney alertly helped herself to the parking validation for the recount workers. We think she was try-

ing to save you money, of course, because otherwise she'd have submitted her parking fee for township reimbursement.



Hot Races Produce No-Shows

The September 6 State Democratic Convention in Lansing was notable for the complete absence of any of the Precinct Delegates elected Aug. 5 from Superior Township. A four-way race for Precinct Delegate in Precinct 2 elected Brenda McKinney, Earl Roberson Jr., and Travis Greer. A four-way race in Precinct 5 elected David Phillips and Alex Williams. We hope they at least join their Party—

it's only five bucks. We'd like to think those hot primary races were more than beauty contests. Precinct delegates are supposed to be working as volunteers--organizing their neighbors in order to help the national and state party ticket. If you'd like to be a Dem precinct delegate from Precincts 1, 3 or 4, there are plenty of openings. There are openings for all five precincts if you are Republican. Since no one filed

to run, you can be appointed. Just show up early at the next Washtenaw County Committee meeting. See <http://www.washtenawdems.org/calendar.html> or <http://www.wash-gop.com/> for your Party's meeting details.

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FOIA Follies

"The Public's information belongs to the Public." —Former Attorney General Jennifer Granholm.

Our last Freedom of Information request was a pricey one. The Township charged 25 cents per page for a copy of the 10 page adopted budget! Wow, when was the last time you paid this much at Office Max? We had to buy a copy because Township Clerk Williams has been unable to figure out how to post documents on the web site. (We scanned our copy into a pdf and would gladly show her how to put this up on the web...)

Now, the Michigan FOIA law does not require that the Township charge anything for public documents. And lots of other local governments happily give their citizens their own public information for free. But Superior seems to regard FOIA as a moneymaker. Well, there is good news for you document

requesters. The Board has approved a new copier contract that will cost them only 8 cents for a color copy, and .016 (less than 2 cents) for a black and white copy. Ok, so if the paper costs another 1.5 cents and the copier speed means that your document was done in less than a minute of labor time...isn't the time it will take to



process your payment going to cost more than the copies?

Just wondering

how they are going to keep up this little profit center....taxpayers want to know!

Swearing In Party at Township Hall Nov. 20

Wow, you probably didn't get a personal invite to the glorious upcoming event where the Township Board members will congratulate themselves on winning an uncontested general election. Oh, and you probably wouldn't have felt very welcome anyway, due to the fact that the party will be at NOON



that day, and you will probably be at your job or taking care of your family. But—if you can make it—please do bring friends. We are sure the food will be great. Township Treasurer

McKinney always gets her banker buddies to show their gratitude for her business by delivering a nice catered feast. Since they didn't have to kick in for her re-election this year, the spread should be especially lavish.