



NEWSLETTER

*To advance the quality of life of all residents through a commitment to responsible growth, and value-driven municipal services that promote the relationships among economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social equity.
(Adopted 2/14/2017)*

TOWNSHIP BOARD

Supervisor

Libby Heiny-Cogswell
libbyhc@oshtemo.org

Clerk

Dusty Farmer
dfarmer@oshtemo.org

Treasurer

Clare Buszka
cbuszka@oshtemo.org

Trustees

Cheri Bell
cbell@oshtemo.org

Kizzy Bradford

kbradford@oshtemo.org

Kristin Cole

kcole@oshtemo.org

Zak Ford

zford@oshtemo.org

DUMP DAYS

9 am-3 pm

March 27

April 10

April 24

May 8

May 29

June 26

July 31

August 28

September 25

October 30

November 6

(and leaf drop off)

November 20

(and leaf drop off)

SHRED DAYS

April 17 and Sept 18

Sewer in Oshtemo Township - We want to hear from you!

To better understand the wants and needs of Oshtemo's citizens, the Township is partnering with W.E. Upjohn to seek input on future sewer expansion policies and procedures. Please take our survey, either by going to the link provided below or using the QR code, to help guide the direction of future sewer expansion projects in Oshtemo.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/OSHTEMO_SEWER

Directions on using the QR code:

- Open the camera app on your smartphone.
- Focus the phone camera on the QR code by gently tapping on the code on your screen.
- Follow the instructions on your phone's screen.



Township Department Information

Assessor Kristine Biddle
216-5225 assessor@oshtemo.org

Fire Chief Mark Barnes
375-0487 mbarnes@oshtemo.org

Ordinance Officer Rick Suwarsky
216-5227 rsuwarsky@oshtemo.org

Parks Director Karen High
216-5233 khigh@oshtemo.org (Rentals: 375-4260)

Planning Director Iris Lubbert
216-5223 ilubbert@oshtemo.org

Public Works Director Marc Elliott
216-5236 mellott@oshtemo.org



Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/oshtemotownship/> or sign up at www.oshtemo.org to join the email list



From Clerk Dusty Farmer—

The Clerk's Office has recovered from the four big elections in 2020 and is ready to move forward! We currently have two elections scheduled for 2021. The first is on May 4, 2021 and has a question from KRESA. This will only affect precincts 3-10 in Oshtemo. You can view your ballot when it is available at www.michigan.gov/vote. You can also request an absentee ballot and register to vote on the state website.

The second election is November 2, and as of this time only Kalamazoo County Transportation Authority has declared intent to have a question on the ballot. This will affect all Oshtemo precincts.

In other Clerk's news, Green Burials in West Oshtemo Cemetery are now available. This is a unique offering in this area, and we are happy to announce that we are the first cemetery in the region to offer Green Burials. More information can be found at www.oshtemo.org/cemeteries/ or by calling my office at 216-5224.



From Treasurer Clare Buszka—

The tax season for 2020 has come to an end!

I would like to thank all of you for making my transition here a great one. The department appreciates all of you who made sure taxes were paid on time by utilizing the drop box, online payment system, and stopping in to see us.

As a reminder, any unpaid property taxes and dog licenses will now need to be handled with Kalamazoo County Treasurers Office. They can be reached at 269-384-8124.

As we move toward the end of March, I will be working closely with the County to ensure all taxes are settled properly. Although the Township is the legal authority that collects taxes, most of that money is disbursed to other taxing jurisdictions (i.e.: Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kalamazoo County, KRESA, Central County Transit Authority, KPS, Mattawan, Otsego, etc.). In April, my first down time, I will be taking tax-based training in order to better assist you in the coming years.

I look forward to meeting more of you as COVID restrictions are lifted and it is safe to spend time in person. In the meantime, I will be sharing information to help residents better understand how taxes are collected and where those dollars go in our community. I have included a tax graph which shows where tax money goes based on an average taxable value of \$118,225.15 and broken down by tax season. If you have any suggestions on information you would like included in future newsletters or social media posts, please share with me at cbuszka@oshtemo.org

As always, if you have any questions, please call the office at 269-216-5221. Stay safe!



From Supervisor Heiny-Cogswell—

The Township Office remains open Monday through Thursday 8-5 and Friday 8-1. Many staff continue to work remotely, so please call ahead to make any necessary appointments. Township Board and other meetings remain virtual, with access from the Oshtemo home page. Many new Township Board and Committee members were seated this year. The Township accepts applications year-round and keeps on file for openings.

Some quick updates--

Assessing – Your peer Oshtemo citizens completed a successful annual March Board of Review on March 11th. Thank you to those serving on the Board: Neil Sikora, Chair, and Kitty Gelling and Fred Gould, Members. And thanks also to the Assessing Department, including Assessor Kristine Biddle and Yale Smith, Assistant to the Assessor, for the organization and hard work.

Facilities – The snow plowing season is winding down, and grass cutting will soon begin. Contact the Township if interested in a facilities and grounds work position.

Police – The Supervisor's Office continues to coordinate with the Sheriff's Office to train and add additional Oshtemo deputies to the Township.

Ordinance Enforcement – The Township extends a warm welcome to retired deputy Rod Rought as a new part-time Ordinance Enforcement Team Member.

Fire Department – The Fire Chief & Human Resources are working to implement details within the first collective bargaining agreement.

Parks – Drake Farmstead Park will open this Spring. Stay tuned for further details. And Music in the Park will return this summer.

If you wish to ask any questions or provide comment to the Supervisor, please email it to libbyhc@oshtemo.org, or phone (269) 216-5220. Or join in virtually on Monday, April 19th, sometime between noon to 2 pm, when the Supervisor is available to answer questions one on one. The virtual link will be on the web home page.



Is Your Streetlight Out?

Streetlight issues, included outages or repairs, can be reported directly to Consumers Energy by visiting:

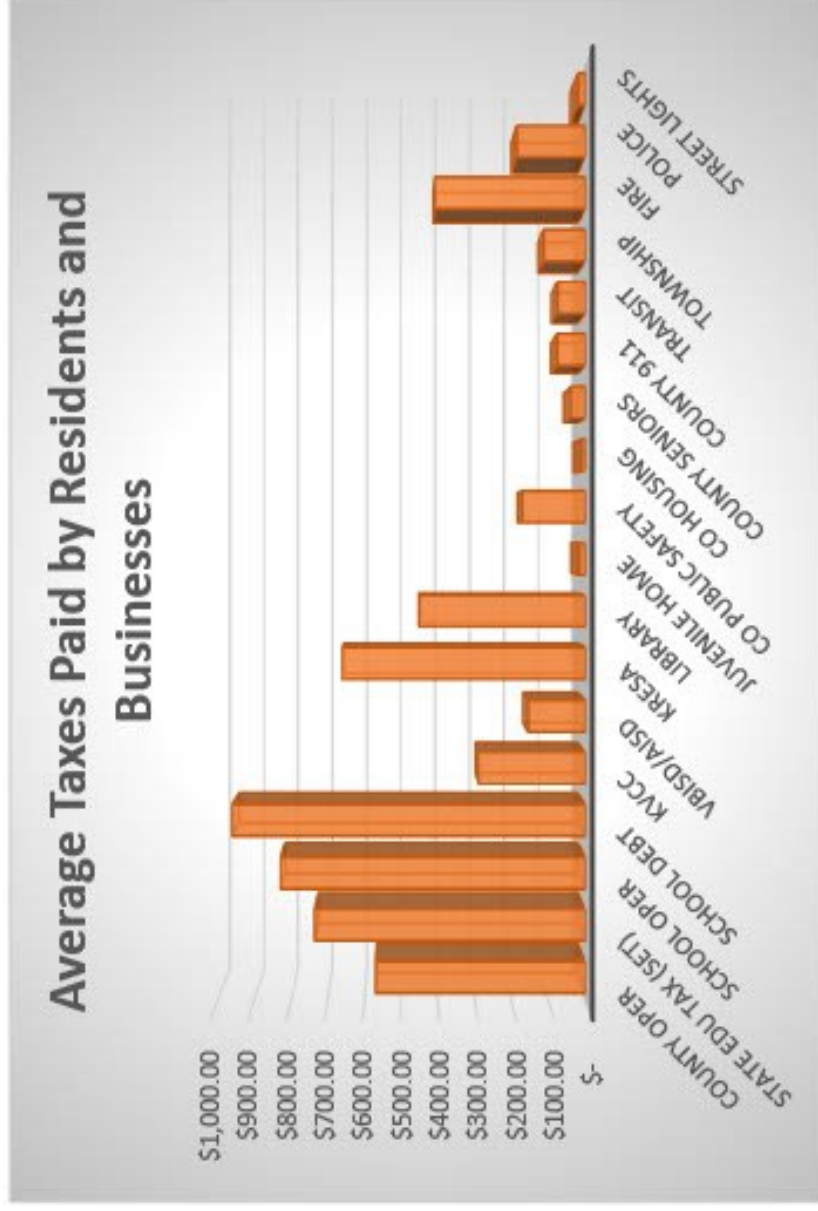
www.consumersenergy.com/outages/street-light

Bar Graph for 2020 Average Tax Distribution based on Average Taxable Value of \$118,225.15

	Tax Type	Avg Amt
Summer Bill	County Oper	\$ 568.05
	State Edu Tax (SET)	\$ 733.24
Winter Bill	School Oper	\$ 826.58
	School Debt	\$ 957.06
	KVCC	\$ 290.46
	VBISD/AISD	\$ 155.63
	KRESA	\$ 659.79
	Library	\$ 449.47
	Juvenile Home	\$ 19.20
	Co Public Safety	\$ 170.78
	Co Housing	\$ 11.76
	County Seniors	\$ 40.55
	County 911	\$ 77.04
	Transit	\$ 75.37
	Township	\$ 113.78
	Fire	\$ 407.96
	Police	\$ 187.27
Street Lights	\$ 21.73	

\$ 5,765.72

Combined Summer and Winter Tax Bills



ROADS UPDATE—

As snow melts and spring approaches, the anticipated construction season nears and orange barrels and cones will be out soon. Some of the annual construction work done in the Township is in partnership with the Road Commission of Kalamazoo County (RCKC) to apply preventive maintenance measures on roadway surfaces. Various treatments are used to extend the life and serviceability of the local roads.

Road segments are selected based on a condition analysis done every few years and other factors.

Preventive maintenance is a cost-effective way to keep roads in good condition by slowing deterioration and protecting them from damage by the weather. Similar to an oil change for a vehicle, these applications start soon after a road is built. All roads continually degrade, and eventually routine maintenance is no longer appropriate. Once roads reach a level of poor condition the road must either be rehabilitated or reconstructed.

The project funding is a dollar-for-dollar match from RCKC “PAR” program and the Township General Funds. This year’s budget is approximately \$630,000.00.

Below are a list of road segments and the preventative maintenance treatments planned in 2021:

Westport Trails Subdivision: Crack Fill, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

Breckenridge Subdivision: Crack Fill, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

2nd Street (KL Ave to M-43): Crack Fill, HMA Wedging, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

H Avenue (6th St to 9th St): Crack Fill, HMA Wedging, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

Quail Run Drive: HMA Overlay

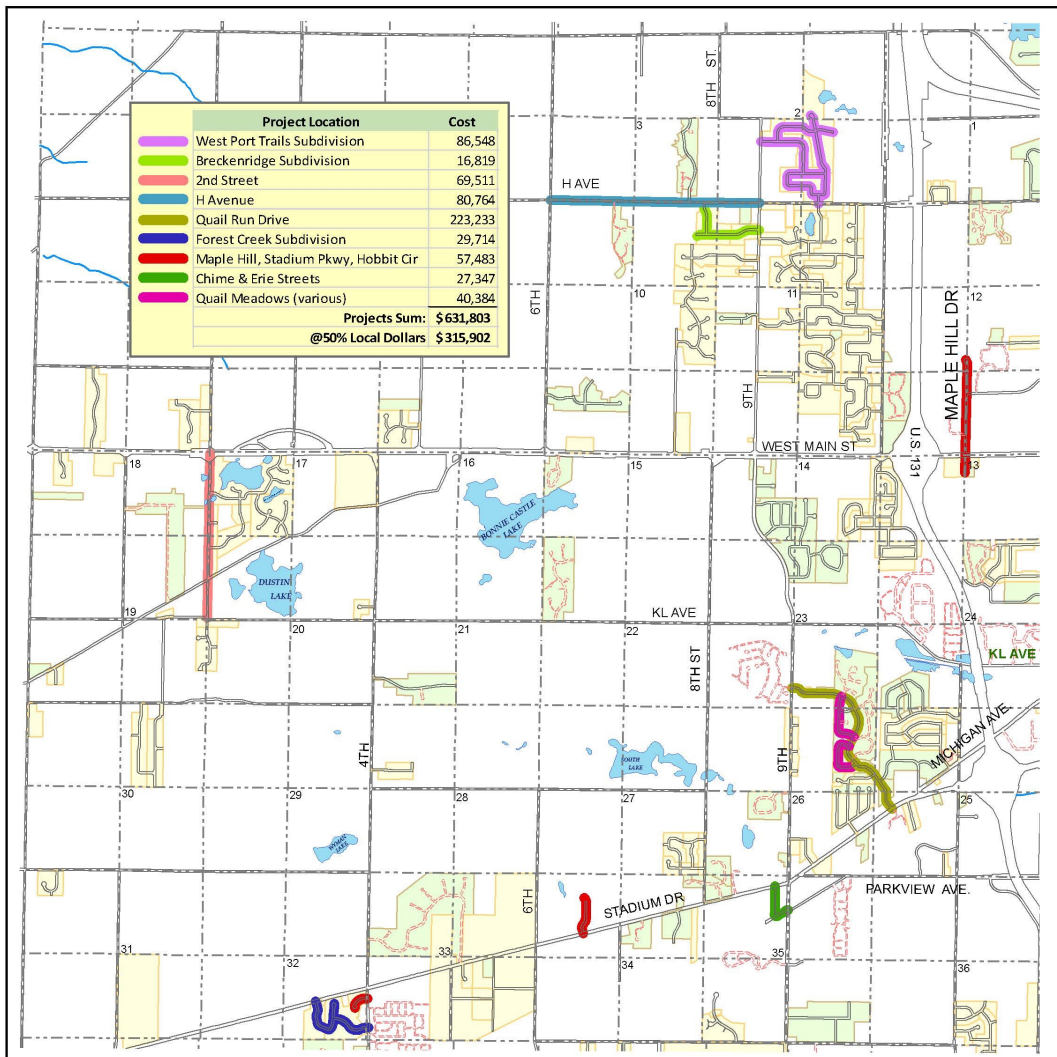
Forest Creek Subdivision: Crack Fill, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

Maple Hill, Stadium Pkwy, Hobbit Circ: Crack Fill, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

Chime & Erie Streets: Crack Fill, HMA Wedging, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

Quail Meadows (Tanager Ln, Pheasant Ln, Partridge Ln): Crack Fill, Chip Seal, Fog Seal

Visit <https://www.kalamazoocountyroads.com/maintenance.php> to see a video and learn more about the Chip Seal process!



Sewer Status?

Given the high cost of individual connection fees, the Oshtemo ballot sentiment was clear -- do not proceed with sewer expansion as currently described. The question now becomes, what other options are available? Are there even options? There are no easy answers. This is the challenge. The cost for the construction of public sewer does not change. Can the bond re-payment methodology for construction change? A thorough re-evaluation of longstanding related policies began this year. Together with professionals in engineering, municipal finance, planning, bond counsel, residents, and ultimately the Township Board, the exploration of different repayment model(s) continues. Until a favorable solution is determined, the projects are on hold.

Your ideas and opinions for alternatives are needed at this time. Anyone who wishes to participate in the planning process is encouraged to use the link to complete the survey on the front page of the newsletter.

NONMOTORIZED—

Non-motorized transportation facilities have been identified as a priority in the community survey, Go! Green Oshtemo Plan, and Master Plan. These trails, paths, and sidewalks are vital to improving safety and connectivity around the Township and the greater regional area. They provide access for a diverse group of users at all levels of ability and promote recreation and healthy lifestyles with their use. The Township continues to work towards connectivity of the network by completing projects each year. Here are the 2021 non-motorized construction projects:

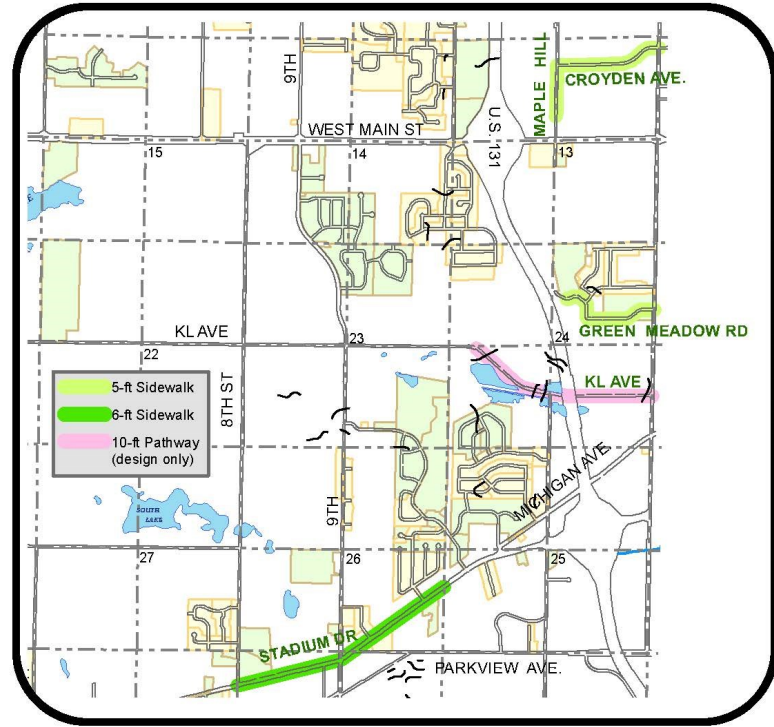
Maple Hill Drive and Croyden Avenue – W. Main Street to Drake Road: 5-foot-wide sidewalk on East/ South sides

Green Meadow – entire length: 5-foot-wide sidewalk on North side

Stadium Drive – 8th Street to the new sidewalk west of Quail Run Drive: 6-foot-wide shared use path on north side

For future construction, planning and design work continues in 2021 for the KL Ave pathway. This segment will connect from the recently completed pathway on Drake Road. This east-west non-motorized project will extend along the North side of KL Ave to the Paddock Apartments. Assuming funding assistance, this project is planned for 2024.

To view a map of the 2021 construction projects or entire non-motorized plan in the GO! Green Oshtemo plan, visit the Township website under Public Works and Planning.



2021 Non-Motorized Projects

OSHTEMO FIRE DEPARTMENT



Legend
■ FIRE
■ EMS
■ FIRE & EMS

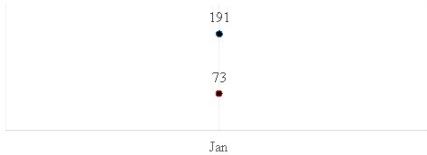
Aid Given



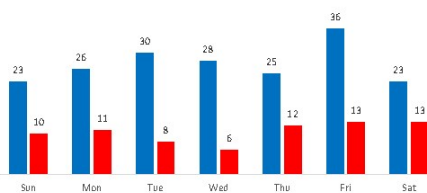
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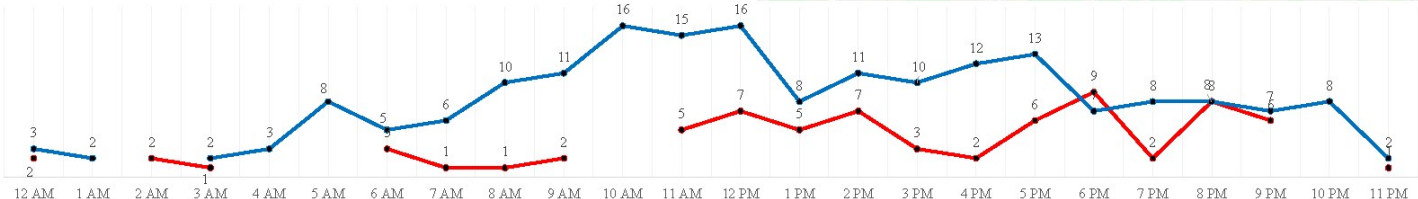
Incident Count by Month



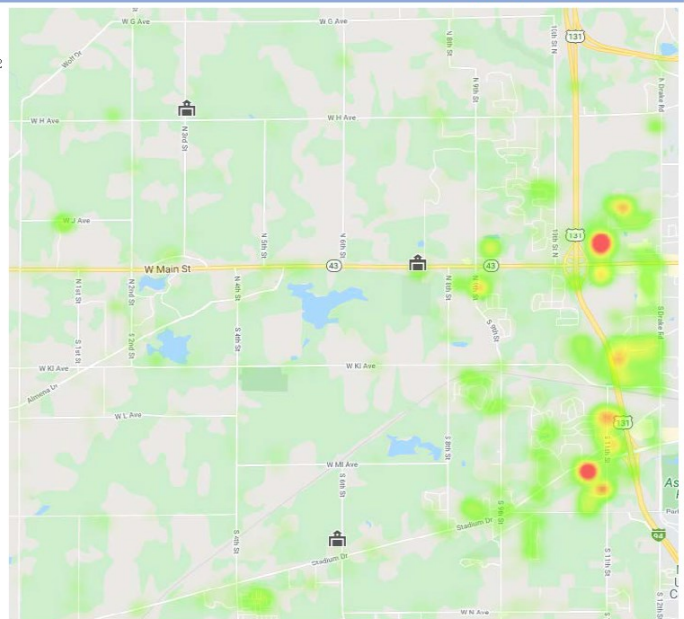
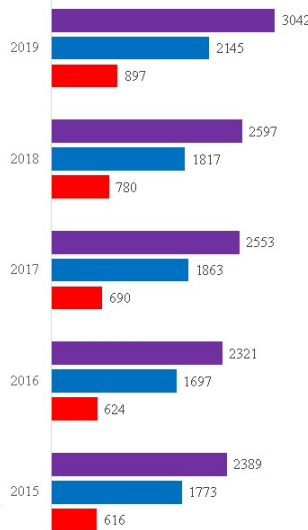
Incident Count by Day of the Week



Incident Count by Time of Day



5 Year Trend



Spring and summer fun planned in Oshtemo Township Parks—

We're looking forward to resuming community gatherings in 2021 as the COVID vaccine becomes more widely available. Safety will continue to be a priority and all programs and events will adhere with public health guidance from the State of Michigan. Here's what is planned so far.

'Yoga in the Park' at two Oshtemo locations! *New this year!* Outdoor yoga classes will be offered on the lawn at the historic Drake House *and* at the Flesher Field gazebo. These are drop-in classes; no registration or advance sign up is required and all levels are welcome. Cost is \$10 per class. Bring a yoga mat or blanket and water. Instructor is Samantha Schafer. For more information contact Karen High, Parks Director, at khigh@oshtemo.org or (269) 216-5233.

Yoga @ Drake Farmstead Park, 927 North Drake Road – every **Tuesday** from 7 to 8:15 pm, May 18 through August 31, 2021. Meet on the lawn outside the historic house.

Yoga @ Flesher Field, 3664 South 9th Street – every **Thursday** from 7 to 8:15 pm, May 20 through September 2, 2021. Meet at the gazebo.

Wiffleball League: Kalamazoo Wiffle League plays at Flesher Field and Oshtemo Township Park on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from **May through August**. Fee required. For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/kzoowiffleball/> or email kalamazoowiffleleague@gmail.com

Tennis lessons: 'Let's Serve' Tennis will again offer youth and adult tennis lessons at Township Park. Schedule to be released soon. Fee required. For more information contact tennis instructor Warner Offord at wotennispro20@gmail.com or check the Notice Board at www.oshtemo.org.

Soccer Shots: Soccer experience for children ages 2-8, held at Flesher Field on Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings starting in mid-**June**. Fee required. Visit soccershots.org/Kalamazoo for more information.

Michigan Disc Golf Hall of Fame Classic: this tournament will be held at Oshtemo Township Park on **May 22 and 23**. Fee required. For more information, contact Larry LaBond at KACES6903@gmail.com

MacDudley's Mid-Summer Fest: A family-friendly event to bring awareness to different disabilities, featuring games and activities for all ages, period costumes from 1300-1901, merchants, food, and music. **June 19 and 20** from 10 am -6 pm. Fee required. **Volunteers are needed for this event!** To volunteer, contact Bridget Ackley at bridget_ackley@rocketmail.com Hosted by MacDudley Dragon Entertainment.



Food Truck Tuesdays at Flesher Field: Food truck rally with three to five food trucks, kids' yard games and music. Free admission. **June 1, July 6, and August 3** from 5-8 pm. Hosted by Kalamazoo Experiential Learning Center. For more information contact: director@experientiallearningcenter.org

'Music in the Park' will return with three family-friendly concerts at the Flesher Field gazebo in **June, July and August**. Dates and performers to be announced soon. Free admission. Hosted by Oshtemo Friends of the Parks. For more information, contact Karen High at khigh@oshtemo.org

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: MAINTENANCE

Oshtemo Township is seeking an experienced candidate for the Part Time General Maintenance position.

SCOPE OF WORK

The assigned maintenance person will work with a team that has maintenance responsibilities for 12 buildings on 10 campuses including 3 fire stations, 3 cemeteries, 3 parks and 4 historical facilities. Jobs and projects are completed as a team as well as individual projects.

POSITION DUTIES:

- Ability to solve problems and work independently.
- Practical knowledge of the following:
 - Grounds keeping
 - HVAC Systems
 - Electrical Repairs
 - Plumbing Repairs
 - Servicing of facility systems and equipment
 - Have excellent organizational and communication skills.
 - Shares relevant information with other departments, coordinating activity when appropriate.

QUALIFICATIONS/REQUIREMENTS:

- Must maintain a current Michigan motor vehicle operator's license without restrictions (other than corrective lenses)
- Basic computer skills and experience with Microsoft Office Suite.
- High school diploma or equivalent.
- Five (5) years maintenance-related work desired.

Please e-mail your resume to sfeister@oshtemo.org as soon as possible

Scouts build nature trail at Oshtemo's Grange Hall—

Oshtemo has a new place to take a walk and enjoy nature, thanks to Eagle Scout candidate Ben Bickel and Boy Scout Troop 292. Ben designed and built a one-third mile loop trail that begins and ends at the playground at Oshtemo's Grange Hall, 3234 North 3rd Street. The trail winds up and down gently rolling hills and through canopy trees and Evergreens. It is surfaced with wood chips. The Scouts built the trail during two work days last fall. The highlight of the project, according to Ben, was "finally being able to see the trail come together after planning for so long and having a couple setbacks early on in the summer." The nature trail and playground area, which includes a basketball court, accessible picnic table, and horsehoes at the Grange Hall are open to the public daily from sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset.



Grange Hall will also soon serve as a staging area for bicycle rides in western Oshtemo Township and on gravel roads in eastern VanBuren County. Amenities such as a 'Bike Fix-It Station,' water, and an information kiosk will be installed this summer thanks to a grant from Bike Friendly Kalamazoo. The Grange Hall can be rented for private gatherings or community events. For details, including a rental agreement, calendar, photos and fees, visit <https://oshtemo.org/parks-and-recreation-facilities/>



Drake Farmstead Park to open May 28th—

Oshtemo's newest community park will open on **Friday, May 28**, just in time for Memorial Day picnics. Located at 927 North Drake Road, the park will be available daily from sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset for hiking, picnicking, and enjoying nature. Drake Farmstead Park features 26 acres of woods and fields with walking trails, a picnic shelter, and interpretive signs about local history and nature. The historic Drake house serves as the park's centerpiece and is available for scheduled tours by the Oshtemo Historical Society. The new timber frame carriage barn, intended for programs on history and nature, can be reserved for private events. The barn features a large multipurpose room, two barrier-free restrooms, heat and air conditioning. Building capacity is 64 with tables and chairs or 80 with chairs only. For information about hosting a private event in the carriage barn, visit <https://oshtemo.org/parks-and-recreation-facilities/drake-farmstead-park/> For more information, contact Karen High at khhigh@oshtemo.org or (269) 216-5223.



Park improvements were funded by the Drake Farmstead Park Capital Campaign, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, Oshtemo Rotary Club, Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, and Oshtemo Township.



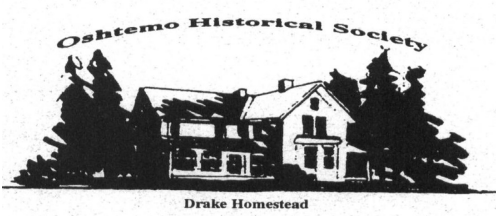
Historic Drake House



Picnic Shelter



Carriage Barn



OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Visit our website for more information.
www.oshtemohistoricalsociety.org

**NOTE: OSHTEMO HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROGRAMS
HAVE BEEN CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE
DUE TO COVID-19 CONCERNS.
WE ARE HOPEFUL TO BE ABLE TO MEET SOON.**

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