

Supervisor's Report

From: Marlene Chockley

Date: April 9, 2019

Trustees,

I've been contemplating the next 17-18 months remaining of our terms and what we will leave behind. What can we all (or at least a majority) get behind so the township can prosper?

Here are several recommendations (in no particular order) to move us forward:

Develop the Community Park

It's time. I propose that we retain an architect to design the beachfront park. That will allow us to obtain a grant from the Department of Natural Resources to build it out. The cost of the architect can be applied to the Township's matching funds.

Fix the roads

Each year the Township receives matching funds from the Road Commission for road improvements and maintenance. This year's allocation, when matched by the Township, will yield a total of \$137,446 to care for the rural roads. The roads are so bad that it will only rebuild maybe a mile of 6 Mile from Earhart to Rushton, for instance, leaving nothing for the rest of the township. We will pay an additional \$55,000 for 3 applications of dust control. This funding level cannot continue if our citizens are to be served well.

The Township itself cannot provide funding at a level that will stop the decline unless a special assessment district or some other creative financing is considered. I propose we set up a committee to look at needs and funding and bring back a plan to deal with them.

Stem the business hemorrhage and recruit new ones to the Township

The Downtown Development Authority recommends holding a Business Fair to allow interested individuals or businesses to inquire about opportunities in the Township. The planner and zoning administrator would be available to answer questions on appropriate zoning and locations for the businesses inquiring. The DDA stands ready to co-sponsor. We would invite commercial realtors to highlight their properties for sale or rent in the Township. We also hope to have an expert in entrepreneurship participate.

Land preservation protects our rural heritage, respects the environment, and keeps it healthy

We can implement a very modest program to preserve agricultural and natural areas in the Township. The Township has been slowly acquiring wetland parcels that have gone into foreclosure for a natural park behind the Public Safety Building. We recently provided \$2000 to

keep 75 acres in agriculture in perpetuity in the Township. It was matched by over \$400,000 of Federal, County, and Ann Arbor funds.

Maintain and improve public assets—buildings, equipment and parks

The Township owns several buildings, but has not kept them up. The Community Center has needed a new roof and flooring for some time. Fire Station #2 needs a new roof. The Public Safety Building's heating and cooling system is abominable. And 75 Barker—wow! We must find a way to protect the investment that the community has made in these buildings and keep them from deteriorating. Leaving them in disrepair costs much more in the long run. Unfortunately, our capital improvement plan graces a shelf, ignored.

Reverse the decline of the downtown

We need viable businesses that people would like to frequent. The Downtown Strategic Action Plan provides a lot of guidance, but we must have public parking. The planning commission has provided a lot of flexibility for businesses and site plans. One of which is removing the requirement to have parking on site. This helps restaurants especially, but we need to make sure it is provided conveniently downtown. Please visit Dexter or Saline—thriving downtowns with public parking. We need a payment in lieu of parking ordinance so we can provide it and we need to keep the current public parking lot or negotiate a deed restriction if the building is sold.

We also need to get into the Redevelopment Ready Communities Program. We would have had help marketing North Village and improving development processes, too. The Board was concerned that it would cost some staff time to fill out the forms, but the benefits outweigh that. Penny wise and pound foolish. Enough already. Let's do it.

Foster residential development in accordance with the Master Plan

Most building has occurred in the agricultural area in recent years, but quality residential development in the sewer district would allow more efficient use of land, ready access to the expressway, and more affordable price points. I recommend that we take a more aggressive approach to communicate with the realtors and landowners and discuss the options we see for that land as shown in the Master Plan.

With that said, we need to begin the process to provide an equalization basin to protect the environment and provide capacity for those areas in the sewer district that the Township is contractually obligated to serve.

Match our personnel to the needs of the Township

I believe we need to evaluate the positions that the Township is paying for and determine if those positions are meeting our needs. *Is the skill set a good match for the job? Having the right personnel is very important. With the right people, our citizens are well-served and the office runs smoothly. We must train and value them or face the turnover that disrupts Township service to our citizens. Compensation should be appropriate.*

Some questions to consider: How well do the job descriptions of each of our staff members match their jobs? There have been some minor adjustments, but more is needed. Are their positions meeting the needs of our citizens and the board? Do we have enough staff and do they have enough work space? What support do they need to grow in their positions? Are their jobs satisfying and adequately compensated? Would reorganizing the office staff move us forward toward performing our statutory duties better and meeting the Township's needs? And one of the big ones. . . are our processes clear and customer friendly?

Most of these questions can be answered by asking staff and taking to heart the feedback we have received from the public. Many of the solutions are administrative, but will need funding and board approval.

One area we lack is human resources. We should look into what an HR company can provide and what it would cost.

Another very important piece is economic development. No one is doing that consistently.

There has been talk of hiring an in-house zoning administrator/planner to improve accessibility and project turnaround. We should explore this. It may be the correct solution, but we should first evaluate the costs.

These subjects will be on our plate for some time to come and more will arise. Let's prioritize them keeping in mind the health, safety and welfare of our citizens—and businesses.

Respectfully submitted,

Marlene Chockley