



CLT Newsletter

July 2016

1651 Frankfort Hwy/ POB 2129
#231-352-9791 and www.crystallaketwp.org

Administration: We are your elected and appointed officials, and we want your feedback. Let us know how we're doing. Among our many goals, at the very least, we want your local government to be a trio of good things: engaging, easy to access and easy to understand. How would you rate us on those three yardsticks alone? Every perspective we hear helps us do a better job representing you individually, as well as the community as a whole. Really, truly, we'd like to know if we're doing something right, could be doing something better, or neglecting an area of concern.

Blight: We are taking the community's directives seriously. Our township residents have given us copious amounts of feedback on this subject, and you have voiced *—overwhelmingly—* the support to clean up blight. It has been a long process to make sure our proverbial ducks are in a row, specifically that our ordinances are updated and well-worded, but we feel that is now accomplished. Best case scenarios? After reading this, or after gentle prodding and friendly phone calls, folks will clean up their own problem areas and the township won't need to get involved.

Broadband Initiative: Your participation is very important in developing an accurate assessment of broadband availability and related needs in Benzie County. To take the survey as a resident, a business owner or a designated representative of another organization, please go to <http://connectmycommunity.org/benzie-county/> and select the appropriate option. Use your computer or smart phone to take the survey. Please share this information with your peers and encourage others to take the survey.

Cemeteries: We are continuing to emphasize the *simple* and *natural* in our cemeteries. To show the love and respect for those who have passed, we are convinced that keeping the grounds reflective of our beautiful northern environment will better serve everyone. Important reminders: CLT is the governing authority in its cemeteries and **all operations in the cemeteries must go through the township**. Never bury anybody or anything yourselves. No plastic or other artificial decorations. Plant only with written permission, or else at your peril of having it removed or cut down. Hunting is prohibited within cemetery boundaries (which extend far north into the woods at both locations.) FYI: we are considering banning dog walking in the cemeteries because of some owners' abuse, not cleaning up after their pets and letting dogs run freely, causing intrusion upon other visiting parties. Want to keep this privilege? We ask that you—or someone you know—clean up their act. Lastly, help us to discourage vandalism and other mischief that often plagues our cemeteries by being there only with a good purpose, namely honoring the dead. Cemeteries are not public parks for the public's recreation, or worse. Be mindful of visiting hours: cemeteries are completely closed to all but foot traffic October 26-March 31st in the "off" season and closed dusk to dawn April 1st-October 25 during the "better weather" months.

Clean Up Day & Recycling: This year's "Junk" Day is the second Saturday in July, the 9th. Hours are 8AM to Noon, or until the trucks are full, so you take your chances getting there later than sooner. Go to our website for complete details, or come in to the hall for hard-copy instructions and your little red CLT ID card, as you must be a CLT'er to take advantage of this service. Non-residents will be turned away. As has been our practice, we will once again have some recycling pickers who will glean your junk for things such as metal scrapping and electronics. Want to know about *all* recycling in the area? To learn more about the county-sponsored clean-up days, including disposing of appliances, hazardous waste, and more, check for a schedule and rules at http://www.benzieco.net/dept_recycling.htm. Hats off to retiring Marlene, Marlene, the Recycling Queen for her years of great work, and welcome to her Benzie County Recycling Coordinator replacement, Dave Shaffer.

Elections: This year's primary election will be August 2nd and the general election will be November 8th. Voting lines and times are expected to almost double this August, since Michigan voters will no longer be able to vote straight ticket

ballots. That means, we will not be able to check one --a single-- spot and have it apply for all the candidates in a single party. If you are 60 or over or otherwise eligible for an absentee ballot, we encourage you to apply for one as soon as possible. We even have applications that allow you to apply now for both the August and the November ballots, and that let you tell us which address to use for which election.

Planning: In addition to continuing residential development, this last year has seen expansion in commercial, tourism and value-added agriculture businesses, all per our master plan. With a historical commitment to outstanding environmental stewardship, CLT planning and zoning decisions are made with an eye to preserving and protecting the scenic and sensitive lands and waters a) for their own sake, b) that are critical to our economy, c) that are loved by residents and visitors alike. We are deeply grateful for the shared vision of the many public and private property owners, residents, visitors and developers to protect and improve this beautiful place. We keep in mind that CLT is an important part of our larger, unique and wonderful lakeshore region. Yes, we are stewards of our own land, but we are also the “gatekeepers” to Frankfort and Sleeping Bear as well as an important part of the entire Northern Michigan ecosphere and economy.

Roads: Your tax dollars are working. This topic discussion is threefold. First, by now you probably all know that the state is redoing M-115 from Benzonia to Frankfort. Four scenic corridors are very important and, as all are aware, the M-115 road reconstruction project is well underway, to be completed by summer’s end. We appreciate MDOT’s responsiveness to our concerns and look forward to improved access, safety and aesthetics. Second, the county-wide millage, passed several years ago, continues to fund those roads under the Benzie Road Commission’s auspices. These monies are shared with Benzie-wide projects, so progress in our specific township isn’t as rapid as we’d ideally like, but Casey Road is on the agenda for rehab soon. Third, the township’s road millage, passed in November 2015, went to work paving some of those roads which are our responsibility. Finished in their entirety are Bacon, Carlson, Didrickson, Graves, and Pautz, along with sections of Airport, Marquette and Thomas. More work is slated for parts of Airport, Bellows and Forrester. Yea! We had the extremely good fortune to make our tax dollars go further than we originally hoped for, and that’s always good news.

Signage: Our Zoning Ordinance, found conveniently on our website, has an entire section (Article 19) on regulating signage. So that all your signs are in compliance, including the temporary ones folks stick into the sides of the roads, please review what signs need a permit. The burden is on you to discover which are permitted and which are not, which are considered commercial and which temporary, how big signs can be and how long they can remain posted, etc. If you need help navigating the sign ordinance section, give us a call and we would be glad to give assistance.

Taxes: **As of July 1, 2016, due to new processing procedures, receipts will no longer be mailed.** Your cleared check is your receipt. Insist on a paper receipt? Write a bold message on or included with your payment that requests one and then either 1) include a stamped self-addressed envelope for a snail mail receipt OR 2) include your email address for a cyber receipt.

Website: Look us up on our website for a wealth of information. Any suggestions for improvement? Notice any glitches? Want to donate some of your photos? Let us know.

Yard Sales: We’re talking about the limitations regulating the things folks are selling in their yards. For *all* kinds of sales, *anything* visibly for sale on their properties, there is an ordinance. DO NOT haul your stuff, (RV, boat, car, or whatever) to the curb and leave it there with a For Sale sign on it. Why the regulation? Because some folks have too frequent --if not continuous-- sales going on, much to the chagrin of their immediate neighbors, as well as the community as a whole. It distracts aesthetically from the township, and violates zoning. Yards sales are a tradition and they do sell our stuff, but keep in mind that our yards are not stores. In a nutshell: **maximum 3 days each sale, no more than two sales a year (1 every 6 mos).** For example, putting a trailer out for sale? It can stay out for 3 days, and that counts as your once-in-6-mos yard sale.

Zoning: We are a zoned community. That means we have some rules and regulations that require your property adhere to community plans and standards. It’s hard to know the entire Zoning Ordinance, even though it is on the website and available in hardcopy in the hall for all to peruse. But here’s the bottom line: to be safe, **if you’re going to do anything on your CLT property, always consult with us first.** And, no, it is *not* better to ask forgiveness after the fact.