

CLT Newsletter

December 2016

1651 Frankfort Hwy/ POB 2129
Frankfort, MI 49635
#231-352-9791 and www.crystallaketwp.org



Airport: Although it is located smack-dab in the middle of Crystal Lake Township, the Frankfort City-County Airport is a separate entity unto itself. As of 2006, Crystal Lake Township is a third “owner” along with Frankfort and Benzie County. The two gentlemen who headed up the Airport Authority through some turbulent times retired this year; Bruce Harwood and Les Poggemeyer, both CLT residents, were invaluable during their long tenures in helping redirect, reorganize, rebuild. New CLT representation as of last summer includes two of our board members, Brooke Trentham and Tammy May; the new Airport Authority Chair is Benzie County Commissioner, Coury Carland who grew up in CLT but now resides in Benzonia. Also, Bill Kennis, Director of the Benzie Bus and CLT resident, is an “at large” rep to the Authority and last but not least, long time CLT resident, Leroy Reed, is the airport’s much appreciated, hard working maintenance one-man crew. As you can see, our CLT folks are very airport active. A new administrator was recently hired, for one year, to help with the massive loads of legal/ bureaucratic regulation that inevitably accompanies operations, but the Authority continues to struggle with some particular issues, not the least of which is long term solvency. We want to hear public opinion on this subject. Authority monthly meetings are held every at 9:30 a.m., the first Thursday of each month, at the City of Frankfort City Hall.

Blight: Over a long period of time, we questioned whether the CLT community was behind efforts to clean up junk or blight as it endangered either the health or safety, or offended the aesthetics, of our constituency. Despite being leery of the tremendous time, cost and challenge to take on this task, we found the community feedback responded positively that blighted properties needed to be cleaned up. Hence, court proceedings have commenced for two cases where we had the most complaints. In both these cases, the township tried to work with these property owners over many, many years (if not decades) but to no avail, so that we felt court action was now in order. With many other cases, when approached about various minor violations, an overwhelming number of property owners we contacted responded graciously and expedited their own remedies. To these people, we extend many thanks for their cooperation.

Cemeteries: Continued efforts to trim and clean up the cemetery landscaping saw many dead or dying trees and plantings removed. Special thanks go to our hired sexton and maintenance worker, R.J. Jordan, as well as the extended Hilton family (Laurel and Brad Heywood, Heather Perry and Leslie Butt) for their tremendous volunteer efforts. It also bears repeated mention of the assistance we get in honoring all those who served in the armed forces; we are so grateful to our local semi-active or retired military personnel, and their helpers, who place an American flag on every veteran’s grave each Memorial Day. The fact that our cemeteries are NO PLASTIC zones is now fairly well understood, and patience with having the Cemetery Ordinance finally and uniformly enforced is much appreciated. All township cemeteries rules and costs associated with the cemeteries are available on our website, and help for cemetery-related issues is only a phone call away. Doing ancestral research? We even have photos of all CLT Cemetery gravesite as of 2004 online, thanks to the Saffrons of Honor. Good with a camera and want to volunteer to do more photographs? Or help in a myriad of other ways? Contact the office and let us know.

Clean Up Day & Recycling: Mark your 2017 calendars. The CLT-sponsored Junk Day is Saturday, July 15th 8 AM-Noon, or until trucks are full. Other clean up days that are County-sponsored include two Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics collections: June 17th at the Frankfort Recycling Site (8 AM-Noon) and August 5th at the Almira Township Hall (8 AM-Noon). News and updates can be found on the county website under the Solid Waste/Recycling Tab in the Departments section. The County has once again applied for the DEQ Scrap tire grant so stay tuned in case we are awarded any funding in the coming year for old tires.

Elections: This fall's big election is over and, suffice it to say, the country is still very divided. Everyone is concerned for the issues that face us all no matter whose candidates won or lost. This township board, the smallest and lowliest of all government entities, was re-elected as it was already seated prior to the election. It continues to reflect a wide range of thought and approaches to problem solving: we have one Republican, one Democrat, and three Independents, not one of whom fits into a neat mold of any established dogma. We continue to affirm that you as voter/tax payer/resident/concerned citizen have a place in this government via your participation and feedback to us. If you are interested in our local election tallies, we have a link to all Benzie results on our website. Here is an interesting note: although only about ½ of the national electorate voted, we had over 75% CLT voter turnout. This includes what we believe is the record for submitting absentee ballots, 328 or about a third of our voters. Applause for our election workers: Harold and Molly Comer, Alice Farr, Kathy Fishburn, Evelyn Griffith, Mary Halliday, Joanne Herban, Joyce Kirshner, Darlyne Leete, Kathy Picklo, Judy Van Meter and Cathy Wilkinson, along with our Clerk Sue Sullivan and deputy, Sheila Applebee.

Planning: The CL Township Planning Commission continues to review and update the zoning ordinance to bring it into closer alignment with the master plan. A public hearing was held in November to hear public comment on recent amendment proposals. The Commission is also working to define home occupations and cottage industries. Signage issues are also on the agenda for 2017. Benzie County's new draft master plan has been released for public comment. In addition, as of January 1 the Benzie County Planning Commission will have staff support through Networks Northwest and the NW Michigan Council of Governments.

Roads: About a year ago we asked if you were interested in paying more taxes, temporarily, to take advantage of lower asphalt (oil) prices in order to repave or repair those roads for which the township is responsible. (This did not include those roads for which the county, state and federal governments were responsible.) The 5-year millage passed by a CLT majority vote and now the results thus far are evident by the approximately 4 miles of improvement to the entire or sections of following roads: Airport, Bacon, Bellows, Carlson, Didrickson, Graves, Marquette, Pautz, and Thomas. We also improved Forrester with some monies from the General Fund. Next year, nothing is set in stone, but we are looking at Adams, Elm, Glory, Mollineaux and Robinson. Also next year, the County Road Commission is considering doing the rest of Bellows as part of their county-wide millage. Many thanks for the CLT Road Committee, made up of Rick Nielsen, Bruce Walton and Al Popp, to whom you can direct any questions or comments with this ongoing project. At the state level, much appreciation to both MDOT and Elmers who both did an extremely good job of reconstructing M-115 this past summer. Kudos!

Taxes: Remember that receipts will no longer be mailed. Your cleared check is your receipt. If you insist on a paper receipt, no problem: 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 and request a cyber receipt.

Website: As the years pass, we are slowly adding features and making it better. Many folks are giving us compliments on how much information can be found there, hence skipping having to make a phone call to the hall, possibly leaving a message and waiting for a response, or waiting on the US Mail for forms that can, instead, be easily downloaded. But we need feedback from users. Do you have any suggestions for improvement to the website to make it more user friendly? We're all ears.

Yard Sales: A yard sale is defined as anything for sale in your yard. And, for all kinds of sales, anything visibly for sale on CLT properties, there is an ordinance limiting such practice. Therefore, do not haul your stuff, (RV, boat, car, or whatever) to the curb and leave it there for sales purposes for more than 3 days in any given 6 month time period. It distracts aesthetically from the township, and violates zoning. Most folks have cooperated, understanding the problems with having repeated, continuous or open-ended sales of things in their yards. Others, not so much. Have any questions, compliments or complaints on this policy? We'd like to hear.

Zoning: We are a zoned community. That means we have some rules and regulations that require your property adhere to community plans and standards. We know 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. So here's a safe rule of thumb: check with us first. Do your due diligence before even buying a property, before planning any upgrades or change, before building or remodeling, and give a call to our very knowledgeable and friendly zoning administrator. That's why he's paid the big bucks.