

MORTON TOWNSHIP

2022 in review

Well, 2022 flew by in the blink of an eye so I would like to take a few minutes of your time and summarize the great things that happened in Morton Township this past year.

The Mecosta County Road Commission is responsible for the construction and maintenance of roads within the township. However, annually, Morton Township provides financial support to keep our roads in better condition. This past year we invested approximately \$400,000 (\$125,000 was funded from one time grants awarded to the Township by the Road Commission and County Commissioners) for improvements to 60th avenue between 11 and 12-mile roads, Oak Drive on the south side of Round Lake, Peninsula Drive to the West of Lake Drive, and Midstate Drive in the business park. We continued to work with our recreation committee and added bike lanes to Pierce Road from 100th to 120th.

The fire administrative board continues to work with Chief Sutherby to ensure our fire/rescue personnel have the appropriate equipment, gear, and training to be fully prepared to protect and serve you. Morton Township along with three other townships applied for and were awarded a \$460,000 FEMA grant to replace air tanks/masks. Approximately \$180,000 of this equipment will be coming directly to our township. The department was awarded fire and carbon monoxide detectors from the State of Michigan that they have been installing for residents free of charge, if you are interested in one please contact the fire station. We provided on-site specialized training to our fire/rescue staff and their families this year related to the trauma they face and deal with as a result of working in this profession. In addition to the training, we added a chaplain position to our department to provide support and assistance to our staff. Going forward, we will continue to provide support systems and resources for this group of dedicated staff. The fire/rescue department continues to be busy and have responded to 744 calls this year compared to 756 calls last year, that is an average of 2.04 calls per day all year long. The contract with neighboring Austin Township to provide fire/rescue coverage to their residents at \$20,000 per year base fee, plus per-call costs is still going strong.

We are averaging approximately 200 cars per week using the recycle center. Ice Mountain/Blue Triton Brands provided their annual \$10,000 donation supporting our recycling efforts, we appreciate their generous support. In conjunction with the paving of Midstate drive we were able to pave the parking lot of our recycle facility this year. We purchased a second cardboard compactor to increase our capacity for bundling and selling our recycled cardboard. Our annual township wide clean-up day was held at the recycle facility and continues to be a huge success.

The Tri-Lakes Spongy Moth (formerly known as Gypsy moth) Special Assessment District allowed us to spray 844 acres in 2022. The spraying combined with natural causes allowed residents to have a much more enjoyable summer. A survey has already been completed by the biologist and plans are being made for spraying 637 acres in the Spring of 2023.

From a technology standpoint we updated our website, our BS&A software (used in assessing and building/zoning), telephone system and installed security cameras in all of our buildings.

New additions outside of our buildings included a privacy fence at the township office in Mecosta as well as placing a gazebo at our river access park on 7-Mille road for visitors to enjoy.

Jill Charron was hired to fill our deputy treasurer/administrative assistant vacancy and is doing great things in her new role. We also welcomed Karen McKenzie and Travis Kizer as new members of our planning commission.

This year brought about changes to the election process including the requirement of an outside drop box with a surveillance camera. Despite the changes and the additional scrutiny, Clerk Stephanie McNeal and her election crew produced another successful and secure election process for our voters.

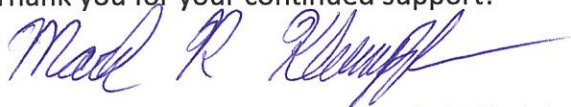
Township Assessor Seth Lattimore received a clean AMAR audit. This is an audit by the State of Michigan to ensure we are in compliance with all assessing requirements and regulations. Values in the township are staying in line with the rising market conditions as we added just over \$24 million in true cash value of new residential construction.

The building trend remained healthy in the township with permits approved for twenty six new homes in 2022 down slightly from thirty the previous year. From a zoning standpoint we facilitated the cleanup of the former Blue Lake Tavern and Denslow's Market sites. We have also been busy working with our legal counsel in getting compliance with a blight issue and dangerous building removal both within the township. In February, we approved a special use permit for a new motocross track that will be located on the north side of M-20 between the Village of Mecosta and the Village Airport. In addition, we approved plans for a new gas station/convenience store to be located at the corner of M-20 and 90th avenue as well as a state of the art storage facility to be located on 90th avenue just south of M-20.

We continued to support the following community activities; \$4,000 Library Literacy program, \$1,200 Village of Mecosta music on the river, and \$500 for 4th of July fireworks.

Finally, thanks to the hard work of Treasurer Maureen Wolfe we again received a clean financial audit of the Township's accounting activities for the year.

Thank you for your continued support!



Mark R. Klumpp, Supervisor (on behalf of the entire Morton Township Board)