



Phone: (269) 756-9221

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STATE OF THE VILLAGE APRIL 2019

Happy spring, Oakers! As I write this the temperatures are rising, the sun is shining, birds are chirping... I just hope I didn't jinx us by putting the snow shovel and snow blower away and getting the lawn mower out. But summer will be here soon either way.

Your Village staff has been busy over the winter, even though most of the work has been behind the scenes. We just received the annual audit report from the Michigan Department of Treasury for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2018. It once again was a clean audit and confirmed that the Village is in excellent shape financially. We have been diligent in setting aside funds for unforeseen events as well as planned upgrades and expansions to the utility systems, parks and streets. We used a good deal of the reserves in the Sewer Fund for some heavy maintenance on the sewer ponds and in preparation for upgrades to those ponds this year. More on that a little later.

The residential waste recycling program has been paid for by Three Oaks Township through a grant from the Pokagon Fund. The Fund made a decision not to award the grant this year and the Township determined the service was too costly to continue. The Village Council decided to continue the service within the Village until at least April 30. The cost for one year of recycle pickup is approximately \$23,000. We have to make a decision on whether or not we continue the service. We pay for regular trash pickup through an assessment on your tax bill of \$120/year. The cost of continuing the recycling would be an additional \$35 **per year**. If the Village does not continue the service, individuals would have the choice of doing so at a cost of \$72 per year. At the end of this report you will have a chance to voice your opinion. There is no need to give your name; just drop it off at Village Hall or put it in one of the drop boxes.

As you are most likely aware, we have been working for a couple years on a resolution to treating some strong waste that is going into our wastewater treatment system. This falls into the "nothing is easy" category, especially since we are dealing with government regulatory agencies. We are in the end stages of this process and are finalizing plans to upgrade the ponds. This upgrade will not only allow us to treat the current waste discharges but position us for future expansion. The treatment ponds were built 40 years ago and have not had much in the way of upgrades since then. Approximately \$600,000 of mechanicals and electric will be replaced as a part of this project. That is work that would have been done regardless of the treatment upgrades. We have used the aforementioned reserves to this point (about \$300,000). The upgrades will require us to borrow some money. We have a major bond that will be paid off in 2022, but at least until that time we will need to raise rates. It appears the rate increase for the average user will be less than \$15/month. The final amount will have to wait until bids are taken and final costs are firmed up.



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The Planning Commission and Downtown Development Authority are nearing completion of the Master Plan and Downtown Development Plan updates. These plans serve as a blueprint for development in the Village over the next 10-30 years. The Planning Commission meets the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00. The DDA meets the first Wednesday at 5:30. All meetings are at the Village Hall.

We will be doing some paving and curb and gutter work on Oak Street and Sherwood Street towards the end of the summer as well as replacing some sidewalks (location yet to be determined). The plan is to tackle the sidewalks Village-wide over the next couple of years. We have applied for a 50% grant to do additional street work next year. Normally all street work is paid for with Village tax dollars and gas taxes. This is a chance to get some assistance from the State for street work, which is rare.

The Parks Board is applying for a 90% grant to build a path in Chamberlain Path that is ADA compliant and will include additional seating and lighting.

We continue to get interest from residential developers. The Planning Commission will be talking to at least two in the coming months. Hopefully we can see some progress on a development that is compatible with Three Oaks.

I want to thank all of you for your support. You can be assured that the Village employees, Village Council and the members of the Planning, DDA and Parks Boards, who volunteer their time, are all working with one goal in mind – making sure Three Oaks remains the greatest place on earth to live and raise a family. Please feel free to contact any Council member, me or the Village Manager, Mike Greene, with your questions and concerns.

President Pro-Tem Steve Graziano
Trustee John Kramer
Trustee Colleen Newquist
Trustee John Pappa
Trustee Becky Thomas
Trustee Troy Zebell

Sincerely,

David G. Grosse
Village President

Which option would you prefer:

_____ I am willing to pay \$2.73/month (\$35/year) so that everyone in the Village can continue to recycle their waste.

_____ Recycling should be left to the individual at a cost of \$6/month (\$72/year).