

Independence Township Times

September, 2018



Road Improvement Proposal Follow-up

By Pat Kittle, Supervisor

Thought I would share a few concerns received about the proposed Road Improvement Millage after last month's *Township Times* hit the newsstands and resident mailboxes...



Pat Kittle
Supervisor

The *Clarkston News* forwarded a concern raised by an Independence resident about the Two-Mil, Four-Year Road Improvement Millage proposal intended to provide funding to repair over 28 miles of roads in the Township and asked for a response.

The specifics of the concern are paraphrased as follows:

In 2015 Pat Kittle mentioned a road millage a couple of times. In the August 12, 2015 *Township Times*, he said, the biggest concern from residents was to make sure that the Township does not get "stiffed" on future road appropriations if we repave our own roads with a local millage. He met with the RCOC and was told "If we repair the primary roads with our own millage, there will no longer be a need and the funds that would have been used for our roads, would instead go towards primary roads in other communities".

In the January 2016 *Township Times* Kittle says, "the proposed local road millage to repair/repave Independence roads is all but dead".

In the August 2018 *Township Times*, there is now going to be a millage proposal on the November ballot. So, have things changed with the RCOC or will we get "stiffed" in the end?

This was my response to the newspaper ...

ROAD IMPROVEMENT MILLAGE PROPOSALS: 2015 VS 2018

PLAN SPECIFICS	2015 PLAN	2018 PLAN
Life Expectancy of Repair	10 Years	10 Years
Township Contribution	\$12 Million	\$12 Million
Roads to be Fixed	22 Miles	28 Miles
RCOC Contribution	No Commitment	\$4.5 Million
Maintenance Plan	No Commitment	Yearly Maintenance
Funds for Neighborhoods	\$0 Funds	Estimated Pool of \$500K
Funding Responsibility	Township Only	Township & RCOC

The above chart highlights the differences between the original 2015 plan and the proposed 2018 plan.

You are correct in your note. I did chicken-out back in 2015 because I was not comfortable with the answers from the RCOC I needed to move the original Road Improvement Proposal forward. Things have changed at the RCOC and the Road Improvement Millage being proposed this year is substantially different than what was discussed in 2015 with: 27% more miles of roadway to be repaired, the same \$12M Township contribution, the addition of a \$4.5M RCOC contribution, a yearly RCOC maintenance plan being added and an anticipated \$500,000 in co-op funding available for neighborhood public road repairs at project completion.

* * *

The *Clarkston News* also asked to address several additional items:

1. What is the shared responsibility between the Township and RCOC?
2. Where is the \$4.5 million that RCOC is contributing coming from?
3. Lastly, will the Township get

"stiffed" on future work with RCOC now contributing?

My responses were as follows:

1. Oakland County Roads, as most roadways in the State of Michigan, are in such a state of disrepair; there is not enough money to go around to fix them. Michigan has ranked in the bottom 10 of per capita road funding since the 1960's. And in 2015, Michigan ranked 47th.

In order to tackle this problem, the Township Board has recognized through experience in other projects that a more proactive approach is needed to get our infrastructure into the shape the Township deserves by forming partnerships with as many agencies as possible to secure needed funding to improve the condition of the infrastructure in our community. We did it for the I-75 interchange project. We had support from MDOT, RCOC, Oakland County, the Sashabaw

Corridor Improvement Authority (CIA), the Township General Fund, as well as McLaren Health Care to make that project a reality. We did it for the new safety paths installed along Sashabaw Road by the Independence Oaks Park just completed this summer through a joint cost-sharing effort with the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission. And, we are again taking the same approach with the North Sashabaw Road Widening project that is starting this fall as a joint RCOC, Township, County and CIA project, and there are several other road and safety path projects on the horizon that will be completed by forming partnerships with other governmental agencies.

The proposed 2018 Road Improvement Millage is an extension of how these partnerships with the Township, RCOC and other funding sources can work, and hopefully will

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Road Improvement Proposal Follow-up

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continue to work, if we are going to get ahead of the curve and secure funding for needed infrastructure improvements.

2. The RCOC contribution involves its payment for the required design engineering and construction engineering services associated with improving the 28 miles of roads, which is estimated at \$4.5M in value. These services would be a Township expense if we had to do this project on our own. In addition to this contribution, the RCOC has committed to a preventative maintenance plan for these roads to help ensure the Township will get the full life expectancy from this huge project.

3. Bottom Line: What scared me off on the 2015 road millage was that it would have been the Township who basically was going to have to "deliver the goods" all on our own, but the current proposal addresses that shortfall with the partnership that will exist between the RCOC and the Township on this project, if the millage passes. If this office had any misgivings on this project proposal, it would not have asked for permission from the Board for placement on the November 2018 ballot.

* * *

And lastly, I received a call a week or so ago from a gentleman concerned

about a buddy of his who rents a house in the Township and that he would be getting a free ride with the proposed Road Improvement Millage.

I explained to the caller how the owners of apartment buildings or rental homes all pay property taxes, just like residents, and if passed, the property where his buddy lives would be subject to the same two mils over four years. I also mentioned that over time, there's a good chance these rental owners will pass this road millage tax expense on to their renters in the form of a rent increase or some other fee. The caller seemed pleased the owner or maybe even his buddy would be paying his fair share.

In closing, while this proposed Road Improvement Millage is not a perfect solution, it is one that has the Road Commission contributing a significant portion towards the total cost, it allows for an additional six miles of roads to be paved, it has a maintenance plan to ensure the designed life expectancy of the roads are maximized and has a provision for unspent funds to be available to help neighborhoods repair residential streets.

As stated last month, asking for additional tax dollars for anything is a tough call. And this is the reason the Township Board decided to put this proposal on the November ballot and let the voters decide.

As we get more calls and letters, we will keep you informed.

Property Tax Due Date Approaching Fast!

By Paul Brown, Treasurer

It's that time of year again and my office is very busy posting tax payments. The due date is September 14 and we will be open until 5 p.m. to accept your payments and get them posted to your account.



Paul Brown
Treasurer

The Township charges interest of one percent for payments received from September 15-30 followed by an additional one percent for each month late thereafter until February 14. February 15-28 an additional 3% penalty applies. All summer and winter tax bills that are not paid by February 28, 2019 are turned over to the Oakland County Treasurer for collection.

If you would like to verify we have received your payment you can look up your property on the Township's Website www.IndTwp.com. Click on the *Property Information* tab on the right side of the screen. This will take you to AccessMyGov.com where you can look up your information by Name, Address or Parcel number.

If you bring up the right property, you should see a picture of your house.

Below the picture, select the Tax Information tab. This page will show your current taxes due, as well as historical payments. If you need help looking up your information, give us a call to assist. 248-625-5115.

Summer Tax Deferment

The State of Michigan allows for the deferment of Summer Taxes until the due date of the winter taxes without penalty on a taxpayer's Principle Residence, if they meet certain requirements. The Taxpayer's gross household income from the prior year cannot exceed \$40,000 and one of the following classifications must be met:

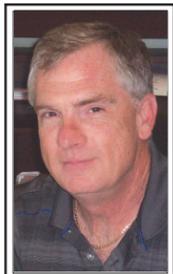
- 62 years of age or older, including the unmarried surviving spouse of a person who was 62 years of age or older at the time of death
- Paraplegic, Hemiplegic, or Quadriplegic
- Eligible Serviceperson, Eligible Veteran, Eligible Widow or Widower
- Blind Person
- Totally and Permanently Disabled

If you qualify for deferment, please stop by my office to complete the Application. The Application must be completed by September 14, 2018.

New Wellhead Protection Area Road Signs Installed

By David McKee, DPW Director

Have you noticed our new Wellhead Protection Area road signs scattered around the Township? Thanks to the



David McKee,
DPW Director

Oakland Technical Schools Visual Imaging Department and grant assistance from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), we recently updated our Wellhead Protection Program logo and installed new signage along the roadways within our wellhead

protection areas. Also, (with the help of Independence Television), we are also

in the process of developing a Wellhead Protection video and banner for use in upcoming parades and other events.

What is Wellhead Protection?

The Wellhead Protection Program was initiated by MDEQ to assist local communities utilizing groundwater for their municipal drinking water supply systems in protecting the water resource.

Michigan's groundwater is used for drinking water by nearly half of the state's population. In addition, it is utilized for irrigation and industrial purposes and contributes to the economy and unique quality of life in our Great Lakes State.

What is Groundwater?

Groundwater is water below the

surface that feeds wells and springs and maintains the level of rivers and lakes in dry weather. Groundwater comes from rain and snow that soaks into the ground and is filtered down under the surface. It can be brought to the surface using a pump or a well. Once pumped, the groundwater can be used for drinking or irrigating crops. If chemicals and pollutants are dumped on the ground, they can get into the groundwater and make it unsafe to drink. This could also kill the plants and animals that might use the water.

Mission Statement

Independence Township is dedicated to the preservation and protection of water quality. In order to prevent

groundwater pollution, Independence Township has developed a Wellhead Protection Program and will continue to apply for grant monies from the MDEQ to continue our efforts.

What You Can Do

- If you own a septic tank, have your tank pumped out and inspected at least every 5 years;
- Never flush chemicals down the toilet;
- Always recycle household chemicals like gasoline, motor oil, kerosene, insecticides, poisons, and paint; and
- Never dump chemicals onto the ground.