

Independence **T**ownship **T**imes August, 2018

I hate potholes!

**By Pat Kittle,
Supervisor**

It wasn't that many months ago my phone was blowing up from a bunch of really upset residents who just blew out their tires on multiple potholes in the community on a cold wintery weekend. Or while shopping at the local market and got blasted from a neighbor who just paid a \$700 repair bill on their new car after hitting a pothole. Heck, even my neighborhood priest gave me an earful after a 'near death' experience one of his parishioners had with a huge pothole.



Pat Kittle
Supervisor



Road Improvement Millage, which will enable the Township to work cooperatively with the RCOC and repair and repave over 28 miles of Township roads. And we're not talking about short-term patch-work, like you are seeing now with the spot repairs around

the Township. Instead, this road improvement plan involves milling the existing surface off 28 miles of roadways, properly repairing the base coat, extending the pavement on the shoulder 2 feet, adding 3 inches of new asphalt and making all federally mandated ADA requirements at crosswalks.

This method of rehabilitating the roads will provide for a 10-year life expectancy vs. the current 4-5 years on the spot repairs. The funding will also provide for needed maintenance to help ensure we get our money's worth. Before you rip up this article because besides potholes, you hate taxes even more ... please read on so you can at least make a well-informed decision.

THE ROADS: The following list highlights the 28 miles of roads that are currently rated POOR in the Township and targeted for improvement under the millage plan. In reading this list you will probably notice that no matter where you live in the Township, there is a very high probability you have to drive on one or more these roads to get to your residence.

THE COSTS: Here is how this proposed Road Improvement Millage will impact the average resident in our community. Two Mills equates to \$2.00 in incremental taxes for every \$1,000 of taxable value on your home.

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Road Improvement Millage -- Repair Priorities

	Street Name	Description	Length
1	Sashabaw Road:	S Twp Line to Maybee Road & Clarkston Road to N Twp Line	4.12
2	Clintonville Road:	Mann Road to Clarkston Road	3.30
3	Waldon Road:	Village Limits to Clintonville	4.28
4	Maybee Road:	Dixie Hwy to E Twp Line	4.86
5	Clarkston Road:	Village Limits to E Twp Line	5.41
6	White Lake Road:	Andersonville Road to Village Limits	1.90
7	Andersonville Road:	Old White Lake Road to S Twp Line	1.52
8	Holcomb Road:	W Twp Line to Village Line	1.43
9	Flemings Lake Road:	Clarkston Road to Walters Road	0.51
10	Walters Road:	Waldon Road to Flemings Lake Road	0.50
11	Eston Road:	Clarkston Road to N end of existing pavement	0.53
			28.36

And while I hate potholes as much as the next guy, what I dislike even more is getting yelled at about potholes ... only because the Township has nothing to do with maintaining and repairing the roads. The one thing in common that happened with all the scenarios just mentioned was a question that went something like this (expletives deleted) ... "so what are you going to do about fixing the roads Mr. Big Shot Township Supervisor?"

Well it took a few months to work out the details with the lawyers and the RCOC, but the Township Board has decided to bring to the voters a proposal to fix the pothole problem in our community.

THE PLAN: On the November ballot, the Township is going to let the Independence residents decide if they are willing to approve a 2 Mill / 4-Year

I hate potholes!

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With the average home valued at \$279,500, the average taxable value is \$111,700. Two Mills would equate to \$223 for the average homeowner. If you look at the \$223 from a weekly perspective, the cost breaks down to \$4.28.

This proposed Road Improvement Millage will only last 4 years. The Road Improvement Millage proposal is being placed on the November ballot when there is a traditionally higher voter turn-out. Every penny of the Road Millage collected over the four years will *Stay In Independence Township!* The cost to repair 28 miles of roadway is estimated at \$16,500,000. The RCOC will contribute \$4,500,000. The balance of the cost, \$12,000,000 will be covered by the road millage. We intend to begin work in 2019 and complete it in 2023, that is, four years of lots of orange cones.

■ **A NO VOTE** will result in the status quo for the roads in our community and leaving the condition of our roads and timing for rehabilitating them in the hands of the RCOC and State legislators' decisions in Lansing.

■ **A YES VOTE** gives our community a level of direct control over the condition of the roads in our community by providing the necessary funding for our Township to work with the

Proposed Road Millage Impact	
Number of Residences	11,820
Average Market Value	\$279,500
Average Taxable Value	\$111,700
Average Annual Tax Impact	\$223

RCOC to rebuild them right now when they need it.

If there are any unused millage funds after the above road work is completed and paid for, they will be pooled into a special-restricted account whereby residential neighborhoods can apply to receive up to \$150,000 to offset the cost to repair their neighborhood public roadways. This incentive will be on a first come / first serve basis after the Township road work is done and paid for in 2023. More details will follow on this topic.

BOTTOM LINE: No matter how this Road Improvement Millage ballot proposal turns out, there will be some folks who will hate the results and some who will love them. We understand there are a lot of residents who want and need tax relief and are asking why in the heck is the Township getting involved in RCOC business. We also understand there is a large group of folks who hate the condition of our roads, who think Independence residents deserve better and are willing to contribute to a solution. **TOUGH CALL EITHER WAY!** That's why the Board agreed to put this Road Improvement Millage request on the November ballot and let Independence taxpayers decide. Keep you posted.

Important Update: Community Wells

By Dave McKee,
DPW Director

You may have read about a new threat to communities from the west side of the state who draw drinking water from underground aquifers ... PFAS. Here's an excerpt from a July 31, 2018, *Detroit News* article.

Michigan Halfway Through Testing Hundreds Of Water Sites For PFAS Contaminants

PFAS (Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl) are chemicals that have been used in firefighting foams, food packaging materials, and in commercial household products or manufacturing facilities. Long-term exposure to PFAS can cause health problems, including issues in the thyroid, kidney, heart and

reproductive system. The water supply for the City of Parchment and neighboring Cooper Township (both located in the west side of Michigan) was found to have 1,587 parts per trillion of PFAS, more than 20 times higher than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory of 70 parts per trillion."

Due to the recent finding on the west side of the state, the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team has undertaken a proactive effort to investigate sources and locations of

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David McKee,
DPW Director

Have you received your property tax bill?

By Paul Brown,
Treasurer

Property taxes bills were mailed out the first week in July and if you have not received yours by now you should stop in to pick up a copy. If getting here is not easy for you, please give us a call and we can email you a duplicate. Although the taxes are not due until September 14, it's a good idea to mark your calendar with the due date if you do not have an escrow account that pays the taxes for you.



Paul Brown
Treasurer

Your tax bill contains lots of information and I encourage you to read it completely and contact me directly if you have questions. Understanding how your taxes are calculated and how those funds are used is important and we're here to answer your questions.

Autopay now available for Property Taxes

There are multiple options for paying your tax bill. In addition to the methods listed on the bill, we've just initiated a new option. **Autopay.** With this method, you authorize the Township to withdraw the balance due from your account. We will provide several options for timing. You can ask us to withdraw 1 week prior to the due date or on the due date. The benefit of choosing the earlier date is that it gives you enough time to resolve any issues that might occur should your account be overdrawn and still get your taxes paid in time. If this is not a concern, we can pull the payment on the due date without issue. We have several years' experience with this process, as we use the same method for our Water & Sewer customers who have signed up for autopay.

If your property is held in a trust and the taxes are paid by the trust, Autopay is an excellent option to ensure that your taxes get paid on time now and into the future.

To sign up for Autopay, please stop by the Treasurer's Office to complete the form and allow us to more thoroughly

explain the options. If necessary, I can make home visits to assist in completing the paperwork.

If I can provide additional information, please give me a call at 248-625-5115.

Sign up for Autopay for your utility bill.

If you are a water and/or sewer customer, you received an **Autopay** sign up form with your most recent bill. So far, the response has been fantastic, as dozens have signed up. With Autopay, your bill is emailed to you a few weeks ahead of the due date letting you know how much is owed. The quarterly payment is then pulled from your bank account on the due date. Our ordinance requires a 10% penalty for late payments so it's smart to have it automatically paid. It also helps to keep costs down for the Water & Sewer Department. If half our customers signed up for emailed billing, we'd save up to \$20,000 per year in postage and processing costs. If you haven't signed up yet but are thinking about doing so, I encourage you to take that step. If you don't have the sign-up form, they are available online at www.indtwp.com under the Reference Center tab. Give us a call if you need help finding it.

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 Taxpayers 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.