

APRIL 2023

Your Township Board

Supervisor.....Roger Seely
Clerk.....Patrice Rose
Treasurer.....Dave Vonk
Trustee.....Ed Meny
Trustee.....Tom Milnikel
Trustee.....Ron Griffin
Trustee.....Melissa Hahn
Manager.....Denise Cook

Other Township Officials

Building Official.....Troy Gano
Ordinance Officer.....Troy Gano
Assessor.....Shalice Northrop
Chief of Police.....Randy Leng

Township Meetings

Township Board of Trustees
6 p.m. 1st Monday of the month
(Board Workshop at 12:00 Noon)

Planning Commission
6:30 p.m. 2nd Tuesday Monthly

Zoning Board of Appeals
7 p.m. 2nd Wednesday
(As Requested)

**MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE
TOWNSHIP HALL AND ARE
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Township Hours
The Township Hall is open
Monday-Friday
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



"Update" is published periodically in an effort to inform residents of the many activities in St. Joseph Charter Township. Inquiries or future articles should be directed to the Manager.

FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK

Roger Seely, Supervisor

Spring Cleanup Passes

Landfill passes will be available for pickup at the Township Hall beginning April 11th. Passes are good for rubbish drop-off at Orchard Hill Landfill in Watervliet on the following dates: April 21, 22, 28, 29 and May 5, 6, 19, 20. A household may have one (1) pass for rubbish clean up from that property. If you have any questions on what is allowed, please call the landfill office at 269-463-5588.



Yard Waste Pickup through Best Way begins April 1st and runs through December 15th. Yard waste will be picked up on your regular trash pickup day. The landfill does not accept plastic bags. Be sure to use large brown paper yard waste bags or you may provide your own container or rent one from Best Way Disposal (463-3232). All containers must be clearly labeled "Yard Waste".

For Hazardous Waste Disposal, please call Berrien County:

269-983-7111, ext. 8234 or go to their website, www.berriencounty.org/recycle. Hazardous waste would include household/garden chemicals and pesticides, medications, tires, and electronics.

Yard Maintenance

In order to minimize rodent harborage and to keep our neighborhoods looking tidy and well-cared for, we ask that residents adhere to the maximum grass height of 6". If we see or receive a complaint that property is overgrown, a notice will be posted to bring it into compliance. If there is no response to the notice, the grass will be cut, without further notice, and that property will be invoiced for the charges. Any unpaid invoices will be placed on the winter property tax bill. Please note this extra charge on your winter tax bill could affect your monthly mortgage payment. The requirement for mowing applies to all properties, even those with deep lots. The exception for full mowing is undeveloped, wooded lots, which must be kept maintained at least around the perimeters. Please assure that your neighborhood is a great place to live in by keeping your property picked up, trimmed and mowed. Your neighbors and the Township thank you!



Pet Ordinance If you bring your dog to any Township park or trail it must be on a leash as stated in Township ordinances. Please be courteous and clean up after your pet. "Doggie" bags have been placed on the trails and in the parks for your convenience.



FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK ...*continued*

*Roger Seely, Supervisor***Parks and Trails Millage Fund**

In December of 2018 the Township began collecting taxes for the ten-year Parks and Trails Millage that was approved by the voters at the August 2018 election. Please see the Parks Department section of this newsletter for more information on 2023 projects and to view plans for 2024.

Fire Improvement Millage Fund

In December of 2018, the Township began collecting taxes for the ten-year Fire Improvement Millage that was approved by the voters at the August 2018 election. The new Rosenbauer fire truck purchase at a cost not to exceed \$725,000 arrived in 2022 and is housed at Fire Station #1. A Rosenbaum mini pumper truck has been ordered and is expected to arrive this year. This truck will be housed at Fire Station #2.

**Revenue Sharing**

In order to receive CVT revenue sharing payments the Township must meet all State requirements. One of the requirements is to complete and publish an annual Performance Dashboard and provide public access to that information. St. Joseph Charter Township's Dashboard is available on the website. Visit www.sjct.org and click on **Public Hub** in the upper right to view the Dashboard information.

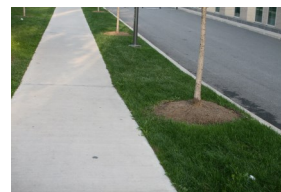
Tools to access Township services

- Permit forms, assessing information forms, tax information and much more can be accessed from the Township website under *Departments* at www.sjct.org. Also, check out the main page of the website for current general information.
- You may email the Township at info@sjct.org.
- Secured, camera monitored, and frequently checked drop boxes, both curbside and at the building to the left of the main entrance door are available to drop off payments and other documents.
- You may send information via postal mail to St. Joseph Charter Township, P.O. Box 147, St. Joseph, MI 49085.
- You may phone the Township at [\(269\) 429-7703](tel:(269) 429-7703) for information.
- TextMyGov is a smartphone texting application that allows you to text in a number to look up Township information. You may also text in a number that will allow you to receive notifications from the Township. See the [TextMyGov](#) section in this newsletter for more information on how to get started.
- The Township also sends information to its [Facebook page, St. Joseph Charter Township](#).



FROM THE SUPERVISOR'S DESK ...continued*Roger Seely, Supervisor*

Napier Avenue Non/Motorized Pathway: In the past four years, the Township was involved in a study, applied for and received approval for a CMAQ grant, for construction of non-motorized pathways on both sides of Napier Avenue from Miami to Colfax. Kalin Construction has begun work on the project with an estimated completion date of July 2023.



The Michigan Secretary of State's Office and the Township remind PEDESTRIANS for your safety: Where there are no sidewalks, walk or jog on the side of the road as far to the left as possible or on a paved shoulder **AGAINST** oncoming traffic.



Road Millage: In December of 2020, the Township began collecting taxes for the ten-year road millage that was approved by the voters at the November 2020 election. In 2023, the Township's share of cost will go for repairs and maintenance on approximately 6 miles of roads to include: Maiden Lane (Red Arrow Hwy. to Cleveland Ave.), Lydia Dr., Brunn Dr. (E. of Niles Rd.), Marilyn Dr. (Brown School Rd. to end), Blackhawk, Moccasin (N. of Napier Ave.), W. Valley View Dr., Crestview Dr., Lasein Dr., S. Valley View Dr., Anthony Dr., Nash Dr., Salisbury Dr., Knox St., Maiden Lane (W. of Knox St., N. of Maiden Ln.), Maiden Lane (Washington Ave. to I-94), Maiden Lane (Cleveland Ave. to I-94), Seneca, Cayuga, etc. (subs N. of Western, E. of Miami).

Employment Opportunity:

St. Joseph Charter Township is seeking a full-time Deputy Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk will be responsible for the administration of all elections held within the Township; assist with board packet preparation, agendas, motions, etc.; administer oaths; and fill in for the Township Clerk if necessary. Must work well with the public, have good customer service skills, good communication skills, the ability to write clearly and logically, possess good organizational skills, and to learn and follow complicated rules regarding elections and public records, knowledge and experience with computer programs and office equipment. Some bookkeeping and H.R. processing would be favorable experience. Some work after normal business hours may be required.

For Elections, the candidate will need to be a self-starter with motivation to learn new information with minimal guidance in addition to adapting to changes that often come from the State on short notice.

The position will be full time (40 hours per week), and pay will be dependent on experience. A full job description is available online at www.sjct.org.

PLANNING COMMISSION*Ben Baker, Chairman*

The Planning Commission is in the process of updating the Township's 5-year Master Plan. In December, the community responded to survey questions about their vision for the future of the community. The Planning Commission is utilizing that information to draft the plan. Our meetings are the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30, if anyone would like to attend and observe the planning process. In the coming months when a draft plan is complete we will be holding a public hearing to gather additional feedback on the plan, and we would appreciate the public's input.

PLANNING COMMISSION ...continued

Ben Baker, Chairman

St. Joseph Charter Township Planning Commission
Annual Report for 2022**Summary**

The Planning Commission worked this year to begin the process to update the 5-year Master Plan. We at first thought that we could update the plan as the commission with help from staff, however we soon realized that a consultant would be beneficial. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission was engaged to assist with the update. In addition, we had many special use permits come through the Planning Commission and two large PUD's. We also had our first site plan review held by the Planning Commission since the approval of the updated zoning ordinance. A summary of our meetings is as follows:

• January

The Master Plan Sub-Committee presented, regarding the Master Plan, and worked to get a copy of the current plan in a format we could edit. Jonathan Fisk presented the 2021 annual report and Commissioners approved the annual report to the township trustees. Officers were elected for 2022: Ben Baker, Chair, Ray Matejczyk, Vice-Chair, Jim Hahn, Secretary.

• February

The Master Plan Sub-Committee presented about their work on review of the 2017 Master Plan. The Commission thought we could review one chapter per month and revise with Township staff assistance. The Commission felt that a survey of township residents should be completed as our top priority.

• March

The Master Plan Sub-Committee presented a timeline for the master plan revision process. The methods of surveying the community were discussed between online surveys and mailings. Commissioners were tasked to send the chair survey questions they would like to have included before the next meeting. It was also decided that a 5:30 pre-meeting could be utilized in the coming months to workshop the master plan review before our normal meeting times.

• April

The Commission held their workshop meeting for the master plan and decided to keep that meeting on the schedule for the rest of the year to keep the master plan process moving. The Master Plan Sub-Committee would be meeting to take all of the survey questions developed and compile them.

Troy Gano presented that the Starks Menchinger Funeral Home recently purchased an adjacent lot and would like to split off 3 acres of that parcel to combine with the current funeral home property. The new property is zoned R-2 while the current parcel is B-2. The Commission and Troy discussed a way to accomplish their desire and Starks would start with a survey of both parcels.

Ram Burri presented to the Commission regarding a proposal to develop missing middle housing at 2750 Niles Road. The ideas were conceptual, and the Commission asked that Troy meet with Mr. Burri to discuss the specifics of the ordinance and his proposal.

PLANNING COMMISSION ...continued

Ben Baker, Chairman

• May

A special meeting was held at 5:30 for a special use permit for 1332 Hilltop Road for a play café business proposed by Brittany and Eric Webb. This would have coffee and a space for young children to play with indoor equipment. The Commission asked questions about the parking at the site and specifics of the business. The Commission recommend approval of the special use to the Township Board.

The regular meeting was held at 6:30. The meeting began with discussion of a Planned Unit Development request at the former Berrien Hills Country Club property. The developer presented their plans for the site, including a mix of housing, commercial and open space. A lake would be dug in the center of the site to mitigate flooding and provide an amenity and boat slips. They discussed the potential to raise the low area to build out of the floodplain. The Commission voted to forward the PUD Request to the Township Board.

• June

The Commission made progress with the Master Plan update and survey at the 5:30 workshop. The Commission discussed gaining outside help with the Master Plan Update.

At the 6:30 meeting a Public Hearing was held for the Starks property at 2650 Niles Road and the adjacent parcel at 2687 Lincoln Avenue. The Owner would like to split and rezone the Lincoln Avenue parcel and combine a portion of that parcel with the Funeral Home parcel for additional space. Public comments were heard on the proposal during the Public Hearing. After the public hearing was completed, the Commission recommended the split and rezone to the Township Board.

• July

At the 5:30 workshop the Commission moved to accept a proposal from the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission to assist with the Master Plan Update.

At the 6:30 meeting a Public Hearing took place for a request from the St. Joseph Youth Sports Foundation for a special use permit to build a sports complex on the 40 acre parcel at the corner of Hollywood Road and Maiden Lane. Nicole Schmitt, President of the Foundation, presented the plan which included spaces for football, flag football, rocket football, baseball, softball, soccer, a park, walking trail, concessions, a pavilion, and a splash pad. The audience had questions, specifically about how the parcel will abut the homes to the west of the field and lighting. The Public Hearing closed, and the Commission discussed the proposal. The Special Use was recommended to the Township Board.

• August

The contract with Southwest Michigan Planning Commission was approved and will start working with the Planning Commission in September. A Public Hearing was held for a Special Use Permit for a Bed and Breakfast use at 1203 Seneca. The request was heard and the Public Hearing closed. The Special Use was recommended to the Township Board.

• September

The meeting started with a review of the PUD process from Attorney Seneca in preparation for the upcoming PUD applications that would be coming before the Commission. Next, the Commission discussed the Master Plan update with Marcy Hamilton of the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission. The Action Plan and Goals were discussed, and then the community survey questions were reviewed. Marcy will finalize the questions and send them to the Commission for final review.

PLANNING COMMISSION ...continued

Ben Baker, Chairman

- October**

On 10/4 a special meeting was held to review the PUD application for the Nye property. A Public Hearing was held to review the application. The applicant and their engineer discussed the proposal, including commercial businesses along Niles, apartments at the rear of the property and a new roadway and traffic light. A large number of audience members spoke in opposition to the project. The Public Hearing was closed. A review of the information provided for the PUD submittal was presented by Building Official Gano, and showed a number of requirements were not submitted. The Commission voted to table the PUD application until the required items were presented.

The Commission held our regular meeting on 10/18. A Public Hearing was held to review a PUD application for the former Berrien Hills Country Club. The developer and their team presented the proposal. A large number of audience members spoke out about the project, with many opposing the project and some in support. The Public Hearing was closed. The Commission reviewed the PUD application and variances requested asking questions of the developer. The Commission voted to recommend the PUD and variances to the Township Board.

- November**

Our meeting was held a week early due to the conflict with the election. The Southwest Michigan Planning Commission sent over a revised survey for the Master Planning process. The Commission reviewed the survey, modified a few questions, and decided to make the survey available online and have a post card mailed to all residential addresses in the Township. Next the Commission performed a site plan review for the proposed sports park at 3630 Hollywood Road. The Commission reviewed the plan and asked questions of the development team. The Commission voted to approve the site plan as submitted pending approval of the final lighting plan.

- December**

It was reported that the Master Plan survey was available online and that postcards had been mailed. The Survey would close at the beginning of 2023 and Marcy Hamilton will attend our January meeting to review the results as well as her progress on the Master Plan.

Approved January 10, 2023

By the St. Joseph Charter Township Planning Commission

Josephine Cassar

Tim Drews

James Hahn, Secretary

Ben Baker, Chair

Ray Matejczyk, Vice Chair

Jonathan Fisk

Tom Milnikel, Board of Trustees Liaison

Get Fast Assistance Text St. Joseph Charter Township

TextMyGov™

St. Joseph Charter Township
269.421.4001

Report

Water Services

Code

Mental Health

Street

Police

Barking Dog

FAQ

Find Information & Report Issues

Skip a phone call and use your mobile phone's text messaging service to quickly access information and report issues.

Simply text the word **Hi** to the Township's smart texting number or send a message containing keywords relevant to your request, such as:

NUISANCE, POULTRY, BARKING DOG, POTHOLE, STREETLIGHT, SIGN, BUILDING INSPECTION, ORDINANCE.

24/7 Texting Service

Smart texting technology identifies keywords texted in to provide immediate assistance. It can relay information back to you or guide you through a few steps to submit a report.

Get Started

Text **Hi** to St. Joseph Charter Township at:

269.421.4001

Save our number to your phone and text **HI** anytime you need it.



Get updates delivered directly to your phone

[Additional service option](#)

Sign up to receive Township text alerts!

Text **SJCTOWNSHIP** to **91896**

What to Expect:

- After the initial keyword is sent to join the text message notification list, you will receive a confirmation message asking you to reply **YES** to verify opt-in.
- You may receive multiple text messages a month. Notifications may include: Upcoming Events, Garbage Delays, Road Closures, and Storm Warnings
- You can text **STOP** at any time to remove yourself from the notification list.



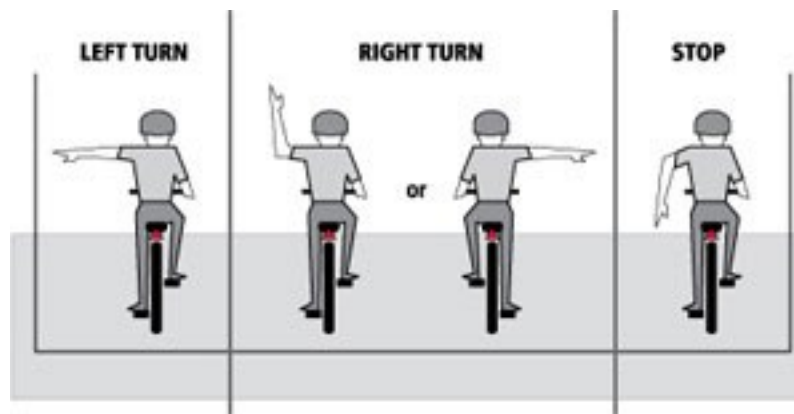
Msg & data rates may apply. Check with your carrier for details. View terms and privacy policy info at: textmygov.com/opt-in-terms-conditions

POLICE DEPARTMENT & NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

Randy Leng, Chief of Police

**ST. JOSEPH TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT
BICYCLE SAFETY TIPS:**

- Wear bright/light colored clothing or reflective materials.
- Use headlights/taillights or carry a flashlight during dark hours.
- Do not wear headphones or use a cell phone while bicycling.
- Always wear a helmet while riding a bike.
- Bike *with* the flow of traffic.
- Follow rules of the road and obey traffic signals.
- Walk and bike single file on the paved shoulder of the road.
- Be alert to engine noise or backup lights in driveways and parking lots.
- Watch for turning vehicles.
- Use appropriate hand signals for turning, slowing, and stopping (see diagram below).



Parents, please train your children in bicycle safety and rules of the road prior to allowing them to bike on public roadways.

Keep in mind that young children have a physical disadvantage in traffic; their peripheral vision is two-thirds that of an adult. They also may have difficulty determining where a sound is coming from, and traffic noises and sirens may confuse them.

Most children lack a sense of danger. They do not understand that an automobile may seriously hurt or kill them if they collide. Children often mix fantasy with reality and may give themselves superhuman powers and do not understand that a moving vehicle can hurt them.

Children are often restless and impatient. They have trouble waiting for things like traffic lights or cars heading in their direction and also have difficulty judging the speed and distance of oncoming vehicles. Children are easily distracted and tend to focus on the things that interest them at the moment.

Many children believe that all grownups will look out for them. They think that if they can see an adult driving a car towards them, the driver must be able to see them.

Please accompany your child on biking excursions until you are confident that they will be safe when riding alone on public roadways.

Questions:

If you have any questions, please contact Lt. Rick Knapp of the St. Joseph Township Police Department at rknappp@sjct.org or 269-429-6890.

National Night Out

Crime Prevention Event & Ice Cream Social



Tuesday, August 1, 2023 from 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Maiden Lane Community Park

**Residents of St. Joseph Township, St. Joseph City,
and Lincoln Township are welcome to participate in
various displays and activities.**

**Programs Include: Fire Department Jaws of Life
demonstration; Med Flight out of South Bend will
be landing on site; fire trucks, police cars, and other
local emergency equipment will be there to view.**



Ice Cream Sundaes, Hot Dogs, Chips, and

Pop will be provided.

Contact: Lt. Rick Knapp, St. Joseph Township Police

(269) 429-6890

FROM THE CLERK - ElectionsPatrice Rose, Clerk

2023 Election Information

2023 Election Information
May 2nd, 2023 – Special Election

Election Workers Needed!

St. Joseph Charter Township is currently hiring election inspectors for the May 2nd, 2023 Special Election. Thinking about becoming an election inspector? And to ensure that every vote is counted? Or, do you know someone who is curious about the behind-the-scenes process? Just call our office today, for more details at (269) 429-7703.

Online Voter Information:

Visit online at <https://mVIC.sos.state.mi.us/> to check your registration status, see upcoming elections, view sample ballots (when available), apply for absentee ballots or find your local clerk contact information.

Should you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact us at (269) 429-7703.

ASSESSING DEPARTMENTShalíce Northrop, Assessor

The State Tax Commission requires that assessors annually inspect a percentage of the properties in each class. New photos of the homes included in this percentage will be taken.

Over the years changes are sometimes made to your property, things added, and sometimes things are removed. The only way your record card can be accurate is by making sure that any changes you make (or have made in the past) have been accounted for. If, for example, you recently removed an inground swimming pool and did not get a demolition permit, we would not know it was gone and it would remain on record card and you would be paying taxes on something that is no longer there. Remember, **YOU** pay property taxes based upon the information I have in my files – and if that information is not current then neither is your assessed and taxable value.

In February you received an Assessment Change Notice showing your new 2023 Assessed and Taxable Values. It has a section that says...% **Exempt As "Homeowner's Principal Residence"**. If this property is your principal residence, not a second/vacation home, as noted on your Michigan driver's license, your Michigan voter's registration card, and the address you file your Michigan Income Tax from then the % here should be 100%. If it is 0 and you feel that it is incorrect please contact this office as soon as possible as this % is used in computing your **summer tax bill** as either Homestead or Non-Homestead. It is a little number but it makes a **HUGE** difference on your tax bill. So please take a second look at your notice and check – if you cannot find your notice you can call and we can check for you. It is much easier to correct this now before the summer bills are processed.

As always, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me at 269-429-7703 or shalicen@gmail.com

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Troy Gano, CBO Building Official

If you are planning a remodel or construction project and have a contractor, be sure that they are licensed to do the work, and ensure that they have obtained the required permits. If you are unsure of what work requires a permit, don't hesitate to call. If you as a homeowner plan to tackle some of these projects and are unsure if a permit is required, please call and we will let you know either way. Our goal is life safety of all residents and through permitting we can ensure this is achieved. Note that a building permit is not required for a shed under 200 sq. ft. in size or a fence of any type, but we do require a \$24 zoning permit to ensure compliance with our zoning code.

We are here to serve you with our State Licensed & ICC Nationally Certified Staff

Contacts:

Troy Gano, Building Inspector (269) 930-2453

Ken Simpson, Electrical Inspector (269) 471-5869

Ken Jewell, Plumbing and Mechanical Inspector (269) 287-0425



ORDINANCE DEPARTMENT

Henry Wing, Ordinance Officer

A few reminders:

- **There is no burning of yard waste allowed in St. Joseph Charter Township.** All leaves must be bagged in the large brown paper bags or placed in containers clearly labeled "Yard Waste" (we have these stickers available for free in our office). You may either purchase your own container and label it or rent one from Best Way Disposal (463-3232).
- **Permissible Fires**—It is permissible to burn clean dry fire wood or sticks contained within a non-combustible ring no larger than 4 feet in diameter, constantly attended, and at least 25 feet from any building or structure. (Excessive smoke in all cases will be required to be put out)
- **Junk & Debris**— If you have large items such as furniture or appliances that you would like to dispose of, please note that Best Way will NOT pick these items up without a special pickup call and additional fee. If you have extra debris/items please store it out of sight until you can haul it away or until you are able to schedule a special pickup.
- **Parking**—There is no parking on the lawn or road right-of-way at any time. All off-street parking must be on an improved surface such as crushed stone, crushed concrete, paving bricks or other similar material.
- **Dog barking** continuously is deemed a nuisance and prohibited. Dogs will bark when they see a dog or people near their property and a reasonable amount is allowed.
- **Rental Property**—Dwellings are permitted to be rented as single-family long-term (30 days or more) only if legally registered and inspected by the township.



Troy Gano, Department Head

PARKS / PUBLIC WORKS

Dave Rindfield, Director

Parks

Township parks will officially open April 1st with hopes of water being turned on by April 7th weather pending.

Knauf Park Trail Donation -

A new pavilion is being built and site work is happening at the Vineland Rd. end of Knauf Park Trail. The new pavilion is made possible through a gracious donation from Mr. Fritz Knauf. The new pavilion will include indoor restrooms, lighting and picnic tables. Other additions to the park will include a drinking fountain with dog/bottle filling station, a paved parking lot, and flower beds. A new identification sign will also be placed at the Niles Rd. end of the trail. Many thanks to Fritz for choosing to donate to this Township Park!

The **Carronde Park Water Trail Connection & Fishing Platform Development Project Grant** Agreement for installation of fishing platforms, a walkway along the river bank, and an all-inclusive kayak launch has been signed. The Land and Water Conservation Fund grant amount is \$200,000 and the Township match is \$200,000. This project will be bid out early spring with an anticipated summer construction this year.

The Township applied for and was approved to receive a Great Lakes Fishery Trust grant for \$200,000. This grant will cover \$200,000 of the match portion required of the Township for the Carronde Park Water Trail and Fishing Platform Development Project Grant.

A Trust Fund grant for **Carronde Park Tennis Court Renovation Project** has been approved for grant funding of \$50,000 with a match of \$42,400 required of the Township. This project will renovate three tennis courts to include improving one existing tennis court and refurbishing the other two courts to add green space and two pickle ball courts. This project is expected to be constructed and completed in 2024.

A Trust Fund grant for **Kedzie Park Playground Development** has been approved for grant funding of \$50,000 with a match of \$34,600 required of the Township. The project will replace equipment and surfacing with structures to better meet the needs of users. Equipment and surfacing is scheduled to be installed in late spring or early summer this year.



PARKS / PUBLIC WORKS ...ContinuedDave Rindfield, Director

Sewer

A reminder to all residents...**do not discharge the following to the sanitary sewer:** storm water, surface water, ground water, roof runoff, subsurface drainage, cooling water or unpolluted industrial process waters.

As noted in the past, disposable flushable wipes should never be flushed as these wipes cause issues to our lift stations and the treatment plant.

Lincoln Ave. Lift Station Replacement - St Joseph Charter Township will begin designing and engineering for the replacement of the Lincoln Ave. lift station and force main. This station pumps an average of 56,000 gallons of sewage a day and close to 21 million gallons of sewage a year and is a much needed project which assists in maintaining our aging waste water system.

Water

Fire Hydrant: Per the International Fire Code, all fire hydrants must maintain a 3 foot radius so please be sure that all fire hydrants are cleared of bushes and trees and no other landscaping hides a hydrant.

Hollywood Water Main Replacement Project: The construction project for the water main replacement has been completed and is awaiting a spring restoration for the new sidewalks from Maiden Lane to Niles Ave.

Storm Water/Watershed Management

Everyone needs to do their part to protect our streams, rivers, inland lakes, and Lake Michigan! We depend on these water resources for our drinking water and for recreation: swimming, boating, and fishing.

How do pollutants enter the water?

- In urban areas, storm drains are a main source of pollutants, draining virtually everything from lawns, streets, and parking lots directly into local streams, rivers, and lakes. Most storm drains do not treat or filter pollutants.
- Common pollutants include; fertilizers, pesticides, grass clippings, leaves, oil, grease, toxic chemicals, sediment, and pet waste.

Just a reminder that it takes all of us working together to prevent pollution of the surface water runoff to our rivers and streams. For further information check out "Keep it Blue" at <https://www.swmpc.org/water.asp>. Brochures that illustrate ways to prevent pollution to our storm water system are also located on the counter at the township hall.

Oriental bittersweet: An aggressive, invasive plant

A beautiful plant along the roadways in late fall, Oriental bittersweet is a threat to native environments by aggressively choking out other woody plants. Collecting can cause spreading.

Oriental bittersweet can single-handedly strangle neighboring mature trees if left to its own devices. This woody vine grows rapidly and has a twining nature that clings to anything going up or down. It can easily climb trees up to 90 feet tall. As the plant grows in diameter, it literally chokes or girdles other plants that it is clinging to. Its rate of spread is a bit like a Jack-in-the-bean-stalk fairy tale and it has been observed covering half-acre wood lots in just seven to 10 years. Between the girdling growth habit and sheer weight, whole canopies of a forest can tumble down during the growing season or an ice storm.

While environmentally savvy gardeners seek to reduce pesticide use, this is one plant it would be best not to try to control solely by manual methods. In combination with chemical controls, methods such as cutting or hand digging can be effective for established populations over time. Herbicides can be applied to freshly cut stems or through other techniques. Refer to a Michigan DNR fact sheet for [best control practices of Oriental bittersweet](#).

Invasive Species Alert

Oriental Bittersweet

(*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

Established in Michigan

Identification:

- Woody, perennial vine that can climb up to 60 feet.
- Leaves are alternate, finely toothed and can vary in shape from oblong to round to tapered.
- Vines are multi-branched and range from brown to gray. New growth is green.
- Clusters of small, 5 petaled, greenish-yellow blossoms form in leaf axils in May or June.
- Clusters of round, green fruits mature to bright red when yellow outer membrane opens in fall.



TREASURER'S REPORT

Dave Vonk, Treasurer

IMPORTANT TAX DATES:

- **Summer Tax Bills** are mailed **July 1st** and due by 5:00 p.m. on **September 14, 2023**.
- **Winter Tax Bills** are mailed **December 1st** and due by 5:00 p.m. on **February 14, 2024**.
- After **February 28, 2023**, all delinquent payments for 2022 taxes are due to the Berrien County Treasurer 269-983-7111 ext. 8569.

PAYMENTS:

- You can pay your tax bill by check, cash or credit/debit card. There is a 3% fee (\$2 minimum) for using a credit or debit card.
- We can accept partial payments starting the day you receive your tax bill.
- Please call 269-932-0269 for current balance due if you did not pay by the due date.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- Tax Bill **Address Changes**: call our Assessor 269-932-0272.
- Tax Bill **Name Changes**: call the Berrien County Register of Deeds 269-983-7111 ext. 8562.
- **County Drain Assessments**: call the Drain Commissioner 269-983-7111 ext. 8255.
- Your **taxable value** is based on the value of your property on December 31st of the preceding year.
- Valuable **income tax information** can be found on your tax bills. Please save them.

DOG LICENSES:

Due to procedure changes, dog licenses are no longer available at St. Joseph Charter Township Hall and may now be purchased through Berrien County Animal Control. Licenses may be purchased in person at 1400 S. Euclid Ave., Benton Harbor or on-line at berriencounty.org click on departments then animal control. If you have any questions regarding dog licenses you may reach Berrien County Animal Control at 269-927-5648.



“Like” our Facebook page: **St. Joseph Charter Township** to keep up to date on Township happenings. Or go to our website **SJCT.org**. Please see the following Facebook pages for Police and Fire Department information:



St. Joseph Township Police Department
 St. Joseph Charter Township Fire Department Station #1
 St. Joseph Charter Township Fire Department Station #2



Presort Standard US Postage
PAID
Kalamazoo, MI Permit No. 1366

PHONE NUMBERS

TOWNSHIP HALL429-7703
Fax.....429-2079
(Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Emergency Only.....9-1-1
Police Administration.....429-6890
(Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
Non-Emergency.....983-3060
(Dispatch – 24 hr.)

FIRE: Emergency.....9-1-1
Fire Administration
Station #1 - 3000 Washington Ave.....429-4100
Station #2 - 1750 Colfax Ave.....429-4100

AMBULANCE.....9-1-1
Public Works - Sewer/Water Problems.....429-8113
Water/Sewer Bills983-6324

Berrien County Road Department.....925-1196
Berrien County Animal Control927-5648
I&M Electric800-311-6424
Michigan Gas800-401-6451

BEST WAY DISPOSAL OBSERVES THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS

Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, New Years Day

Usually, if a holiday falls on your regularly scheduled collection day, that day and every collection day after that day will be moved back one day for the remainder of that week. **Please call Best Way directly (463-3232) with any questions on holiday pickup or recycling schedules.**

Arrangements for extra rubbish carts, yard waste carts, or recycling containers can be made by calling Best Way. Please call Tami at **269-463-3232** with any questions or concerns on our rubbish/yard waste/recycling programs.

STREET LIGHTS: If you notice a street light that is not working, report it to Indiana Michigan Power on their website: <https://www.indianamichiganpower.com/> You will be asked for the pole number and the nearest street address or cross street. The pole number is located on a metal tag about eye level on the street light pole. If you do not have internet access, you may contact the Police Department at 429-6890 to have them enter your request into I&M's website.

FIRE HYDRANTS are a vital part of our overall community public safety. **Please try to keep them free of over growth 3' around and easily visible.**

Seconds can make a difference between saving and losing someone's home or life. Please help us keep them readily visible for emergency personnel, even in winter. Our fire fighters thank you for your help!

ST. JOSEPH CHARTER TOWNSHIP

3000 Washington Ave
P.O. Box 147
St. Joseph MI 49085

YARD WASTE PICKUP RUNS FROM APRIL THROUGH THE SECOND THURSDAY OF DECEMBER, ON YOUR NORMAL TRASH DAY

Office Closures for 2023

Friday, April 7th — **Spring Holiday**

Friday and Monday, May 26th and 29th — **Memorial Day**

Monday and Tuesday, July 3rd and 4th — **Fourth of July**

Friday and Monday, September 1st and 4th — **Labor Day**

Thursday and Friday, November 23rd and 24th — **Thanksgiving**

Monday and Tuesday, December 25th and 26th — **Christmas**

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Your water service may be turned off if your bill remains unpaid 45 days after the date of the bill. There will be a fee to turn the water back on, so please call 983-6324 with any questions or problems before this occurs.

Unpaid bills are added to December property tax bills, and these additional fees, which raise the amount that mortgage companies with escrow accounts pay, COULD affect your monthly mortgage payment, so please keep your account current. Call 983-6324 to make payment arrangements.