

Land Preservation Update

Brian Bourdages, Farmland Protection Specialist

P. Salathiel & P. Brink, Shoreline Preservation Advisory

Acme Township’s Farmland Preservation Program has risen to a new level of activity with the completion of the program’s first application round. Four local landowners offered a total of 816 acres of working farmland for permanent preservation within the Saylor Road and Bates Road corridors—the heart of Acme Township’s active agricultural area.

The commitment to preserving these properties demonstrates the long-term multigenerational investment that Acme’s farm families have made, and are willing to make, to the future of farming in Acme Township. Preservation of these lands also ensures that the residents of Acme Township continue to enjoy the rural character, scenic beauty, and economic benefits that their agricultural resources provide.

Total costs for preservation through Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) were determined by a certified appraisal process to be \$4,819,000. To date, the one mill, ten-year property tax approved by township residents in 2004 has generated \$1,076,781 and is conservatively expected to generate over \$2,500,000 by 2014. The township, together with the landowners and the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, is hard at work securing matching dollars from state, federal, and private sources.

This exciting surge of progress is not only building the necessary momentum to inspire investments from various funders, but it has recently resulted in two additional parcels of agricultural land—totaling 307 acres—being submitted for the program’s consideration.

“Acme Township is a microcosm of our entire region’s resources,” said Glen Chown, Executive Director of the Conservancy. “With the profound investment in the protection of the Township’s natural lands in the Yuba and Ptolego watersheds, and with the preservation of shoreline, coastal forest and farmland at Maple Bay Natural Area, the safeguarding of Acme’s critical agricultural resources completes the picture, and is a top priority for our organization.”

Look for updates about Acme’s Farmland Preservation Program in the near future. Until then, we hope you will make time to drive along the roadways where land is slated for permanent preservation and enjoy Acme’s Township’s rich agricultural heritage!

In the past year the Township has made good progress towards its goal of creating a public waterfront park. With the help of a dedicated Citizen Advisory Committee, it looks like we are on the road to success in finding win/win solutions for both landowners wanting to sell their properties and the public wishing for a swimming beach, biking/hiking paths, public gardens, and other amenities that



would come with a **first-class** waterfront similar to those in Petoskey and other Northern Michigan resort towns.

Almost half the property owners between MDOT Park and Bayside Park have expressed interest in discussing the sale of their property to

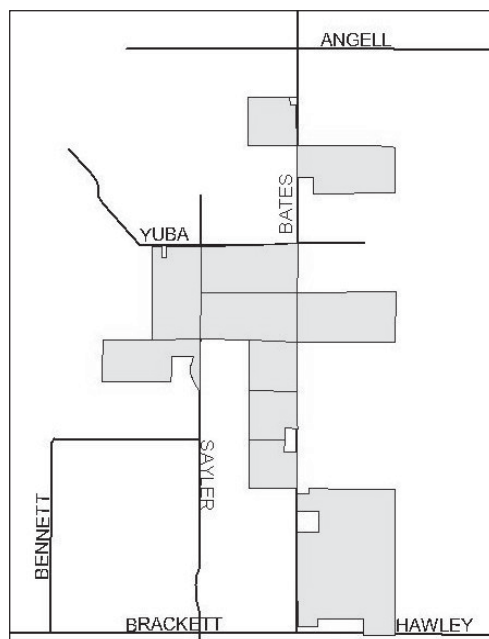
the Township, and some have signed option agreements. The goal is to pay for this project with private donations, foundation grants, and state and federal funding. A grant application was submitted to the DNR Trust Fund for 75% of the funds needed to purchase the available properties. We now need to raise \$1 million by December 8, 2008 to meet our initial “match” requirement.

Our sincere thanks go out to the nearly 50 individuals and organizations who provided letters of support to accompany our grant application. Letters came from a broad range of individuals, business owners, economic development interests, foundations, governmental units and elected officials.

We would also like to thank the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, which has provided invaluable guidance in our effort to raise the necessary matching funds. You can be a part of this exciting project, by sending your contribution to:

Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy –
 Acme Shoreline Project
 3860 North Long Lake Road
 Traverse City, MI 49684

For more information about this project, come to a Shoreline Preservation Advisory meeting, regularly scheduled at 4:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month. You can also call co-chairs Paul Brink (938-9785) or Pat Salathiel (938-2128.)



Grand Traverse Metro Fire Department

Chief Patrick Parker

Hello and happy summer to everyone. Your fire department has been busy with calls so far this year. As a department our volume is up almost 10%.

At the Acme fire station, we have daytime coverage Monday through Friday from 7:00 until 4:00. On summer weekends there is a firefighter on duty every day for 8 hours. We have two paid on call firefighters for the night time hours 365 days a year. This staffing plan is to improve customer service and reduce response times. Stop by the station and say hello. If you need your blood pressure taken, they would be glad to do so.

I want to invite everyone to the grand opening and dedication ceremony for our newest fire station. Station 1 opened on February 1st and is located at 841 Industrial Circle in the middle of the Metro coverage area. Industrial Circle is just north of the intersection of Hammond and Three Mile. The open house is on Saturday, July 26 from 11-3, with the ribbon cutting and

dedication at 1:00. Food and beverages will be served. From all of us, we thank the citizens of Acme, East Bay and Garfield for their investment in the future of the



department. This station is already making a big difference in reducing response times.

We have been having a very big problem with finding addresses. If we can't find your home, we can't help you! Please put numbers on your mail box that can be seen from both sides. If you have a long driveway and we can't see your house or if you don't get your mail delivered, please

install a sign post with your address numbers on it. Thanks for helping us help you!

Our annual report is now on our web site at www.gtmetrofire.org along with numerous fire and life safety tips. Please check it out and give us your thoughts or concerns. We thank you for your support and we are ready to serve at any time.

**PASSPORT APPLICATIONS
ARE AVAILABLE AND
ACCEPTED AT THE ACME
TOWNSHIP HALL**

**CALL OFFICE ASSISTANT/
PASSPORT ACCEPTANCE
AGENT
NANCY EDWARDSON
FOR DETAILS
AT 938-1350**

For 55 years from 1953 to 2008 Bertha Vos Elementary served generations of young students in our community. We are pleased to announce that the impact and tradition of this exceptional school will continue. To celebrate the 125-year history of local education in Acme, the *Bertha Vos Legacy Scholarship* has been established through the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation to honor students, dedicated teachers and staff, and our community. The impact these scholarships can have is up to our community - success depends on the strength of the support shown through donations to the Bertha Vos Legacy Scholarship. Please visit www.4good4ever.org to learn more and donate to this worthwhile scholarship. Pledge cards are also available at the township office.



Acme Township Heritage Citizens Advisory

Kristen Salathiel

Bertha Vos Elementary School may have closed its doors for the last time on June 11th, but its history will be preserved forever thanks to a new committee established by the Acme Township Board at its June 3rd meeting. The Acme Township Heritage Committee is chaired by Acme residents Beth Whiting and Evie Kuncaitis-Huver. Its first charge is to preserve the memorabilia from Bertha Vos, but the committee hopes to eventually play a large role in preserving all of the history of Acme Township.

The committee will work in conjunction with the Traverse City Area Public Schools to gather all of the yearbooks, photographs, plaques and other important items from Bertha Vos' 55 years of educating Acme Township residents. Though these materials will still belong to TCAPS, the committee will house the materials and be in charge of

auditing them yearly so that all materials are safely accounted for.

One of the first significant historical items preserved by the committee will be the flag that flew over the school at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. On the last day of school, all



Bertha Vos students and staff participated in a flag ceremony, raising the flag for the last time. When the day was over, the flag was taken down and will be preserved with the hope

that it can one day fly over a new school in Acme Township.

The Heritage Committee met for the first time on June 5th, and its meetings are open to the public. For more information, contact co-chairs Beth Whiting and Evie Kuncaitis-Huver or committee members Dorothy Dunville and Wayne Kladder.

The Planning Commission and legal and township staff are currently working together on a “neutral” rewrite the Acme Township Zoning Ordinance. The last time the ordinance was completely recodified and readopted was in September 1979, and over 140 amendments have been proposed since then. As amendments have been made, internal inconsistencies have developed where sections reference each other.

Major amendments to state zoning enabling laws occurred in July 2006, and were in turn amended earlier this year. Some sections of our zoning ordinance are inconsistent with the new laws and therefore must be amended. There are many opportunities to remove “legalese” in favor of plain English, clarify vague provisions and make the document easier to use.

While changing state law demands that amendments be made at this time, the Commission is also aware that several recent proposed “substantive” amendments to the ordinance have been controversial. A substantive amendment would be one that changes the options landowners are currently granted for using their land.

The Commission and Board recognize that substantive changes are needed to the ordinance to ensure it

contains laws truly designed to implement the various community goals set forth in the Master Plan. However, the township felt it would be prudent to separate, to the greatest extent possible, discussion of the “neutral” changes required to meet the new legal requirements from any potential substantive changes. In this way we hope to minimize the potential for having the basic legal compliance changes required potentially delayed or even thrown out if substantive changes proposed along with them were to be challenged by referendum.

It is impossible to perform the needed revisions without changing any entitlements at all. For instance, state law requires us to allow clustered housing developments as a use by right, but currently our ordinance only allows them through a special use permit process. The proposed amendment would allow clustered housing as a use by right, thereby increasing landowners’ current entitlements. There are also some decision-making processes our ordinance assigns to the Planning Commission that should, by law, be assigned to the Zoning Board of Appeals instead. We are seeking to minimize these substantive changes at this time.

This does not mean that the need to discuss substantive changes will be

neglected, however. As soon as the neutral rewrite is complete, the Commission will begin tackling some of the larger substantive issues on its list. We’re simply taking things one step at a time.

Everyone is invited to take part in the neutral rewrite process. Discussions about the proposed rewrite are continuing at every Commission meeting until the Commission forwards a draft to the County Planning Commission for their review and the Board of Trustees for final action. Zoning Administrator John Hull would also be very glad to discuss any questions you may have. All of the documents being used, including a “clean” copy of the proposed rewritten ordinance, a “markup” copy showing proposed additions and deletions in color, and a memo from our legal staff describing why they have recommended the changes, can be found via links on the right-hand side of the home page of our website at www.acmetownship.org. We can also provide them for you at the township hall with advanced notice and payment of a \$100.00 fee to cover the cost of copying the approximately 400 pages. We look forward to your participation in this important process.

Update on Meijer and the Village at Grand Traverse

Litigation involving Acme Township, Meijer and the Village at Grand Traverse has quieted down. Meijer has a special use permit for the Lautner Commons development and the Village at Grand Traverse has the right to get its special use permit reinstated, but they have taken no action on these permits in several months. **The Township is not involved in the litigation that is making recent headlines.**

The Village at Grand Traverse (VGT)

The Township, CCAT, Meijer and VGT agreed to end the appeals in the case about the Village at Grand Traverse mixed use development. The next step would be for the Circuit Court to reinstate VGT’s special use permit and to review again the dismissal of VGT’s lawsuits against the Township and its individual Board and Planning Commission members. Last time, the Circuit Court reinstated the VGT permit on the condition that the Township would have full control of the site plan review process, and dismissed the conflict of interest lawsuits as having no merit. The Township hopes that if VGT or Meijer asks the Court to move forward on these issues again, the result will be the same. So far, neither VGT nor Meijer has asked the Court to proceed with these issues.

Lautner Commons

The appeals are also over on Meijer’s Lautner Commons project, and the conditions the Township put on the Meijer special use permit have been upheld. Those conditions include moving the gas station to a location on the property where the water table is not so high and raising the walkways above the grade of the parking lot for pedestrian safety. So far, Meijer has not contacted the Township to move forward on the project or complete the conditions in the special use permit.

Bill Boltres’ and Bob Carstens’ cases

Former Township Treasurer Bill Boltres has a lawsuit pending against VGT that alleges harassment and malicious prosecution. The Township is not a party to that case. The Circuit Court recently granted a motion by Planning Commissioner Bob Carstens to overturn a previous order that released his and others’ potential counterclaims against Meijer and its attorneys for their lawsuits against him. The Township took no position on that motion and is not participating in that court proceeding.

Welcome to Our New Trustees and Commissioners!

We would like to welcome and introduce to you several people who have assumed new positions with Acme Township:



Doris Boltres was appointed as Treasurer effective July 1 to fill the unexpired term of office vacated by Bill Boltres. Doris has served as our Deputy Treasurer since November 2004 and will be

able to apply her experience to keeping the Treasurer's office running smoothly through the busy summer tax collection and annual audit seasons until a new Treasurer is elected and takes office in November.

Ron Hardin has been a Planning Commissioner since December 2004. He was appointed by the Board as a Trustee to replace Wayne Kladder when Wayne was appointed to complete the unexpired term of Supervisor during Fall



2007. Ron is currently the state-mandated dual Board/Planning Commission member, holds the MSU Citizen Planner designation, and is trained in the role of County Planning and its relationship to municipalities, green infrastructure and the new Michigan Planning Enabling and Zoning Acts. Ron designs alarm fire suppression systems for Northern Fire & Safety, Inc. and has been an Acme resident for over 25 years. He is married with 2 children.



Robert Hopkins has been appointed to a 3-year term on the Zoning Board of Appeals expiring July 2010. Bob comes to us with extensive management experience he earned in the automotive manufacturing industry. He has been a Wellington Farms resident for about 3 years and is looking forward to contributing to the process of fair and equitable application of our Zoning Ordinances across the community.

Judy Oster has been appointed Deputy Treasurer effective July 10. Judy grew up on Lautner Road and has lived in the township for most of her life with the notable exception of several mission trips to Hungary with her

husband and 2 children. She brings many years of local banking experience to the job.

Jay Zollinger became a Planning Commissioner in December 2007 when he was appointed to fill

Wayne Kladder's unexpired term of office. Jay has over 40 years of experience in telecommunications management and consulting. He has served as a township election official for the past 4 years helped set up for the VASA for 6 years, and volunteers within the township with the Sweetwater Evening Garden Club and at the



Traverse Area District Library Childrens' Garden. Jay has attended most township public meetings held since 2003 and is currently working towards his MSU Citizen Planner designation.

Welcome to all of you, and thank you for your willingness to serve your community!

Community Calendar

Come to these great events right here in Acme Township this summer and fall!

Ongoing:

The Streamside Village Farmer's Market is held on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Stained Glass Cabinet Company on M-72. Local vendors offer a wide variety of locally-produced products, many of which are organic.

Special Events:

July 11-13	Chick-Fil-A Kyle Petty Charity Ride Across America - G.T. Resort & Spa
July 16 - August 3	Horse Shows By the Bay Equestrian Events - Flintfields (Bates Road)
August 3-4	TC Junior Golf Association Championships - G.T. Resort & Spa

Election Dates:

All Acme Township voting precincts are at the Township Hall. Polls are open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. Check with the Clerk's Office for important election-related deadlines

August 5	Primary Elections
November 4	General Elections
November 20	Newly-elected township officials take office

Do you have a special event taking place later this year? Contact Sharon Vreeland at 938-1350 or svreeland@acmetownship.org and we'll list it on the township website. Events occurring between January 1 - June 30, 2009 can be submitted prior to the end of November 2008 for inclusion in the December newsletter.



It has been my honor to serve as Acme Township Supervisor since September 2007 when the Township Board appointed me.

Today the issues for local governments are more complicated than ever and resources limited. Acme Township is the government closest to the people and provides critical services important to quality of life now and for our future. Some of the services Acme Township provides are fire service through the Metro Fire Department, community police service with a contract with the County Sheriff, sewer and water services through the Department of Public Works, and planning and zoning. As residents, this is how your local tax dollars are spent.

Revenue sources are limited and being reduced due to budget challenges at the state level. At the same time, the cost of operating our local government continues to rise. The Township is working harder and smarter to continue to provide the services that residents have grown to expect by working together with other

municipalities, improving technology when possible, and striving for continuous improvement. As with families facing a similar situation, this is challenging and we will continue to meet this challenge to ensure a balanced budget.

BUDGET

The 2007-08 fiscal year closed on June 30. For the third straight year we generated a surplus of revenues over expenditure for addition to our General Fund reserves, which are close to \$1 million. Our annual general operating budget is approximately \$800,000/year. Our auditors recommend at least a 3-6 month operating reserve, which we are well exceeding with our 1+ year reserve. Our budget for the 2008-09 fiscal year projects a surplus as well, with revenues and expenditures predicted to be comparable to last year as we continue to monitor spending carefully.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We continue to explore new ways to assist businesses so they are able to create Michigan jobs right here in Acme. One positive step in this direction is a Zoning Ordinance amendment adopted exactly one year ago that created uses "by right" in our business zoning districts. For the first time, there are a wide range of commercial uses that are approved after a

brief site plan review process by our Planning Commission alone, rather than a lengthier process involving both the Commission and Board. The amendment also provides for New Urbanist-style mixing of commercial and residential uses on commercial properties, which promotes walkability and may provide a wider range of housing price points in our community. Already three commercial uses by right have been approved.

INFRASTRUCTURE

On January 1, 2008, I became chairperson of the County Board of Public Works and chair of the DPW Sewer and Water committee. Acme Township will participate in a sewage capacity study to determine the sewage needs of our township for the next 10 – 15 years. Also, the septage plant has an ever-improving financial outlook. More people understand the need to regularly empty their septic tanks. The BPW has signed an 18-month agreement to bring wastewater from Bay Harbor, and the plant now is accepting grease from the many restaurants in the area.

There are many challenges, but we are committed to addressing each and every one of them with sound solutions that will continue to make Acme Township a great place to live, work and play.

How are Road Repairs Accomplished?

Sharon Vreeland, Township Manager

Many of you have called to discuss concerns about road conditions and seek help in getting them repaired. The need is real as demonstrated in the attached table. Any meaningful discussion about fixing them begins with a few basic facts:

- ◆ Property taxes DO NOT pay for road maintenance or improvement. They are funded through a \$0.19/gasoline gallon and \$0.15/diesel gallon tax. This is a fixed number of pennies per gallon - not a percentage. Decreasing fuel consumption due to increased efficiency and reduced purchasing leads to decreasing tax revenues for road repairs.

- ◆ Most road building materials and machinery require petroleum-based products. So, rising gas and oil prices cause construction costs to rise as road funding declines.

- ◆ The Road Commission pays for maintenance and repair of "county primary" roads. Very few township roads (parts of Five Mile, Bates and Yuba Roads) carry this classification.

- ◆ The Road Commission pays for maintenance of "county local" roads but may pay no more than 50% of repair or reconstruction cost - to which it is not required to contribute at all. Their current policy is to contribute 25% of project cost if funding is available in their budget.

- ◆ Funding for county local road repairs must primarily come from other sources such as additional millages or special assessment districts (SADs).

The township can create a SAD for a road unless 20% percent of abutting property owners petition against it. Or, owners of more than 50% of road frontage can petition for a SAD and the township can move forward unless a certain number

then petition against it. Township administration has traditionally preferred the latter method, feeling it's better to work with situations where improvements are desired rather than proposing projects and expenses that are not desired.

We have asked the Road Commission to prepare cost estimates to repair Holiday Hills-area roads. Later this summer you will receive a copy of the estimate for your road and an invitation to set up a neighborhood meeting to learn more about requesting a SAD.

For two years we have been working actively with East Bay Township to find a legal and equitable way to fund needed Holiday Road repairs. The preliminary cost estimate to repair Holiday Road east of Five Mile was \$1.5 million. Approximately 1,200 housing units depend on this road for access, but only approximately 140 are abutting property owners who could participate in a SAD. We need a fair solution we can propose to the property owners who may be affected before we proceed.


2007 Acme Twp. Road Rating Table

Road Condition	Miles	Percent
Very Good/Excellent	10.7	17.17%
Good	28.2	45.19%
Fair	14.6	23.31%
Poor/Failed	9.0	14.33%
Acme Totals:	62.5	100.00%

Acme Township
 6042 Acme Road
 Williamsburg MI 49690

www.acmetownship.org
 E-mail: acme@netonecom.net
 Phone: (231) 938-1350
 Fax: (231) 938-1510

Office Hours
 Monday - Friday
 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

<i>Board of Trustees</i>	<i>Township Staff</i>	
<p>Wayne J. Kladder, Supervisor wjktcm@gmail.com</p> <p>Dorothy Dunville, Clerk ddunville@acmetownship.org</p> <p>Doris Boltres, Treasurer bboltres@acmetownship.org</p> <p>Ron Hardin, Trustee rehardin@charter.net</p> <p>Paul Scott, Trustee</p>	<p>Deputy Treasurer (231) 938-6213 (work) (231) 938-9244 (fax)</p> <p>Sharma Zollinger, Deputy Clerk szollinger@acmetownship.org</p> <p>Sharon E. Vreeland, Manager svreeland@acmetownship.org</p> <p>John S. Hull, Zoning Administrator jhull@acmetownship.org</p> <p>Nancy Edwardson, Office Assistant nedwardson@acmetownship.org</p>	<p>Dawn Plude, Assessor dplude@acmetownship.org (231) 409-1827 Office Hours on Wednesdays</p> <p>Tom Henkel Parks and Maintenance Supervisor</p> <p>Ernie Keech, Sexton (231) 267-5735</p> <p>Deputy Mike Matteucci Community Policing Officer (231) 938-2583</p>
<p>Erick Takayama, Trustee etakayama@acmetownship.org</p> <p>Frank Zarafonitis, Trustee frankiez@chartermi.net</p>	<p><i>Planning Commission</i> Matthew Vermetten, Chair mvermetten@bfarlaw.com</p> <p><i>Zoning Board of Appeals</i> Joe Kuncaitis, Chair jkuncaitis@aol.com</p>	<p><i>County Commissioner</i> Larry Inman (231) 938-1418</p> <p>Regularly attends Board meetings</p> 

Monthly Public Meetings

All meetings are open to the public and made accessible to individuals requiring special assistance.
 Agendas are available at the township hall or via the website approximately one week prior to each meeting.

Twp. Board of Trustees:	Planning Commission:	Zoning Board of Appeals:
First Tuesday at 7:00 p.m.	Last Monday at 7:00 p.m.	Second Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Visit Acme's Website at www.acmetownship.org

THE OUTLOOK - July 2008

www.acmetownship.org
 49690
 Williamsburg, MI
 6042 Acme Road



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