

## Township Hall Update

For many years, we on the Portland Township Board have known that we are outgrowing our current location. COVID-19 and new regulations from the State of Michigan have finally pushed us over the line—a new hall is no longer a want, it has become a need. Surprisingly, many of our residents don't even know where our current hall is located, nor have they been inside it within the past decade. Many also ask, how it is that the Township Hall is located within the City of Portland instead of in our own township.

In 1984 when the Emergency Services Building was built on the site of the old Portland Bayou, the Portland Area Municipal Authority (PAMA) was formed and Portland Township moved into the 24' X 26' room in the southwest corner of the building. The hall also contains a 5' x 6' bathroom and an 8' x 16' storage room. In 1984 it was a step up from meeting at the Board members' homes, but 37 years later, it no longer fills our needs. A new hall will allow us to:

### Be more responsible to our residents

- The existing building is not **ADA compliant**.
- We need a **larger meeting space**. Most of the time we have very few residents who attend our meetings, but when we hold Public Hearings or Special Assessment District hearings, 624 square feet isn't enough space.
- Our current hall doesn't allow for **social distancing** during cold/flu seasons.
- We need **more parking**. There are just 11 parking spots at our current hall, barely enough to accommodate personal vehicles for our larger boards.
- Our current building was built in 1984 and is not **energy efficient**.
- A new hall, built on our own property, will give us **more control in the future**.
- The building we now use is in need of major repairs and renovation. It would be better to **spend our money on a building that we own**.

### Better serve the needs of our community

- The new hall will allow us to **hold elections in our own building**. Right now, elections are held at Westwood School, requiring the entire school district to close down each time we have an election.
- The Emergency Services Building where our current hall is located no longer has enough space for all of the entities that are using it. Both the **police and ambulance departments need more space**. Vacating our corner of the building would help alleviate those shortages.
- A new Portland Township Hall would provide **meeting space for Portland's senior citizens**.
- It would also be an option for **other non-profit organizations** that don't have their own buildings.

### Better serve the needs of the Township Board

- The current building **no longer suits the State-mandated rules for Election Day protocol**. Now that citizens can register to vote on election day, the Clerk

### Results of the Survey

A short survey was sent out with tax bills in July, and the same survey was also available online. The Township Board wanted to know how our residents feel about the new hall.

- **61% of the respondents think that a new hall is needed.**
- **80% of those think that the hall should be big enough to accommodate 100-200 people.**

Some of the proposed uses for the new hall are:

- **Family parties/events, blood drives, non-profit meetings/uses, craft shows, school/community events, funeral dinners, classes, etc.**

To be fair, several respondents were not in favor of the new hall, the primary reasons were:

- **The hall we have is sufficient.**
- **Government agencies shouldn't be in the business of renting out space for events.**
- **Tax dollars could be better used for roads and ditching.**

Hopefully, the information provided in this newsletter will explain the needs of the Township sufficiently so that we can get all of our residents on board. If you have any questions or concerns, we encourage you to attend our next meeting to talk to the Board about them.

**Don't forget! You can now pay your taxes online!**

#### CREDIT CARD



➤ Convenience Fee  
3% (minimum fee \$2.00)

#### E-CHECK

➤ Convenience Fee  
\$3.00 Flat Fee

To pay online go to [www.portlandtownship.org](http://www.portlandtownship.org)  
and click on **ONLINE PAYMENT**

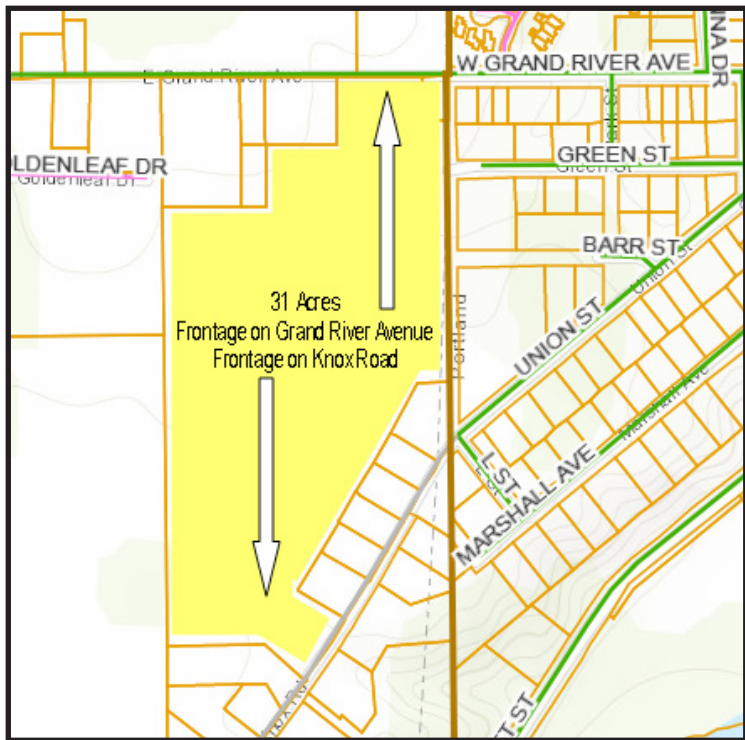
# Township Hall (continued)

needs to be in her office that day. The clerk also oversees the election and does troubleshooting. She can't be in two locations at once.

- We have 128 square feet of **storage space** at our current location, not nearly enough to store records, election machines and other election equipment. Westwood School has been generous over the years and allowed us to store all of these things at the school, but certainly the school will have a use for that space when we no longer need it.
- The new location will allow us to **relocate the monthly recycling to our own property**. Brian Wohlschied, from Municipal Supply, has let us use his property for the past three years, but we would much prefer to move this operation to our own land.
- The latest census shows that Portland Township grew by 14% over the past ten years. There will undoubtedly be a time in the not-so-distant future where we will need to provide the Township Board with **office space**.

On October 9, 2021, the Township Board purchased 31 acres of land adjacent to the western-most border of the City. The land fronts on Grand River Avenue, next to Tri County Collision/Glassmasters, and also fronts on Knox Road. The parcel is larger than is needed, and plans are underway to make the best usage of it, which could include selling off some parcels to other entities. The four-acre parcel on Barnes Road that the Township purchased in the spring will also be sold.

Everything is in the very early stages of planning, however, it should be noted that this new hall will not compete with existing Portland-area event centers. It will be large enough to accommodate all of the needs of Portland Township, and rental fees will cover the annual costs of the building; it will not be a for-profit venture.



The newly purchased property that will become the home of the new Portland Township Hall is located on Grand River Avenue, adjacent to Tri County Collision/Glassmasters. It goes through to Knox Road on the south.

Your thoughts and opinions are very important to us. Please call any of the Board members if you have questions or concerns. Or better yet, please attend any of our meetings and talk to us there. We will be forthcoming with all information and will communicate with all of you through our website, Facebook page, and newsletter as our plans fall into place.

**We will set aside time at our December 8 meeting, specifically for public comment. We invite you to attend. The meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.**

If anyone would like to tour our existing hall, please attend any of our meetings.

## Portland Township Board Meets 2nd Wednesday, 6:30 p.m.

### Supervisor, Chris Jensen

portlandtscjensen@gmail.com  
(517) 647-2479

### Clerk, Charlene Keilen

portownship@att.net  
(517) 647-6643

### Treasurer, Shelly Schneider

ptowntreas@gmail.com  
(517) 647-2075

### Trustee, Sue Vanlente

suevanlente@gmail.com  
(517) 575-8000

### Trustee, Mark Simon

mgsimon@wowway.com  
(517) 647-4892

### Planning Commission

**Meets first Wednesday of March, June, September and December at 7:00 pm**

Chair, Cindy Selden  
Secretary, Sue Vanlente (township liaison)  
Andrew Huhn  
Tony Dixon  
Ross Schneider  
Marcy Lay  
Evelyn Walkington-Jensen

**Zoning Board of Appeals Annual Organizational Meeting second Wednesday of each January at 6:00 pm, then as needed.**

Kris Bond  
Mark Simon (township liaison)  
Nic Schneider  
Tom Klein  
Vacancy  
Alternate, Vacancy

**Board of Review Meets in December, March, and July**

Chris Jensen  
Cindy Selden  
Nick Sandborn  
Matt Robertson  
Alternate, Vacancy  
Alternate, Keith Baker

### Zoning Administrator

Jeanne Vandersloot  
(616) 897-4242  
zoningadmin@msn.com

### Assessor

Jason Kohagen  
(989) 383-0306  
jkohagen@bsasoftware.com

### PAMA Board Representatives

John Baker & Marcy Lay

### PAFA Board Representatives

Chris Jensen & Bill Stegenta

### Library Board Representatives

Kathy Cook & Robert Weller

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