

FOCUS ON DANBURY TOWNSHIP - 2020 YEAR-END REVIEW

By Dianne Rozak, Danbury Township Trustee

www.danburytownship.com

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Danbury Township faced the same issues as the rest of the nation when the pandemic was declared. Serving the public required the ability to quickly adapt, specifically when the decision was made to no longer keep township buildings open to the public. We simply did not have enough staff to continually clean and disinfect areas where the public would visit. Fortunately the year proved productive even more so than planned. As we move forward into 2021 the staff at Danbury Township continues to excel at meeting the needs of our residents and visitors. Road Superintendent Brett Waldron currently has three full-time and two-part employees. The resignation of a fourth full-timer during 2020 enabled Brett's department to hire two individuals later in the year to work limited hours, but those hours exceeded that of one full-timer. These employees do an extraordinary job of keeping parks, roads and township property in superb condition. At the onset of the pandemic, the department was able to secure and distribute PPE equipment for their staff, for the police and for fire and EMS during the initial phase of the PPE shortage. The department handled 18 funeral services (the same as in 2019), assisted with unloading and delivery for the annual Wreaths across America program and mowed and trimmed the cemetery forty-five times. Township resident "free mulch days" were able to be held at the brush drop-off site and will continue this year. Brush and leaf drop-off continues to be well-received and two professional grindings were completed. Township clean-up weeks experienced the biggest change which proved highly successful. Two clean-ups were held instead of three, employees from Cyclone Services were contracted to handle the clean-ups and the days were changed to Tuesday through Saturday. Township staff alternated assisting as well as operating the backhoe during these weeks. The ability to have a full Friday plus half of a Saturday available during clean-up made a welcome difference to our residents. Our new rules continued to ensure this service was successful, efficient and safe. Two very similar clean-ups will be scheduled for the 2021 season. After the baseball and softball seasons were cancelled, the township athletic complex, as well as the other township parks, received general lawn maintenance. Although a controlled burn was unable to be scheduled at Meadowbrook, vegetation control was applied to the Phragmites at the marsh. A plan for repair of the dike fronting Bayshore Road on the west end of the property is being developed. At Lake Point Park both bridges were reconstructed after suffering years of weather and wear. The department spent 490 hours mowing township properties exclusive of many hours of trimming. Dead or hazardous trees as well as brush in the township road rights of way and parks have been removed and ditches were monitored and cleaned as needed and as a preventative maintenance measure. Seven roads received preventative maintenance applications, one road was paved, an erosion project was completed on Buck Road and the township acquired Regatta Passage Drive as a new road. Crack sealing was regularly applied where needed. An additional 300 tons of salt was obtained through the ODOT state purchasing program. An ODOT grant covered the entire cost of upgraded signs and accompanying hardware and the department finished the entire installation of these new materials. A new International snow plow has been ordered and is expected to be delivered in spring. A new salt storage building will be constructed in 2021 on the property of the police/maintenance building on Bridge Road.

The Police Department, managed by Chief Michael Meisler, has eight full-time officers and one K-9 named Kalahan who is handled by Officer Kyle Scott. Our officers provide protection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with seven marked and two unmarked vehicles. The officers drove 127,567 miles patrolling during 2020. Total incidents were 3,335. The department handled 18 incidents inside the Village of Marblehead and 167 within Lakeside. K-9 Kalahan assisted with 4 drug searches, 1 building search, 9 training events, 9 assists to Danbury Township and 1 assist to another agency. Police incidents with high amounts of attention included alarm calls, welfare checks, trespassing, animal and property complaints, lockouts, civil disputes, suspicious persons or vehicles, traffic complaints, assisting Fire and EMS and verbal traffic warnings. The department has a regular presence at Danbury Schools where a patrolman is available at certain times in an office provided by the school. The DARE program is taught by Officer LaMarca who conducts the classes with elementary students throughout the year. A 2 mil police levy was on the ballot during the March primary and passed with monumental support. The Police Department and the trustees are very thankful for the township-wide support for this important levy. The department is located at 419 S. Bridge Road. They offer secure document shredding and unwanted prescription disposal services as well as house watch and senior watch. Call (419) 732-2549 to make arrangements for these free services. The township's recycling bins are located on the south side of the police department property.

The Danbury Township Fire Department led by Chief Keith Kahler reported 848 incidents in 2020, just slightly down from the prior year. They were detailed as: 702 EMS calls, 34 fire calls, 27 motor vehicle accidents, 73 fire alarm activations, 8 carbon monoxide activations and 4 mutual aid calls. 700 people were transported. The department roster totals 40. Fire and EMS staff meet every Monday evening for training, department updates and continuing education sessions. A three-quarter mil levy was placed on the November ballot to enable a new central fire station to be constructed on East Harbor Road just west of North Shore Blvd. The levy passed with overwhelming support. The Fire & EMS staff along with the township trustees are very grateful to our residents for this successful passage. Construction plans are well underway.

The Danbury Township Zoning Department, singularly overseen by Kathryn Dale, AICP, continues to be the center for residential and business growth and expansion. 300 permits were issued which was 61 more than in 2019. Between 2010 – 2020, the average number of permits issued per year was 225. The month of June alone yielded 49 permits being issued, the most ever in a single month in the last 20 years. Single family home permits totaled 31. Commercial activity yielded 12 new commercial structures and additions for a total of 63,410 square feet. Permit fees were up by \$6,417 and included three new condominium buildings, 112 campground sites (v. 51 in 2019) and an increase in BZA cases. Residential improvements continued in large numbers (153) and included additions, fences, porches, decks, docks and accessory buildings and pools. This continually points to the never-ending trend of relocation and retirement to our area with improvements versus starting anew. The Board of Zoning Appeals heard 39 cases (8 more than 2019). 34 of those cases were heard remotely via the Zoom platform. The Zoning Commission heard 6, the same as 2019. Mrs. Dale responded to 8,939 calls, emails and in-person inquiries (1,820 more than in 2019), went on 1,087 site visits (202 more than in 2019) and sent 67 violation letters. There were 4 abatements and 5 court proceedings were held. Mrs. Dale works in conjunction with businesses seeking to locate or expand in the township and also works closely with commercial and residential developers, business owners and residential property owners to design projects that will add to the township's

economic, environmental and social well-being. In addition, she is in regular contact with the trustees to recommend and research the abatement of abandoned and dilapidated structures as the general fund budget allows. Sadly, on December 20 Mr. Richard Kracer passed away. He served 11 years on the Board of Zoning Appeals and 4 years on the Zoning Commission. His expertise will be greatly missed. For 2021 the department's goals include studying the impacts of "R-C" recreational commercial zoning districts on residential properties, reviewing accessory building height and size ratio to lot size and conducting training for Board of Zoning Appeals and Zoning Commission members.

Township newsletters are published three times each year – spring, summer and fall. They are available on the township's website along with other current and pertinent information. Our website is www.danburytownship.com. On November 20, 2020 the Rainbow Ridge memorial at Meadowbrook Marsh was dedicated. Detailed information about the memorial can be found on the township website under the Community link. The trustees continue to review all expenditures closely in order to provide the best service at the most reasonable cost. Despite township buildings still being closed, all employees and elected officials are available to the public via phone or email. All contact information and up-to-the-minute news is available on our website.

Trustees John Paul Dress and Dave Hirt join me in wishing everyone a very safe and productive 2021. Fiscal Officer Carolyn Adams and Assistant Fiscal Officer Susan Dress continue to work diligently to keep the financial side of township business up to speed and in compliance. We are all working very hard to meet the continual growing needs of your township. Please do not hesitate to call any of us with your questions and ideas.

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