




# A HUGE THANK YOU

to Landscape Forms,  
Austin Sand & Gravel and  
Ouding Greenhouses  
for their donations to the  
“Beautify Comstock Center” Initiative.



# Comstock Connect

## Township Newsletter



Charter Township of Comstock, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49048

*A Community with Opportunity*

# Summer 2021

### TOWNSHIP HOURS

Monday, Tuesday,  
Thursday  
8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m.  
Wednesday  
8:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.  
Friday  
8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.

### HOLIDAY HOURS

In observance of the  
upcoming holidays our office  
will be closed:  
Labor Day- September 6  
Veterans Day- November 11  
Thanksgiving  
November 25 & November  
26

### TOWNSHIP BOARD

#### **Supervisor**

Randy Thompson

#### **Clerk**

Nicole Beauchamp

#### **Treasurer**

Bret Padgett

#### **Trustees**

Jerry Amos

Terry McIver

Jason Knight

Clyde "Bub" Sherwood

### TRANSFER STATION

#### Summer

April 1- October 31  
Tuesdays & Thursday  
11:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m.  
Saturdays  
9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

#### Winter Hours Begin

November 1- March 31  
Thursdays  
11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Saturdays  
9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.



### Clerk's Corner

**Contact:** [clerk@comstockmi.gov](mailto:clerk@comstockmi.gov) 269-381-2360

**Name & Title:** Nicole Beauchamp, Clerk (1st term)

One of my goals as the new Clerk is to help inform the community about local level government and how things work. If you have not already, follow us on Facebook for an opportunity to ask questions and be in contact with your local officials.

This issue is about other boards that operate in our Township, what they do and who they are. A more detailed account of these boards can be found on our website at [comstockmi.gov/boards](http://comstockmi.gov/boards). You can direct questions about these boards or the issues they deal with to Jodi Stefforia, Community Development Director.

### Planning Commission (PC)

The PC is made up of seven appointed members on staggered terms of service. The Commission reviews and dis/approves site plans and special exception uses. The PC makes a recommendation to the Township Board on proposed rezoning, master plan amendments, plats/site condos and amendments to the zoning ordinance.

Currently, the Planning Commission Board consists of Jennifer Jones-Newton, Chair; Ron Sportel, Vice Chair; Allan Faust, Secretary; Randy Beister, ZBA Liaison/Member; Robert Pratt, Member; Patrick Hanna, Member; and Clyde (Bub) Sherwood, Township Board Liaison and Member.

The PC meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

### Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA)

The ZBA is comprised of five appointed members and two alternates. They make decisions regarding variances from zoning ordinance provisions, interpretations of the zoning ordinance and appeals of administrative decisions.

The board consists of Ronald Kuivenhoven, Chair; Steve Gazdag, Vice Chair; Randy Beister, Planning Commission Liaison/Member; Jodi Colby, Member; Patrick McVerry, Member and the two alternates are Robert Reilman and Marla Schwartz.

The ZBA meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month, as needed, at 4:00 p.m.

### Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

The DDA was formed in 2019. It is comprised of nine members, appointed by the Township Board. The DDA is busy at work on their "Beautify Comstock Center" initiative. If you have noticed the banners and planters lining the downtown streets, this is the work of the DDA. The board consists of Sandra Katje, Chair; Jonathan Koets, Vice Chair; Jeffrey Townsend, Secretary/Treasurer; Randy Thompson, Township Supervisor; Roger Tuiner, County Commission Liaison; Ryan Davis, Member; Bill Howson, Member; Matt Norman, Member; and Amy Dyer Taylor, Member.

The Board meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month. If you are interested in partnering with the DDA, please contact Jodi Stefforia, Community Development Director at (269) 381-2360.



## Cemetery Records Update

Do you or a family member have burial rights in one of our cemeteries? If so, please update your information with us so we can better communicate with you. Here are some ways you can reach us to update your information:

1. Complete the form below and mail it to us at **P.O. Box 449, Comstock, MI 49041**
2. Call us at **(269) 381-2360** with the updated information.
3. Email us at [clerk@comstockmi.gov](mailto:clerk@comstockmi.gov)



**Please print your answers below.**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Who purchased the burial rights in our cemetery? Please list name whether yourself or a loved one:

Are you the main contact person for future communications regarding this grave? Yes/ No If not you, who should be contacted? : \_\_\_\_\_

Which cemetery? Comstock/Maple Grove

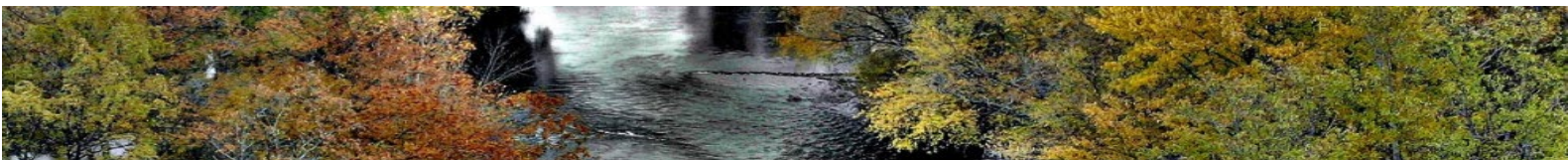
**Please remember to look at the posted signs as you enter the cemeteries for ordinance information.**

## Ways to Honor Your Loved Ones

Are you not sure what to do to honor your loved one while still complying with the cemetery ordinance? Consider some of these ideas:

1. Laminate pictures of and for your loved ones and securely fix them to the headstone so they do not fall or blow away as a way of honoring or sharing a memory. You can also do this with a card or a letter, just make sure it is covered and protected from the elements in a laminated or plastic pouch and affixed to the headstone.
2. Flowers that saddle the top of the marker via a headstone topper or a hook. Make sure it is securely fastened onto the headstone, so it does not fall off or blow away.
3. Small (non-glass) items affixed to the monument with a headstone safe adhesive. We suggest checking with a monument company to see what supplies they offer or recommend.
4. Coins have long been considered good luck and a well wish for prosperity. It is also a traditional way of honoring a veteran., Make sure the coins are securely fixed to the marker with an adhesive.
5. Planting a small garden, put potted flowers, or other meaningful memorabilia in your yard so you can have a daily reminder of your loved one.

Remember to read the posted ordinance signs as you enter each of the cemeteries. Prohibited items may be removed and disposed of. If they are pricey or meaningful to you, a public cemetery may not be the best place for them.





### Yeses and Nos of Grave Decorating



Many have asked us what types of items they can put on their loved one's graves and still be compliant with the ordinance. Here are examples of ways to honor your loved one in a decorative way while still allowing for ease of maintenance. Note that the items are either in a line with the headstone on a foundation or tied directly to the headstone, which keeps things off the ground. You could put artificial flowers in planters in place of live ones.

The following pictures illustrate why placing lightweight items such as artificial flowers and small wooden crosses directly in the ground can become a maintenance issue. If these items fall over, it's more difficult for the mowers to do their work, the items shred and disperse throughout the cemetery, causing litter and potential hazards to our maintenance crews.

Please remember that there are many families with loved ones buried at our cemeteries. Our cemeteries are a public place for everyone to visit graves and the ordinance applies to everyone.

Our brush/tree/plant cleanup of the cemeteries is continuing throughout the summer. We anticipate the clean up to be completed in the next few weeks.

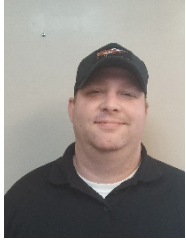




## New Employees at Township Hall

### Ordinance Enforcement Officers

We have two new ordinance enforcement officers at the Township. Tim Smith is full-time; Jordan Fighter is part-time.



**Tim Smith**

**Email:** [ordofficer@comstockmi.gov](mailto:ordofficer@comstockmi.gov)

I enjoy being outdoors doing things like watching or playing sports, hunting, fishing, scuba diving, camping, and hiking. I recently started my own custom woodworking business and spend any other free time I have working at the fire department where I live. I am very excited to work here in the Comstock community where I hope to have positive interactions with the residents as we work towards making Comstock an even better place to live and work.



**Jordan Fighter**

**Email:** [jfighter@comstockmi.gov](mailto:jfighter@comstockmi.gov)

Before coming to Comstock Township, I was a corrections deputy at Calhoun County Sheriff's Dept. I am currently a full-time student pursuing my graduate degree in clinical mental health counseling, and in my free time I enjoy spending time outdoors. I look forward to serving the Comstock community with dedication and positivity.

### Ordinance Enforcement Update

You might have noticed the orange tags on properties throughout the Township. These tags are not citations but are left as a courtesy notice that there is an ordinance violation on the property. These tags are being placed throughout the entire Township with the hopes that these violations will be corrected without further action from the Township. Being proactive in finding these issues and getting them corrected is for the benefit of the entire community. This process will take time and we greatly appreciate everyone's cooperation.

### Assessing Department

We also have two new contracted assessors. Kevin Harris is in office on Tuesdays, Lydia Paille is in on Thursdays. An assessor is always available by phone and email during the township's business hours.

### Assessing Department Update

The Assessors are responsible for estimating the market value of every property in the Township.

As we estimate the value of your property, we also make every effort to assure that your assessment is equitable to similar properties. Please feel free to contact the Assessor's Office at **(269) 381-2360** if you need assistance.



**Kevin Harris (Assessor)**

**Email:** [assessor@comstockmi.gov](mailto:assessor@comstockmi.gov)

**Lydia Paille (Assistant Assessor)**

**Email:** [asstassr@comstockmi.gov](mailto:asstassr@comstockmi.gov)





# Comstock Township

## Department of Fire & Rescue

### **Swimming Safety:**

Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related deaths among children ages 1-4. It is the third leading cause among children 19 and under. In 2018, 918 children under the age of 19 drowned and more than 7,000 were seen in the emergency room.

Comstock Fire & Rescue recommends some simple water safety tips at the beach or in the backyard pool to help you have fun in the sun.

Watch kids around pools and open bodies of water, give kids your undivided attention.

### **Safety Tips**

- Choose a water watcher. When there are several adults, choose one to watch the children that are in or around the water. Take turns, such as 15 minutes. After 15 minutes, select someone else to be the water watcher.
- Teach your children how to swim. Every child has a different skill level, if possible, enroll your child in swim lessons.
- Do not dive into the water until you are sure that the depth of the water is at least nine feet of water, and that there are no obstructions.
- Wear a personal floatation device (PFD or life vest) when in or around the water. Make sure the PFD fits the child according to the manufacture specifications. A PFD that is too big or too small can be just as dangerous as not having one at all.

When it is hot out, we head to the nearest lake or pool for fun and to cool off. However, you have your water fun, the most important thing is to enjoy it safely.

### **Comstock Township Firefighter's Memorial update:**

Everything is complete at the Firefighter's Memorial on Comstock Ave, next to Merrill Park, except the bronze statue of fallen Chief Ed Switalski, which we are still raising funds for. We are hoping to hold a Grand Opening and Dedication sometime this spring in conjunction with Merrill Park. Please stop by to look at the beautiful memorial.





## Comstock Township Department of Fire & Rescue



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### **Comstock Township Firefighter's Memorial**

Standing on the same historic site that was home to Comstock's Central Station for 60 years (1950-2010), the Comstock Township Firefighter's Memorial is a tribute to, and reminder of, the service and sacrifice made by members of the Comstock Township Fire Department—past and present. For nearly 100 years, they have bravely served their community with honor, dignity, and devotion.



Phase 1 of construction was completed August 2013 with the memorial featuring a walkway, memorial rock, and flagpole. This was only the beginning, however. Phase 2 of construction began in the spring of 2018 with designing of the new memorial site with Mike Onderlinde (Forget Me Not Landscaping) and Conrad Kaufman (Fence Row Studio), both local businesses within the township, and aggressive fundraising by our firefighters.

With the help of Kalamazoo Mortgage, we sold 50/50 raffle tickets at Growler's games, participated in the annual

Hero Salute Chili Cook Off and participated in the Eric Zapata EZ5K run to raise funds needed to begin the next phase of the project.

In May 2019, Conrad Kaufman with Fence Rows Studio began the mosaic tile wall in their studio, and we officially broke ground on July 15, 2019, with the poured wall forms going up. In October the mosaic mural was completed, however, we had to wait to complete the rest of the project until Spring 2020 due to the weather. In June 2020, we were able to complete the improved landscaping around the site including an irrigation system, trees, plants/shrubs, lighting along with new benches, and bronze plaques.

We are currently still raising funds for the bronze statue of fallen Fire Chief Ed Switalski. We need just over \$30,000 to complete this portion of the project. The Firefighter's Memorial was funded completely on public donors and donations. No township tax dollars were used or will be used for future developments of the memorial. We held a grand re-opening of the memorial in conjunction with the re-opening of Merrill Park on May 26, 2021.

Please visit our Facebook page (Comstock Township Firefighter's Memorial) which is dedicated to the memorial, for pictures of the completed project.

### **How to Donate to the Firefighter's Memorial**

To support the vision and aid in the future growth of the Comstock Firefighter's Memorial, we rely solely on the generosity of third-party donors. No public funds are used.

If you are interested in partnering with us to humbly honor the men and women of the fire service who have sacrificed and selflessly served their neighbors and communities, we would be very grateful if you would consider donating to the Comstock Charter Township Fire Department Memorial Fund.

Money donated to this fund is managed by the Comstock Charter Township and placed directly into an account designated solely for use for the Comstock Firefighter's Memorial. All donations are tax-deductible. To make an online donation, please go to the link below:

<https://client.pointandpay.net/web/ComstockTownshipFireDepartment>

### **Pave the Way to Honor**

Another way to support the Firefighter's Memorial is by purchasing a personalized, engraved paver brick to be placed at the memorial. Personalized bricks will allow local businesses, firefighters, as well as friends & family of the Comstock Fire Department to be recognized and become a permanent part of history.

Each brick you purchase helps fund necessary improvements, including ongoing landscaping of the memorial and the proposed bronze statue of fallen Fire Chief Ed Switalski. An application can be found on our website at [www.comstockfire.com](http://www.comstockfire.com)



### **Promotion and New-Hire Announcements:**

Congratulations to Rick Mack on his promotion to Captain. On July 19, 2021, the Comstock Township Board approved the promotion of Capt. Rick Mack to Station 9-1 after Capt. Dave Watson retired earlier this year. Mack has been with Comstock Fire & Rescue since May 2012. He was promoted to Lieutenant in July 2019. Capt. Mack plays an integral part of the department as a full-time employee, which includes overseeing the SCBA maintenance, rope rescue equipment and department training.

Congratulations to our newest probationary firefighters that were approved by the Township Board to join the department on July 19, 2021. We welcome back Part-time Firefighter Brendon Waterbury and Part-time Firefighter Darin Luchies to the department, along with are new hires, Devin Thomas, Riley Barnum, and Cody Roberts. This brings our roster back up to 39 members.

# Donate Blood In Memory Of Ed Switalski



On June 14, 2017, Comstock Township Fire Chief Ed Switalski was killed in the line of duty. Ed dedicated his life to the fire service and helping others and was known for his bravery and devotion to his family and community. He was very active in his community and could often be seen at sporting events throughout the county. Ed was always doing what he could to help others, and this is an excellent opportunity to honor his legacy while doing what he would do – help others.

## **Blood Drive** **Comstock High School**

2107 N. 26th Street, Kalamazoo

**Monday, August 9, 2021**  
**12:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.**

For an appointment visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter sponsor code: Comstock, or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).



**American Red Cross**

**[redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) | 1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767**

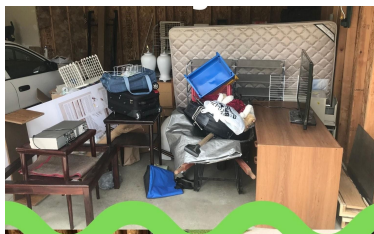


## 2021 Curbside Bulk Pick Up Services Beginning September 13, 2021

The Township of Comstock will have one curbside bulk clean up starting September 13th, 2021. Clean up is for residents that live within the Township limits only. All items must be curbside no later than September 12th.

Household doors and windows, furniture, mattress/box springs, carpeting, toys, miscellaneous rubbish/junk, and packaging will be accepted.

- Glass should be in a cardboard box or other sturdy container and taped shut.
- Carpets must be bundled in 4 ft or shorter length.
- Mattress/Box Springs must be wrapped.
- Nothing 2 people cannot safely pick up and place into a truck.



### The following items will **NOT** be accepted:

- Freon appliances such as refrigerators, freezers and dehumidifiers
- Electronics including computers, printers, monitors, and accessories
  - Televisions
  - Auto parts or engines
  - Tires
- Oil, Gasoline or antifreeze
- Batteries
- Fluorescent light bulbs
- Chemicals, paints, solvents pesticides, herbicides
- Other household hazardous waste
  - Concrete
- Iron or steel or cast iron bathtubs
- Stumps, yard debris, brush
- Medical Waste



Charter Township of  
**Comstock**

## Follow us on Facebook

@ Charter Township of Comstock  
Or scan our QR Code to stay up to date 😊



**Text “Comstock” to 888-777 to receive  
announcements, weather alerts and  
other notifications**

# BE YOUR REAL ID SELF



## MAKE A PLAN BY MAY 3, 2023

**Don't delay.** When the federal REAL ID law goes into effect, you'll need a REAL ID document to board domestic flights.

Make an appointment now at a Secretary of State office to turn your standard driver's license or ID into a REAL ID.



Learn more at  
[Michigan.gov/REALID](https://Michigan.gov/REALID)