

The Board of Trustees you elected in 2012 is midway through our fourth year in office and we continue to make measurable improvements in Township efficiencies and governance. This Annual Report will serve to present the State of the Township, based on a combination of facts, observations, and educated opinions.

MY MISSION

In my eighth year as your Supervisor, my mission continues: to ensure that the Board of Trustees and the Township staff preserve and improve Grosse Ile Township as one of our country's most desirable residential communities. As our population has not stabilized, we have much to do as long as there are empty homes, shops and classrooms on our island. So, with the support of your Board of Trustees, I will continue to seek and implement every means to develop and market those assets that distinguish Grosse Ile Township as a family's best destination to call home. We are all neighbors and stakeholders, so I need your inputs and advice on how to improve both government performance and our community's appeal.

LOOKING BACK...

Michigan's economic outlook continues to improve, and the loss of residents and revenues that had plagued our state has reversed, with, unfortunately, the exception of Wayne County. Here on Grosse Ile we survived some tough times that necessarily resulted in reductions in personnel and non-essential services. I hope you can appreciate that we are operating this Township with a minimum staff who somehow continue to provide those municipal services that residents of a major metropolitan area have come to expect. None of our current successes or future endeavors would be possible without their dedicated efforts. Supported by this exceptional staff, Grosse Ile's Board of Trustees is working hard to ensure our Township remains the most desirable residential community in Michigan. So let's reflect on what we have accomplished in the past year.

Once again we have been recognized as the Safest Place to Live in Michigan and one of the safest places to live in the entire country. Although no surprise to us residents, this title is wonderful news and certainly highlights one quality of living in Grosse Ile Township. Again, they issued the award based solely on reported crime statistics; we know there are many more aspects to safety in our everyday lives. I think we can agree that rapid response in a medical emergency, a rescue from the surrounding waters or ice, or just making our homes and businesses accessible during weather events are also safety concerns. Through the teamwork of the Police, Police Reserves, Fire and Rescue, and Public Services, we enjoy an exceptionally safe community for children, seniors, and everyone in between.

Beyond being Michigan's safest place to live, we have increased our recreational opportunities as another of our quality of life goals. Volunteer efforts, coordinated by both the Township staff and non-profit organizations, continue to improve our secluded waterfront park on the Detroit River, Grosse Ile's only public beach. Also on the waterfront, island volunteers continue to develop a kayak launch in our marina complex, with a phenomenal response. Our Recreation Department has found grant funding to dramatically improve this resource, and this spring we will open a world-class river front launch site that will be universally accessible, a long desired addition to our recreational offerings.

Continuing the subject of water access, the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, which surrounds the southern end of our island, promises to preserve the beauty and tranquility of our natural wetlands in perpetuity. We should all consider this refuge our asset, and, working with the Fish and Wildlife Service, we will continue to secure additional access so we can all enjoy the wonders that the refuge has to offer.

We would be skating on our all-seasons rink if we had colder temperatures, having completed some deck preparations earlier this fall. Fund raising efforts will continue to provide more capabilities and programs for this

potentially very popular addition to Grosse Ile recreation.

Our Bike Path Advisory Committee continues to evaluate maintenance requirements and expansion opportunities for our nationally recognized system of walks and paths. Hopefully future funding will allow us to connect to the Downriver Linked Greenways network of bike path and trails, providing an avenue (pun intended) to a more active lifestyle for our residents.

In addition to our recreational offerings, we have additional community activities to enjoy. I am pretty sure all would agree that Island Fest continues to be even more exciting, the product of an energetic, dynamic Festival Commission. We won't have to wait much longer to see what surprises are in store this year.

We had the privilege of hosting the Detroit Institute of Arts "Inside / Out" exhibit, where world famous paintings were displayed throughout the Island for you to enjoy. I was humbled to learn that the DIA is the only art museum outside of Europe that brings art to the community, and we were that community.

We completed our first year of residential road repair partnership with Wayne County and made significant improvements throughout the township. We are prepared to continue for another year, but we are cautious about the anticipated funding – we'll wait and see.

And last, I am pleased to report that we have completed the restoration of the east side of Hangar One and our Airport/Commerce Park manager has the space leased to a business owner. I'm very proud that we made the effort to preserve the other side of our historic building and will be able to generate revenues from it, revenues that will enable us to make improvements to the park and attract even more economic activity.

AT THE MOMENT...

I'm not sure enjoyed is the proper term, but compared to our previous two winters this one has been relatively mild. Hopefully we will be spared the road damage and water main failures that accompanied the temperature extremes of the past two winters.

Your board has just finished our annual budgeting marathon, all of us working with the manager and finance director to develop a balanced, responsible budget. I wish I could report a budget surplus, but we had to make some difficult decisions.

We began this year effectively balanced, but were hit with unanticipated expenses that required reaching into our reserves. The parking lot at Township Hall, used by residents and visitors alike, was severely damaged by the previous brutal winters. We decided to make substantial repairs rather than patches, giving us a safer access with better drainage control to reduce future damage.

Some minor housekeeping turned into major repairs at Township Hall, a structure over 75 years old. Undetected moisture was causing mold and corrosion problems, problems we decided to permanently resolve. While the repairs to both the parking lot and Township Hall were expensive, they would eventually be much more expensive had we deferred them to a future budget.

We are all ware of the spectacular fire that destroyed the maintenance facility at Waters Edge. In replacing the facility, we decided to relocate it to a much more suitable location offering more safety for employees and freeing up areas for more efficient usage. This move was also somewhat costly, but was clearly the right thing to do.

I hope you agree with me that we took the challenge and turned repair into improvement. These improvements, although initially more expensive than patchwork, will provide Grosse Ile with assets that should serve for decades to come. Our planning efforts will preclude future residents and officials from reflecting on our work and

wondering 'what were they thinking?'

I also want to add my personal thanks to the Township staff for their resilience and dedication to service. When directed to vacate Township hall during the initial portions of the mold remediation, the entire staff relocated to the newly vacant restaurant at Waters Edge, set up shop as best they could, and went back to work. Service to the residents was interrupted for less than a day while we set up phone and internet lines, otherwise we were business as usual.

Beyond maintaining existing assets, we have some new items to report. We are developing a new smart phone "app" or application (we used to call them programs) that will enable us to keep you up to date on all that is happening in your community. Public safety will be able to notify you immediately of 'need to know' events – road closures, water main repairs, bridge openings, etc. We will also be partnering with our school administration to help push out school related notifications, hopefully making life a little easier for all the parents on the island.

An operator is refurbishing the restaurant at Waters Edge, promising new dining and entertainment opportunities - we're all looking forward to sampling their offerings at the grand opening later this spring. This will also be your chance to see the new roof currently being installed, a roof that will keep our restaurant attractive and secure well into the future.

And lastly, I wish I could report that we had finally resolved the situation with the Reo Road apartments, but we are limited to the legal process. Whether they are restored to occupancy or demolished, we will not look away while this dangerous and unsightly condition exists.

LOOKING FORWARD...

A continuing, and justifiable, concern of Grosse Ile residents and visitors is the condition of our roads. Although residents rejected an opportunity to fund our own road repairs, we still expect to receive another \$500,000 from Wayne County to continue the repair of residential roads within the Township. We are all aware that transportation funding throughout the state is in turmoil, we can only take a wait and see approach for the rest of our deteriorating roadways. We will do the best we can with the dollars available.

I am optimistic about our ability to deliver water to your home based on our inclusion in the Great Lakes Water Authority, now affording us some control over our supplier. Our DPS Commission has begun preparations to replace the last of our aging water mains, some over eighty years old, employing least disruptive methods and utilizing awesome new technologies. This project will improve the flows and firefighting capability throughout the east side of Grosse Ile and adjacent neighborhoods since it will be completing a 12-inch diameter water main loop that encircles the entire island.

Another ongoing challenge will be continued evaluation and enforcement of our property maintenance ordinances. The deteriorating appearance of some of our residential neighborhoods, a condition many of you brought to our attention, has been largely reversed. I am convinced this effort reflects the desires of the community, considering we have closed over 300 violations and have not had to collect a single dollar in fines. Now that we are all aware of our responsibilities and are seeing improvements, I invite your thoughts on any changes to these 'good neighbor' ordinances you might think are more appropriate for our community.

I'm sure you have noticed, we have far too many empty businesses on Macomb Street. In order to try to reverse this trend, we will be bringing on a part time Downtown Development Authority Director, someone with experience in identifying and attracting those businesses that will enhance our community.

Our Recreation Department continues to seek – and be awarded - grants and other sources of funding to expand

our capabilities, including improvements to the Activities Center at Centennial Farm and a new lift van for transportation.

A challenge that must be considered is the future direction of our community. We continue to lose population (although nowhere near the losses of a few years ago) and are perilously close to the 10,000 threshold. Correspondingly, we are losing enrollment in our school system and businesses are closing on Macomb Street. All measurements indicate that, instead of improving, property values remain flat – an objective indication that there are too few families interested in making Grosse Ile their home. We have made all the appropriate reductions in government staff and services in response to this shrinking population, so let's work together to reverse the decline. Tell me what you want for your Township's future, but I hope I am not alone in my assessment: no community ever cut its way to prosperity – we need to grow! Working together, we can, and will, make Grosse Ile an even more desirable place to live, work and play.

With that, we should all be very optimistic about our future, so let me close by asking that we all commit to making this the community we want our friends to discover and to join us, the community we are proud to call home, and the community we want to leave for our children. Thank you again for your confidence, your support, and your participation.

Best wishes to all,

Brian Loftus

Supervisor