

ANNUAL REPORT 2019

The Board of Trustees you elected in 2016 is midway through our third year in office with the primary responsibility of governance; bringing your concerns to the staff for action and ensuring the Township provides the services you expect. This Annual Report will serve to present the State of the Township, what we, your Township Staff and elected officials, have accomplished throughout the past year, what we are doing now and our plans for the near future.

MY MISSION

This will be my eleventh year as your Supervisor; my mission remains unchanged from day one: 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. 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 along with your Board I will continue to seek your inputs and advice on how to improve both government performance and our community's appeal.

LOOKING BACK...

Another busy year for all of us at Township Hall, keeping Grosse Ile Michigan's best place to live. Our Township Manager has an extensive list of accomplishments, most not glamorous or exciting but absolutely necessary to keep the Township running smoothly. You will find them listed in his report; I'll just cover some of the highlights and attempt to give credit where credit is due.

The mission of Township Government is to provide service, so I will begin with our Department of Public Services. Our major public works project, the West River Road water main replacement, went very smoothly, and we should all consider it quite an accomplishment. The teamwork between by our Department of Public Services, our DPS Commission, Engineering consultants at CE Raines and the numerous contractors all contributed to the success. The new high density polyethylene water main is virtually indestructible and will provide reliable water for household use and fire suppression for at least the next century. In addition, we replaced sewer lines and storm drains, and partnered with Wayne County to repave the road. I am proud to announce that our DPS was awarded an American Public Works Association award for that project. At the same time, almost unnoticed, a portion of East River Road was also repaved by the County. In all, we received nearly 1.2 million dollars in road funding from Wayne County this past year.

Based on this project and her other proven performance as Grosse Ile's Interim Director, we promoted Ms. Lorinda Beneteau to the position of Director of Public Services, one of the very few females to lead a public service department in the state – well deserved!

We have some new faces in our Police Department – Chief Mark Warnick, along with Deputy Chief Brent Hardin and Lieutenant Ken Pelland compose our new command staff, following the retirement of Joe Porcarelli and Robert Bow. I am also pleased to introduce Susan Dalpiaz, Grosse Ile's first female police officer.

After thoroughly considering all available alternatives, we signed a thirty year contract with the Great Lakes Water Authority. We approached this with justifiable trepidation, because the former alternative,

the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, presented an uncomfortable number of concerns. We are convinced that the GLWA is well managed and capable of providing affordable water to Grosse Ile for the duration of the agreement.

I was disappointed to learn of the closing of the PNC Bank; the last thing we need is another empty storefront on Macomb Street. Our Downtown Development Authority director, Angela Sukockas, has been working to facilitate new offerings in our business district, including the Public Service Credit Union and Tastee Freez. She is also planning several events to bring, and keep, people 'downtown.'

Island Fest continues to grow in attendance, offering something for everyone! Great planning and participation (along with perfect weather) resulted in a community festival. Yes, traffic was a bit hectic – as always, especially after the spectacular fireworks show, but our Police and Police Reserves got everyone, residents and visitors alike, in and out safely for a truly memorable weekend. Island Fest 2019 opens in two months!

AT THE MOMENT...

I'll begin with the latest news, Grosse Ile Township has once again been named Michigan's safest community; the National Council for Home Safety and Security just released their findings for 2019. I hope none of us ever take this status for granted - we are all responsible for this status, from supporting our police force (and the entire public safety team) to looking after our neighbors and neighborhoods. Well done, everyone!

My thanks to the Nature and Land Conservancy again this year. Sunrise Park, our only waterside retreat, is being transformed from a hidden gem into a destination! The park will reopen soon, drop in and see what they have been up to and prepare to spend more time there – or at the Gibraltar Bay Unit of the international Wildlife Refuge, also stewarded by the Conservancy

At last, progress in the demolition and remediation at the former McLouth / Detroit Steel Company site across the channel in Trenton. While many are not happy that the property will most likely be returned to some level of industrial activity, the blighted eyesore will be gone and the contamination will be removed. This will be a lengthy, tedious process with intense oversight by both the Environmental Protection Agency and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. I will do my best to keep you informed of any developments regarding this project, particularly those that affect our air and water quality or those that might impact the viability of the Grosse Ile Toll Bridge. With that said, please consider rumors from unaccountable sources as just that - rumors. We will keep you informed of every development by every means available. We are accountable to you.

LOOKING FORWARD...

All rumors aside, we are conferring regularly with Wayne County on the status of our bridges and now have a proposed schedule for repairs. Our most critical bridge, the East River Road causeway to Meso Island, is first on the list, with replacement to begin very soon. Only one lane will be available during construction, so expect some delays but, in the mean time, please cross the bridge slowly – the 5 MPH signs are for your safety and the bridge's integrity.

The next project will be the support piers for the Grosse Ile Parkway bridge. We recently learned that federal funds are available for the repair of this bridge and that the pier reinforcement will be a design-

build project to begin this summer. Despite even more bizarre rumors, the County has again advised us that no long term closures are expected for this portion of the repairs.

Continuing our infrastructure improvement program, this year we will begin a project along Parke Lane north of Bridge Road. You may recall we suffered numerous water main breaks in that area due, in part, to aged pipes and a failed Pressure Reducing Valve. Like the West River Road project, this main will ensure more residents have reliable water to their homes and hydrants.

In April I will be off to the Michigan Townships Association conference. These professional retreats give me the opportunity to learn from my fellow Supervisors and the MTA instructors so that I can do a better job for you. My immediate quest will be for guidance on our approach to recreational marijuana. Possession of recreational marijuana, or 'marihuana' as it is spelled in legislation, is now legal in Michigan, but the yet –to-be-finalized legislation will still allow communities to 'opt-out' of allowing commercial sales within their borders. The challenge for Grosse Ile, as well as many communities within the state, will be to honor the will of the electorate while trying to avoid the dismal results that Colorado has experienced. As a cautionary note, while legal in both Michigan and Ontario, possession of marijuana while crossing the international border remains a criminal offense under federal law, including possession on vessels on "boundary waters" such as the Detroit River.

We all agree that our roads are in terrible condition, so road funding, one of Michigan's most misunderstood financial responsibilities, will remain at the top of everyone's list of priorities for the foreseeable future. Unfortunately, with so many new faces in Lansing, there is little agreement as to how to generate the necessary dollars. This is much more than just a funding issue, with specifications, weight limits and a number of other considerations on the table. Consider also that within the Township we have 12 internal bridges in addition to the aforementioned Meso Island bridge, all very expensive to repair and maintain, some in better condition than others.

I wish I could finally and completely quash the forecasts of this Township's impending financial doom. Municipal finance, including pensions and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEBs) is very complicated, particularly with actuarials and other costs and liabilities changing almost hourly. Our Township – yours and mine – is well managed and efficiently operated with limited resources and minimal staff. We are in compliance with the letter and intent of all current legislation, no matter how poorly crafted. Thanks to shared sacrifices, we have recovered from Michigan's Great Recession and are planning for a brighter future, albeit with a guarded restraint

Working together, we can, and will, make tomorrow's Grosse Ile an even more desirable place to live, work and play. We should all be optimistic about our future, so I'll close by reminding everyone, once again, that we all have a responsibility to make 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 and grandchildren. And remember, if you're lucky enough to live on Grosse Ile, you're lucky enough. Thank you again for your confidence, your support, and your participation.

With my Best Wishes
Brian Loftus
Supervisor