

# Dexter Village Update

Winter 2014

Volume 14, Issue 1

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Your email address will remain confidential.

## Happy 2014!



Hello fellow residents. On behalf of the entire Village Council and our Village staff, we hope everyone is managing to stay warm and that your families are safe and well as you begin the new year. There is no doubt that 2014 will surely be remembered as one of the snowiest and coldest of recent memory.

As you will read in the following newsletter articles, we are doing everything we can to keep the Village accessible and safe for our residents, business owners and visitors during this winter of winters. There is a lot happening and a lot of projects and effort planned for 2014 that we want to update you on. I hope you enjoy reading this edition of the newsletter and look forward to seeing you around our town!

Shawn Keough, Village President

## Improving Our Financial Health



With all that has happened in southeast Michigan over the past few years, you have likely read or heard about one community or another that is experiencing pension related or retiree health care related financial challenges. The economic downturn in 2008 and the corresponding declining property values have created revenue shortfalls for many communities and provided a very clear picture of the financial challenges facing many communities today. It

would be great if we could tell you that the Village doesn't have any of those problems. The truth is, like most Michigan communities, we do have pension liabilities and retiree health care obligations (often referred to as Other Post Employment Benefits or OPEB).

The highlight of this message is that the Village has been very proactive since 2008 in addressing these problems. To paint the Village's picture, in 2008 we were facing an unfunded liability (i.e. a shortfall) of nearly \$1,100,000 in our Village employee pension fund. In other words, we were only

67% funded and needed to find or earn through the market \$1,100,000 in order to be considered fully funded. Through cooperation with our employees, we were able to make one large philosophical change and three major structural changes to our employees' pension plan. The philosophical change is from the longtime notion that the Village is solely responsible for funding an employee's pension plan to the new philosophy that employees are primarily responsible for helping save and fund their future retirement plans.

~Continued on Page 2 ~

## Improving Our Financial Health (Continued)

This was a major acknowledgement by our employees and it opened up the opportunity to get healthier. Structurally, the Village closed its Defined Benefit Plan to new employees and now offers a more common type of retirement savings vehicle called a Defined Contribution plan (i.e. the government version of a 401k program). The Village is still responsible to those employees that remain in the Defined Benefit program, however employees in both programs now contribute 5% of their wages toward their retirement savings. In the Defined Contribution plan, the Village pays a match of 2.5% on top of the 5% saved by the employee. The third structural change involved a concession by our union employees to reduce the benefit multiplier (from 2.25% to 2.0%) in their defined benefit formula going forward from 2011. The combination of these 3 structural changes has reduced our unfunded liability by nearly \$600,000. As of the date of our last pension fund valuation, the fund contained \$2,764,508 which means the Village is 85% funded and only has a liability of approximately \$490,000. While we still have ground to make up, we have improved our financial health significantly and are focused on making it even healthier. Many thanks to our employees for their role in this.

Providing retiree health care for our current and past employees was a promise that most communities made many years ago. The Village of Dexter was one of the communities that made that promise. With the rising cost and unpredictability of health care costs, that promise is not one that most communities find sustainable forever. Unfortunately, while making those promises to our employees over the past 30 plus years, we did not save any money to pay for those obligations in the future. In 2008, an actuarial analysis performed for the Village estimated that the Village's retiree health care obligations would be approximately \$1,600,000 going forward. At that time, the Village was "paying as we go" for any retired employee's health care benefits that we needed to provide. In an effort to turn the situation around, the Village Council voted to take \$160,000 in general fund reserves and set it aside in a restricted investment account

specifically designed to grow and to be available for future retiree health care costs. Although we hadn't saved any money in the past, we knew that if we didn't start doing things differently, it would ultimately affect (threaten) the amount of services that our current tax structure supports. A few years later, two significant things on parallel tracks took place. In 2011, the Village received an updated actuarial based on some different assumptions, as required by our government accounting standards, which predicted that our future obligation was actually closer to \$4,000,000, not \$1,600,000 as originally predicted. This higher prediction of our future obligation was quite a shock from the original actuarial, but it reinforced the fact that this challenge wasn't going away and that we needed to make some changes. The second thing that took place was the result of a union concession. The Village was able to eliminate from its contract the promise of retiree health care to new employees. While removing this obligation to new employees from the contract didn't make the future obligation any less, it capped the number of employees that the Village needs to hold its promise for. The Village is currently paying retiree health care benefits to 4 retired employees. Since 2008, the Village has invested money each year from across our different funds into the restricted investment account. We currently invest \$95,000 each year and I am proud to share that as of December 31, 2013 the account has grown to over \$560,000 that can be used for this future obligation. We are getting healthier.

We obviously have a long way to go before we are completely clear of these long term obligations, however, I thought it was important for our residents to know and understand how we are facing and addressing these challenges. Over the next few months, we will be establishing the budget for the upcoming 2014-2015 fiscal year, which begins on July 1, 2014. I expect that the budget will include funding to help address these long term obligations. Please don't hesitate to contact any member of your Village Council or our staff with any questions or suggestions. We feel it is very important that we communicate information like this to you. We would love to hear from you and welcome your feedback on how we are doing. Shawn Keough, Village President

# Spring 2014 DEXTER STREET TREES Resident Cost-Share Program



*Trees in the street right-of-way (lawn extension) in front of your home qualify for this program.*

This is an opportunity for residents to have a dead, dying or diseased tree removed and replaced or a new tree planted in their lawn extensions. **Your cost to participate in this program is \$135.**

This \$135, plus approximately \$100 per tree from the Village's restricted tree fund, covers the purchase and installation of a 2-2½ inch caliper tree and includes a one-year warranty. Once the tree has been planted, it is the buyer's responsibility to maintain and care for that tree, including watering it diligently during the first three years, especially during droughts. This year we are providing tree watering bags to help you with irrigation. Additional tree care information is available from the Village.

If a tree does not survive its first year, it is the responsibility of the purchaser to notify the Village prior to expiration of the warranty period.

A selection of different tree species will be offered for sale each year through this program. The choices will vary from year to year. Five different species are available this year.

**The following species are available for planting in spring 2014:**

- **Sugar Maple (Green Mountain)**  
*Acer saccharum*
- **Magyar Ginkgo (male only)**  
*Ginkgo biloba*
- **Thornless Honeylocust (Skyline)**  
*Gleditsia triacanthos*
- **Japanese Zelkova (Greenvase)**  
*Zelkova serrate*
- **Red Oak**  
*Quercus rubra*

If there are overhead wires where your new tree will be planted, contact the Village for species selection information. It is important that there be a variety of species in the Village tree population so that disease or insect infestation such as the Emerald Ash Borer does not kill all the trees within one neighborhood.

Pictures of the trees and information on their characteristics and culture are available on the internet at [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org). Choice of species will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The Village reserves the right to make the final selections of trees for specific locations, based on the purchaser's preferences, availability and conditions at the particular planting site.

**To participate, just follow these steps:**

1. Determine the location for your new tree.
2. Choose your preferred species (3 choices per tree).
3. Calculate the price of the tree order (\$135 per tree) then fill out the order form.
4. Submit the completed form and payment for your new tree to the Village by **Friday, March 28, 2014.**

Earliest orders have the widest choice in trees.

**Mail your order to:**

Village of Dexter – Street Tree Replacement  
8140 Main Street  
Dexter, Michigan 48130

**Or drop it off at:**

Village Offices – Street Tree Replacement  
8123 Main Street  
PNC Bank – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

**Spring Planting**

Trees will be planted in April or May. You will be notified of the planting and given a flag to place at the location you wish to have the tree planted and/or removed.

**If you have questions, please contact the Community Development Department at 734-426-8303 ext. 15**

**ORDER FORM**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Phone</i>
Select three alternate species for each tree. If you are ordering more than one tree, choose alternates for each.		
<b>TREE #1</b>	<b>TREE #2</b>	
Alt 1 _____	_____	Price/tree: \$135.00
Alt 2 _____	_____	Order: _____ trees x \$135 = _____
Alt 3 _____	_____	Payment enclosed: _____
Do you have trees that need to be removed? _____ How Many? _____		
Approximate trunk diameter: _____		

***Thank you for your participation!***

## Update from the City Charter Commission



The Charter Commission was sworn in on November 18, 2013 by Village Clerk Carol Jones (who also

serves as our secretary). The Commission has been meeting every Wednesday evening (with the exception of holidays) since then. We have a legal ‘window’ of 36 months to finish the task but we quickly decided that we could have the Charter ready for the ballot in November of this year. There is a gubernatorial election at that time so we should have a maximum turnout and thereby get a solid and lasting opinion of the cityhood process.

We are using a national model for a city charter, from the National Civic League, as our base and supplementing

that with information from eight charters from Michigan cities similar to us. We also invite current officeholders to serve as resources as we work on sections related to their roles. A lot of what we do is limited by State law. We have an attorney present about half of the time and he ultimately reviews all of our draft language.

We are using a three step process where we review a section and agree to adopt the model charter language, or we ‘borrow’ better language from a neighbor or we write our own version that speaks to a unique local concern or circumstance. We call this the First Reading. When we finish a section we drop back and review it in a more finished form. We call this the Second Reading.

When we have finished all of the sections we will commence

a Third Reading of the whole document to make sure that we have not left anything out or doubled up on any topics in some conflicting manner. The Village attorney will then make his final review before we agree that the document is ready to be sent on to the State Attorney General for his approval to place it on the ballot. Then it will be up to you – the citizens of Dexter – to make your decision.

Our meetings are open to the public and the documents provided to the Commissioners, our draft sections, minutes, packets, and agendas are posted on the Village web site. The Commissioners are working very well together as a group. If you choose to attend a meeting we think you will be impressed with the openness and thoroughness of the discussions. Two opportunities

for public comment are provided on each Charter Commission agenda. At the beginning of the meeting, any attendee who informs the Village Office in advance of the meeting can speak for 5 minutes (10 minutes if representing a group). At the end of the meeting, any attendee can speak for 5 minutes (10 minutes if representing a group). Attendees with questions during the meeting can request to be recognized by the Chair. Written comments are placed in the packet of information distributed to each Commission member prior to every meeting. Written comments can be submitted to the Village at any time either by dropping them off at Village offices or by emailing them to [cnicholls@DexterMI.gov](mailto:cnicholls@DexterMI.gov).

### Proposed Schedule for Upcoming City Charter Commission Meetings (as of February 26, 2014)

- February 26: Taxation
- March 5: Special Assessments/ Borrowing
- March 12: Purchasing/Public Utilities
- March 19: General Provisions/ Transition
- March 22, 2014: Public Hearing on the completed sections at 2 pm at the Dexter District Library
- March 26: Charter Amendments
- April 2: Full Charter Review
- April: Final Public Hearing
- May: Draft Charter Submitted to Attorney General
- November 4: Charter Election

Completed drafts available online:

- Preamble
- Powers of the City
- City Council
- Administrative Services
- Financial Management
- Elections

[www.DexterMI.gov/city-charter-commission](http://www.DexterMI.gov/city-charter-commission)

## The Village Welcomes New Employees



Last fall, the Village lost a valued and long-time employee in Allison Bishop, the Community Development Manager, who decided to leave government service in order to work in the private sector. After an extensive search, the Village is pleased to welcome our highly qualified new Community Development Manager, Michelle Aniol.

Michelle is responsible for managing, directing and supervising community development activities, specifically zoning administration, planning, and development. She serves as the liaison to several Village Commissions and Boards including the Planning Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Tree Board. Michelle can be reached at [maniol@DexterMI.gov](mailto:maniol@DexterMI.gov) or 734-426-8303 x15.

Over the past few years several retirements in the Public Utility Department have occurred. To fill these positions the Village has welcomed Scott Maurer, Eric Hartman and Tim Stewart who bring years of experience in their field to the Village. The responsibility of the Public Utility Department is operation and maintenance of our water and sewer system.

## Thank You DPW!



Sometimes we get so comfortable in our daily routines that we forget to recognize and understand that there are people working behind the scenes to make our lives easier. Our Department of Public Works staff deserves special recognition this winter for the countless hours that they have spent plowing and salting our

roadways, sidewalks, parking lots and alleys.

President Keough, Village Council and staff would like to recognize Kurt Augustine, Butch Gross, Todd Viebahn and Bruce Whitley for their dedication, commitment and effort. They get up early, they work extended shifts, they work on weekends and holidays.

We feel that we have one of the best snow response teams in Washtenaw County and we wanted to say thank you to these 4 individuals for not only doing their job, but doing it so well. If you see Kurt, Butch, Todd or Bruce driving around in the snow, please don't crowd the plow, but be sure to give them a wave of appreciation. Job well done guys!

## Snow, Snow and More Snow



We would like to thank our residents and business owners

for your cooperation during the large snow storms and cold temperatures we have experienced this season.

During a snow storm the roads are generally given the following priority: main roads (Central, Baker, Main, Broad), local/subdivision streets, alleys and parking lots. During this time it is critical that vehicles are removed from the streets so that they can be cleared. Once the roads are open, the village crews work on clearing out

intersections, cleaning sidewalks/paths, and relocating snow piles.

Sometimes it is necessary to go back around and push the snow completely off of the roadway to prepare for an upcoming snow storm or ensure that melting snow can flow into the storm water system. Several times this year, this procedure has caused driveways and sidewalks that were shoveled to become snow covered once again. We understand that this is a significant inconvenience for residents/business owners and are reviewing our practices to make sure this

is only done in limited circumstances.

Please remember that it is the responsibility of the property owner to remove snow from the sidewalks adjacent to their property. (It is against Village Ordinance to shovel the snow into the street or onto a neighbor's property.)

In commercial districts snow must be cleared within 4 hours of snow cessation and in residential districts snow must be cleared within 48 hours of snow cessation. If de-icing chemicals are required pick types that are less harmful to the environment and to pets.

We also request that you please help the fire department by making sure that fire hydrants around your home or business are cleared of snow, and accessible and visible from the street as soon as possible after a snow storm. Every second counts in an emergency situation.

The Village Department of Public works strives to keep public areas, such as the Mill Creek Park boardwalk and stairs, free of snow and ice, however they can still be slippery. Please use caution when using these amenities in the winter months.

## 2014 Road Projects – Ann Arbor Street and Central Street



Road projects are planned this summer on Ann Arbor Street and Central Street. Ann Arbor Street will be resurfaced from Kensington to Baker. Crosswalks will be enhanced in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. New water

main will also be installed in the right-of-way. Two way traffic will be maintained during a majority of the project. A detour will likely be necessary while the concrete crosswalks are poured and cured across Ann Arbor Street. The Village will be receiving \$400,000 in federal transportation funding towards completion of this project.

Central Street has also received \$200,000 in state funding to be reconstructed between Third and Second. To facilitate this project, Central will be closed between Third and Second for approximately four weeks. The project will continue the look of the corridor that was started with the reconstruction from

the Mast Road Bridge to Second Street in 2012.

These projects are currently out to bid through the Michigan Department of Transportation. Residents in the project areas will be receiving notifications throughout the construction process.

## Safe Routes to School



In November 2013, the Village received word that it was

successful in obtaining \$216,000.00 in construction dollars for Safe Routes to School funding for several projects within the Village limits. The various projects include the following:

- Construction of a mid-block crossing with a pedestrian refuge island on Baker Road immediately north of the Bates School Driveway.
- Construction of sidewalk on the east side of Baker Road between Dan Hoey and the existing sidewalk at Bates Elementary School as well as improvements at the Baker/Dan Hoey intersection.
- Construction of sidewalk connecting an existing bike path on the north side of Dan Hoey near the St. Joseph Cemetery to the rear of Bates Elementary School.
- Construction of a concrete sidewalk between Lexington Drive

and the DAPCO Industries' easterly property line and reconstruction of portions of Dan Hoey Road to allow for a mid-block pedestrian crossing.

The projects are expected to be constructed in late summer 2014.

## Capital Improvements Plan



Each year the Planning Commission gets together to discuss the Village's capital

improvement needs. Capital Improvements are large, physical improvements that are permanent in nature, and include the basic facilities, services, and installations needed for

the functioning of the community. These include transportation systems, utilities, municipal facilities and other miscellaneous projects.

The vision for future improvements are set forth in a document called the Five Year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). In March the Planning Commission will hold their first work session to review current and previously proposed capital expenditures, and to make

recommendations for future projects. A public hearing on the plan will be held in April.

Last year's CIP is available on the Village's website at [www.DexterMI.gov/capital-improvements-plan](http://www.DexterMI.gov/capital-improvements-plan), and the Planning Commission Agendas are at [www.DexterMI.gov/planning-commission](http://www.DexterMI.gov/planning-commission).

## Village Meetings

### Village Council

7:30 p.m. at the  
Dexter Senior Center  
7720 Ann Arbor Street

March 10, 2014  
March 24, 2014  
April 14, 2014  
April 28, 2014  
May 12, 2014  
May 26, 2014

Planning Commission  
7:30 p.m. at the  
Dexter Senior Center  
7720 Ann Arbor Street

March 3, 2014  
April 7, 2014  
May 5, 2014

Parks & Recreation  
Commission  
7:00 p.m. at the  
Village Offices  
8123 Main Street

March 18, 2014  
April 15, 2014  
May 20, 2014

Downtown Development  
Authority  
7:30 a.m. at the  
Dexter Senior Center  
7720 Ann Arbor Street

March 20, 2014  
April 17, 2014  
May 15, 2014

### Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee

7:00 p.m. at the  
Dexter Senior Center  
7720 Ann Arbor Street

March 4, 2014  
April 1, 2014  
May 6, 2014

**Interested in serving your  
community?** We are soliciting  
applications for the Downtown  
Development Authority (DDA).  
The position must be filled by a  
resident of the DDA District. An  
application form can be  
downloaded from the Village  
website.

The Huron River  
Watershed Council  
(HRWC) has launched a  
“**Pledge, Save, Win**”  
**Contest** to help you  
save water, energy and  
money. Visit  
[www.h2oheroes.org](http://www.h2oheroes.org) for  
contest details.

Winners get your water  
bill paid for three  
months!

## Spring Clean Up is May 16th

This service is for Village residents and residential waste only. Items must be placed at the curb prior to 6:00 a.m. Items must be in placed in containers, bagged, bundled or boxed for collection (when possible). Carpet should be bundled with tape in 4-foot rolls. No loose items, please. No items or containers weighing over 50 pounds will be accepted.

Click on the Calendar for May 16, 2014 on the Village’s website for more information on what is and is not accepted.  
[www.DexterMI.gov/calendar/2014-05](http://www.DexterMI.gov/calendar/2014-05)

## Monument Park Ice Rink

As we reach the end of winter, we want to thank the community, including the following sponsors, for making the ice rink possible!

- Dexter Village Council
- Dexter Parks and Recreation Commission
- Dexter Rotary Club

- Dexter Lions Club
- If the rink needs to be closed due to weather it will be posted on the Village’s website and Facebook page. Please stay off the ice when closed to avoid damage to the rink. Thank you for your cooperation.

## Old Vision Results in New View of Mill Creek Park

During the months of February and March, residents will notice contractors demolishing the old building at 3045 Broad Street (at the end of Grand Street). The property was purchased by the Village’s Downtown Development Authority in December 2012 in an effort to complete a vision that started approximately 30 years ago.

The old building used to be owned by DAPCO, a long time Dexter business

that is currently located in our Dexter Business and Research Park. Approximately 30 years ago, Village residents had a vision to remove the industrial uses from near our downtown and move them to the Industrial Park. In 2014, the Village is progressing ever closer to completing that vision by tearing down the old building adjacent to our newest park, Mill Creek Park. The footings and concrete floor of the old building will remain until a redevelopment opportunity is found.

Village representatives from our DDA, Village Council, Planning Commission and Parks Commission have brainstormed a new mixed use vision for this real estate. While the property is currently listed for sale by the Village, we wanted to make you aware of this exciting redevelopment opportunity. We anticipate future opportunities for public involvement as we work through the redevelopment process.

Village of Dexter  
8140 Main St  
Dexter MI 48130  
(734) 426-8303

Village President:

Shawn Keough

Village Trustees:

Jim Carson  
Paul Cousins  
Donna Fisher  
Julie Knight  
Joe Semifero  
Ray Tell

Village Clerk

Carol Jones

Village Staff

Donna Dettling,  
Manager  
Courtney Nicholls,  
Assistant Manager  
Marie Sherry,  
Treasurer/Finance  
Michelle Aniol  
Community Development  
Dan Schlaff,  
Public Services

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The Village Offices are located at 8123 Main St, 2nd Floor, above the PNC Bank. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

**Elected Officials:**

Shawn Keough, President: skeough@DexterMI.gov (313) 363-1434  
Jim Carson, Trustee: jcarson@DexterMI.gov (734) 502-4257  
Paul Cousins, Trustee: pcousins@DexterMI.gov (734) 548-3293  
Donna Fisher, Trustee: dfisher@DexterMI.gov (734) 649-5169  
Julie Knight, Trustee: jknight@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-4961  
Joe Semifero, Trustee: jsemifero@DexterMI.gov  
Ray Tell, President Pro Tem: rtell@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-3398  
Carol Jones, Clerk: cjones@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8114

**Staff:**

Village Manager: ddettling@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8303 x 11  
Assistant Manager: cnicholls@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8303 x 17  
Treasurer: msherry@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8303 x 14  
Community Development: maniol@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8303 x 15  
Utility Billing: eaiken@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8303 x 12  
Administrative Assistant: btuscano@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8303 x 10  
Public Works: kaugustine@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-8530  
Public Utilities: dschlaff@DexterMI.gov (734) 426-4572

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☆☆ **Mark Your Calendar!** ☆☆  
☆☆  
☆☆ The City Charter Commission will hold a ☆☆  
☆☆ public hearing on the draft City Charter ☆☆  
☆☆ on Saturday March 22, 2014 at 2:00 ☆☆  
☆☆ p.m. at the Dexter District Library. ☆☆  
☆☆  
☆☆ The purpose of the hearing is to review ☆☆  
☆☆ the sections of the proposed charter ☆☆  
☆☆ that have been completed at this point, ☆☆  
☆☆ and to receive input from Dexter ☆☆  
☆☆ residents. ☆☆  
☆☆  
☆☆ Please visit the City Charter page at ☆☆  
☆☆ [www.dextermi.gov/city-charter-](http://www.dextermi.gov/city-charter-commission) ☆☆  
☆☆ [commission](http://www.dextermi.gov/city-charter-commission) to review the completed ☆☆  
☆☆ sections. ☆☆  
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