

Charlevoix County Hayes Township Supervisor Retires

Hayes Township will be losing a dedicated individual who has served the residents of Hayes Township for forty years. Ethel Knepp has chosen to retire from her position of Hayes Township Supervisor. Ethel is a long time resident of Hayes Township who first became involved in township government as a member of the Hayes Township Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Appeals in 1976 having been appointed by Township Supervisor Bud Sneathen. She served in those positions until being appointed Zoning Administrator in 1982. She continued as zoning administrator until June 30, 2007.

In 1988 while still serving as zoning administrator, Ethel ran for the elected office of Township Clerk, winning the election and serving as Township Clerk until 2005. During her term as township clerk, Ethel appointed Marlene Golovich as Deputy Clerk. When Ethel resigned as clerk, the Township Board appointed Marlene to fill the clerk position. After serving as Zoning Administrator for 25 years, Ethel took a break from elected office and then ran for and won election as Hayes Township Supervisor in 2006. She has served in that position since then and will retire as supervisor when her term of office expires on November 20, 2016.

Ethel said, "I don't know where this past forty years have gone because it sure doesn't feel like it's been that long to me. I have enjoyed every position I've held for the township, because I've had the fortune of working with some wonderful people, on boards, commissions, committees, and administrative duties, who had positive visions for the entire township. I have also met many of the residents throughout the years whom I consider friends. I've been asked several times why I've stuck with the township so long and my only answer is that I love where I live and have always wanted to be involved in trying to keep the rural nature of the entire township intact. Any decision I've voted on has been based on what is the right thing to do for the entire township."

Ethel believes one of the greatest accomplishments of Hayes Township has been the purchase of the historic girls' camp, Camp Sea-Gull, now re-named Hayes Township Park Camp Sea-Gull. The camp is comprised of twenty acres and 1400 feet of Lake Charlevoix frontage which gives the public access to the lake. This was made possible by a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) Trust Fund Grant and a lot of work by the township board and the financial support of individual donors. Hayes Township closed on the purchase in January, 2014. Ethel has always said the Township Board would have been remiss to squander the opportunity to purchase that much lake front property at a cost to the township of \$500,000 which was only twelve per cent of the purchase price after awarded grant funds and generous donations.

Hayes Township has signed an agreement with the MDNR Waterways Commission for a grant for partial funding of an access road to the waterfront and a boat launch for small boats. The

Township Board with the assistance of the Charlevoix County Community Foundation will be seeking donations of \$200,000 through an upcoming fundraising campaign for the matching funds required by the Waterways Commission grant. **The Township also expects to receive more grant monies for a fishing pier. The grant monies for the fishing pier are contingent on the construction of the access road and boat launch.** Ethel said, “We need to get the road constructed because everything else depends on the road for access.”

Paul Hoadley, Hayes Township Trustee and former Hayes Township Supervisor said, “Ethel prides herself for being a ‘straight shooter’. She tells it like it is and doesn't beat around the bush. Ethel believes in grass roots government. She has truly enjoyed her time serving Hayes Township. Those of us who have worked with her through the years can testify to this. She will be missed.”

Jim Rudolph, Hayes Township Trustee said, “Ethel has set a very high standard of integrity and dedication to the betterment of Hayes Township that will be difficult for future supervisors to meet.”

Ethel will be recognized at the Hayes Township Annual Picnic on Sunday August 21, 2016 from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. at a cake and ice cream reception at Hayes Township Park Camp Sea-Gull. The Annual Picnic will be held from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m... Hayes Township residents and friends of Ethel are invited. Attendees may purchase food from the Pigs Eatin’ Ribs Food Truck, grill their own food on a provided gas grill or bring brown bag snacks. Transportation will be provided for those who cannot walk up and down the steep road to the picnic location.