

SPRING NEWSLETTER

VILLAGE NEWS

SPRING CLEANING!!!!

THE 2020 SPRING CLEAN UP DAY HAS BEEN MOVED TO SATURDAY, MAY 30th 8am - NOON

Dumpsters available for **FREE** at the Village Office Parking Lot.

You haul and self unload.

Village staff will be available to help unload too.

Clean out your attic, your garage, your basement, your yard!

Call the Village for more Info.

SPECIAL NOTE FROM THE VILLAGE PRESIDENT

These last few months have certainly been unprecedented circumstances for our Village and community. I want to thank our Village staff including; Rhonda, Toni, Sara, Phil and Jake for coming into work and getting the job done as usual. They work hard to keep things on track in the Village, follow all the rules and make sure everyone is safe in the process. **If you see them out and about say THANK YOU!**

Tim Flynn
Village President

ZONING INFO

The Village of Benzonia has a Zoning Ordinance.
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN???

Zoning Ordinances are in place to protect your property value and protect the Health, Safety and Welfare of all the Village residents - this means YOUR neighbors.

A common concern in many communities is **BLIGHT.**

Blight is defined in the ordinances, but mostly it means **JUNK**. This can be vehicles that do not run and are continuously sitting in your yard, parts of vehicles, tires, other discarded machinery, old appliances, other discarded materials (boxes, plastic totes, wood pallets, garbage, etc.....). **If it's been sitting in your yard, unused, rusting and deteriorating for more than several months, it may be considered blight.** Please review the definitions or simply call the zoning administrator for an explanation if needed.

Why do WE care what you do in your OWN yard? Because when you create a blight condition, you are driving down the property value of your neighbors and the entire Village, AND threatening the health and safety of the community.

Violation of this ordinance is a municipal civil infraction, subject to a maximum civil fine of \$500 (max), and each day the violation continues it shall be considered a separate violation.

The Village is offering a spring clean up day, as they have most every year, **PLEASE** - help us by cleaning up your property. We have noticed some of you are cleaning and getting rid of junk and we greatly appreciate it, and so do your neighbors!!

ATTENTION ALL RESIDENTS!!!

After May 30th, 2020 any property that continues to display junk in their yards will receive a written **VIOLATION**. If you receive a violation you have 30 DAYS to correct the problem. If you do NOT, then a municipal civil infraction (up to a \$500 fine, max.) may be issued. The Village may also choose to forward the infraction to the 85th District Court for a Court Hearing where you may be responsible for court fees.

Q&A

Q. Can I store my RV or Camper in my yard?

A. Per Section 3.10, YES - you can, but they must be placed either on the side or rear of your home. **RVs may NOT be stored in the front yard of a residential property.**

Q. Do I need a permit to put up a storage building or garage?

A. Per Section 3, an accessory building requires a permit to make sure it meets the size (no larger than 960 sq. feet) and that it is not placed in the property setbacks. The only exceptions are for non-permanent structures 100 sq. feet or less. For all others, a land use permit application and \$60 fee is required.

Q. Where do I get a land use permit?

A. We have been working on updating Village documents. Most can be found on the Village website under Zoning. Or you can contact the Village Office or Zoning Administrator.

Q. Who is this Zoning Administrator (ZA)?

A. It's me, Sara Kirk. I'm a registered landscape architect and have my own consulting business. I have about 20 years of experience in planning and design for all things outdoors. I've been working with the Village as the ZA about a year. I look forward to collaborating on improvements to help keep our community healthy, safe and make it more attractive. While I don't hold regular hours and this is just a part time position, I make myself as available as possible via email or phone. **Please send me questions or comments anytime!**

ORDINANCE UPDATES

The Village recently completed a new Master Plan for the Village, adopted January 2020. You may also be aware that in January, the Village opted to put a moratorium (hold) on non-residential development permits on US-31 and South Street for 6 months. This was done so that (in short) the Village could update the Ordinances to better reflect the ideals in the master plan. The Planning Commission has been working through 3 major updates to help address the most immediate issues. The updates include the following:

#1. Environmental Provisions (a revision of the existing section)

This update will provide for additional tree protection, and regulate tree removal and provide for replacement of trees in the Village as well as some additional environmental standards. Most new tree protection is geared towards non-residential development, however some additional restrictions may affect residential properties.

#2. Steep Slope Overlay. This new overlay zone will provide additional restrictions and standards for developing on property that contains slopes in excess of 15%. This is intended to provide additional protection of natural resources and our important watersheds.

#3. US-31 Corridor Overlay. This new overlay zone will provide an additional set of regulations and standards that will better guide the look and feel of development on any parcel that fronts US-31. It will provide additional pedestrian standards to better coordinate with the new roadway and sidewalk improvements. It will also include updated landscape and sign regulations for properties that face US-31. New development will primarily be affected, but also existing developments when improvements are made over a certain amount.

The Village is aiming to adopt these new ordinances in **JULY**. There will be a public hearing announcement - Please watch the newspaper and website for dates.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION WANTS YOUR FEEDBACK!!!

Please find the **DRAFT** ordinances on the Village website OR contact the ZA to find out where they will be available.

The Village has been making improvements to the website and MOST zoning information and forms can be found on the Village website under zoning.

<https://villageofbenzonia.com/zoning>

NOTE: Any Zoning Complaints can also be filled out and turned into the Village or ZA. Complaint forms are available on the website or contact the Village Office.