



LETTER FROM CAMPAIGN CHAIRS

Dear Friends:

Oshtemo Township is one of the fastest growing communities in Southwest Michigan. As more families locate here, community green space and park land are at a premium. Each year, thousands of residents use our community parks for gatherings with friends and families. We now have a unique opportunity to invest in a new park located near the busiest intersection of our community.

The Drake Farmstead is a hidden gem located near the corner of West Main and Drake. Township leaders recently voted to invest \$250,000 in this 26-acre historical farm to create a new community park. The first phase of improvements will renovate the existing farmhouse and build an event barn and other park amenities that will be open to residents throughout the region.

Our goal is simple. Working with area volunteers, friends and supporters, we are seeking \$250,000 in charitable gifts to complement Township funds and to launch improvements to the park.

Providing accessible, low cost recreation for our community is a top priority for our leadership team. Over the next several months we will be approaching our neighbors to seek help in meeting this goal. Please join us in supporting the Drake Farmstead Park campaign!

Sincerely,



Wes Freeland



Denny Patzer

CAMPAIGN CABINET

Curt Aardema
Cheri L. Bell
Scott Betzler
David Corning
Maria Dacoba
Adam Danapilis
William E. Dimond
Deb Everett
Wes Freeland
Kathleen Garland-Rike
Libby Heiny-Cogswell
Matthew Hunt
Pam Jackson
Irene Livingston
Kenn Livingston
Millard L. Loy
Neal Miedema
Kay Oppliger
Denny Patzer
Terry Schley
Paul Sotherland
Kathryn Steadman
Brian Stults
Steve Taplin

ENDORSEMENT COUNCIL

Bill Buell
David Campbell
Dr. Lawrence Schlack
Gary Start
Peter D. TerLouw



Township Park



Flesher Field



Flesher Field



Flesher Field

"I HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF GROWING UP ON BEECH AVENUE, NEAR THE DRAKE FARMSTEAD. THE BEAUTIFUL HOME WAS THE CENTERPIECE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD. I STILL DRIVE BY NEARLY EVERY DAY AND AM REMINDED OF THE PAST GENERATIONS WHO BUILT OUR COMMUNITY."

- MARTHA A. BETKE

BRIEF HISTORY OF OSHTEMO TOWNSHIP PARKS

Oshtemo's parks are truly the heart of our community. People come to walk on the trails, bring young children to the playground, or play a game in the wide open spaces. Others are simply looking for a chance to reconnect with nature. Our two primary parks are:

- Flesher Field, a favorite for its open sports fields, recently upgraded with many new amenities.
- Township Park, offers a quiet place to walk in the woods, and provides a variety of active recreation opportunities for all ages.

Our parks are a favorite destination for family and community gatherings:

- From birthday parties to family reunions, our parks are a popular venue.
- We are a gathering place for playgroups, a lunch stop for school buses filled with children on field trips and an outing for groups of disabled residents.
- Thousands gather to enjoy our parks during Oshtemo Fun Day, the Kalamazoo Scottish Festival, Music in the Parks, Movies in the Park and other community events.

Oshtemo has a long tradition of preserving and reusing historic buildings that are important to our heritage. Past projects include:

- Oshtemo Community Center
- Grange Hall
- Old Township Hall

Most recently, the Township obtained the historic home built by one of the Township's earliest families, Benjamin and Maria Drake. Built in 1852, volunteers from the Oshtemo Historical Society have spent 12 years and countless hours working to restore the house and enhance its usefulness. Though they have made significant progress, more work remains to be done.



Drake Farmstead

DRAKE FARMSTEAD TIMELINE

1830 Benjamin and Maria Drake arrive in Oshtemo Township	1852 Red brick farmhouse is built	1882 Fire damages the farmhouse; it is rebuilt and enlarged	1906 Thomas and Mary Stewart purchase the house and 280 acres	1945 Helen Stewart Frays and Alvin Frays inherit the property	2004 Township purchases farmhouse and 5 acres from a developer	2004 Oshtemo Historical Society forms
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Township Park

"MY FOUR-YEAR-OLD SON AND I ENJOY BOTH TOWNSHIP PARK AND FLESHER FIELD ALMOST DAILY AND LOVE SPENDING FAMILY TIME HERE ON WEEKENDS."

~ SHELLY CORAKIS



Flesher Field



Flesher Field

2005 - present
Township
invests in
exterior
and interior
repairs

2012
House and
26 acres are
listed on the
National
Register of
Historic Places

2013
Township
purchases ten
acres south of
the house

2014
Developer
donates 11
acres north of
the house

2015
Master Plan
and Market
Study for
the Drake
Farmstead are
completed

2016
Work to
begin on
exterior of
historic house

2017
Anticipated
ground-
breaking
for Phase 1
amenities



MANY OF US HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF VISITING A FARM AS A CHILD. SEEING BABY CHICKS IN SPRING, HUSKING FRESHLY PICKED CORN, SWINGING ON A ROPE, TASTING A GRAPE STRAIGHT FROM THE VINE.

DRAKE FARMSTEAD PARK

We're inventing a new kind of park! A place for people of all ages to interact with nature and history, both indoors and out. Our new park will have outdoor elements typical of a traditional park, like walking paths, a picnic shelter, and interpretive signs. But it will have unique elements as well. The first phase will include:

- A carriage barn for educational programs and private events. Multi-purpose space (50 person capacity), kitchen and accessible restrooms are planned. ★
- Historically-appropriate renovation of home's exterior.
- Reception space to greet and provide interpretive information as visitors enter the house.
- Improvements to the gravel driveway and addition of a small parking area. ★
- Barrier-free access ramp to the historic house. ★
- 'Drake Farmstead Park' signage with landscaping. ★
- Trees and benches.

Future improvements planned:

- The historic brick farmhouse will be a living history center available for tours and small events like bridal showers or high teas.
- An expanded barn for large events like wedding receptions, concerts, or community gatherings.
- A gazebo, surrounded by historically-inspired flower gardens, will offer a welcome place for a stroll or a summer wedding.
- An outdoor classroom, garden area, and picnic shelter, where school children can learn how to dig in the soil, plant a garden, and grow food.
- A corral for displaying animals and plenty of open space for outdoor events.
- A food forest with walking paths where people can forage for ripe berries, pick apples, or harvest nuts.



FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS OF CHILDREN, DRAKE FARMSTEAD PARK WILL BECOME THE FARM THEY VISIT. AN OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT THAT BRINGS HISTORY TO LIFE.

DRAKE FARMSTEAD PARK MASTER PLAN

★ PHASE 1



THE NEED FOR MORE COMMUNITY GREEN SPACE AND ANTICIPATED COMMUNITY BENEFITS

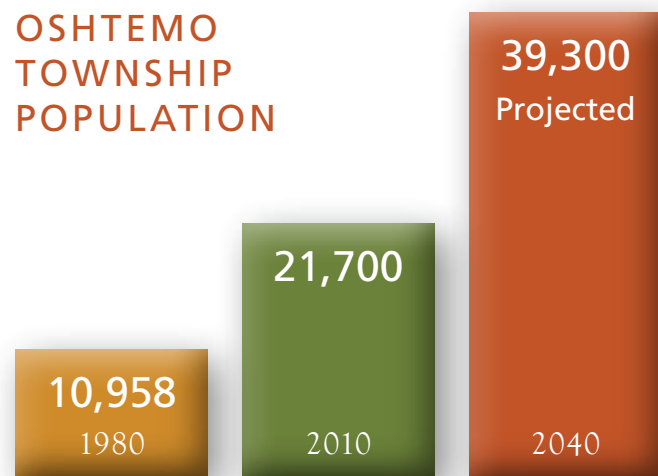
Oshtemo is a rapidly growing community. As the residential population grows, places to shop and work will increase as well. This growth is occurring primarily on our farmlands, woodlands, and other rural areas. We must preserve community green space today because:

- As our population increases, we will need more places for people to interact with nature, be physically active, and gather with family and friends. Parks are critical to a healthy and connected community. Children especially need unstructured outdoor environments to play, learn, explore, discover, and grow.
- Preserving the rural character of Oshtemo Township and our agricultural heritage is especially important in a time of rapid growth. Places with local historical significance must be preserved today for future generations.
- Parks are great places to learn about growing the food that nourishes us. Kalamazoo is fortunate to have a local food movement that promotes access to healthy food. As our population grows, we will need more land for growing food and more skilled farmers and gardeners to grow it.

Oshtemo Township is committed to providing parks and green spaces for a growing community. The new Drake Farmstead Park will offer:

- A place to play, walk, and interact with nature
- A place to bring history to life
- A place for the community to gather
- A place to learn about growing food and provide access to healthy food

OSHTEMO TOWNSHIP POPULATION



Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 2010 and Oshtemo Township Master Plan, October 2012.



Flesher Field



Flesher Field



Township Park

"I COME FROM BATTLE CREEK TO PLAY DISC GOLF AT TOWNSHIP PARK. IT IS MY FAVORITE COURSE IN THE AREA."

~ NANCY SCHWARZ



Flesher Field



Flesher Field

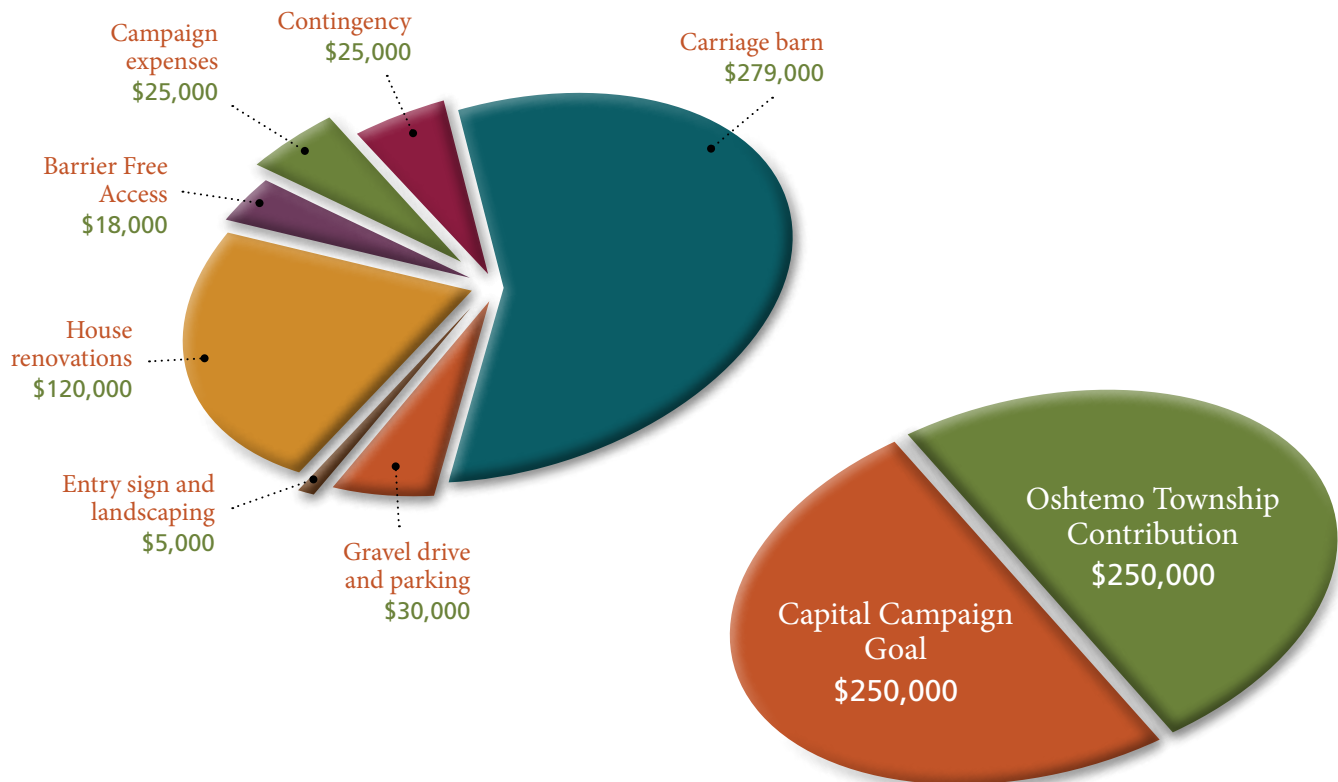


Township Park



Township Park

DRAKE FARMSTEAD PARK PHASE 1 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BUDGET



HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Drake Farmstead Park campaign is seeking \$250,000 in community support to provide funding for Phase 1 improvements to the park. You can help us achieve this important goal by supporting this campaign through:

- A one time cash gift
- A multiple year pledge commitment (may be paid over a three year period)
- A gift of appreciated assets (i.e. stock)
- An estate gift

The Oshtemo Friends of the Parks is a qualified 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Accordingly, your charitable gift is tax deductible to the full extent of state and federal law. Please check with your tax advisor to determine how your gift may affect your personal tax situation.



Grange Hall



Flesher Field



Township Park



Township Park



Township Park

"OSHTMO'S PARKS PROVIDE US WITH A WONDERFUL HOME FOR OUR LEAGUE ALONG WITH A GREAT FAMILY ATMOSPHERE."

~ BRIAN LEWIS, DIRECTOR, KALAMAZOO WIFFLE LEAGUE



KAREN HIGH, PARKS DIRECTOR

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