

# Northfield Township

— M I C H I G A N —

~ 9000 PEOPLE

TOO SMALL FOR A MANAGER, TOO COMPLICATED NOT TO HAVE ONE  
DEDICATED POLICE DEPARTMENT

10 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN ANN ARBOR, TWO PROMINENT LAKES

LARGE WEALTHY RURAL AND LAKEFRONT COMMUNITIES

AGING AND TIRED SMALL DOWNTOWN (UNSUSTAINABLE RETAIL PRESENCE)

AGING AND DISTRESSED URBAN AREA WITH TIRED RETAIL

## SETTING THE STAGE: Community



# Northfield Township

— M I C H I G A N —

Distrust among board members

Factions and silos

Misunderstanding of the difference between policy and administration

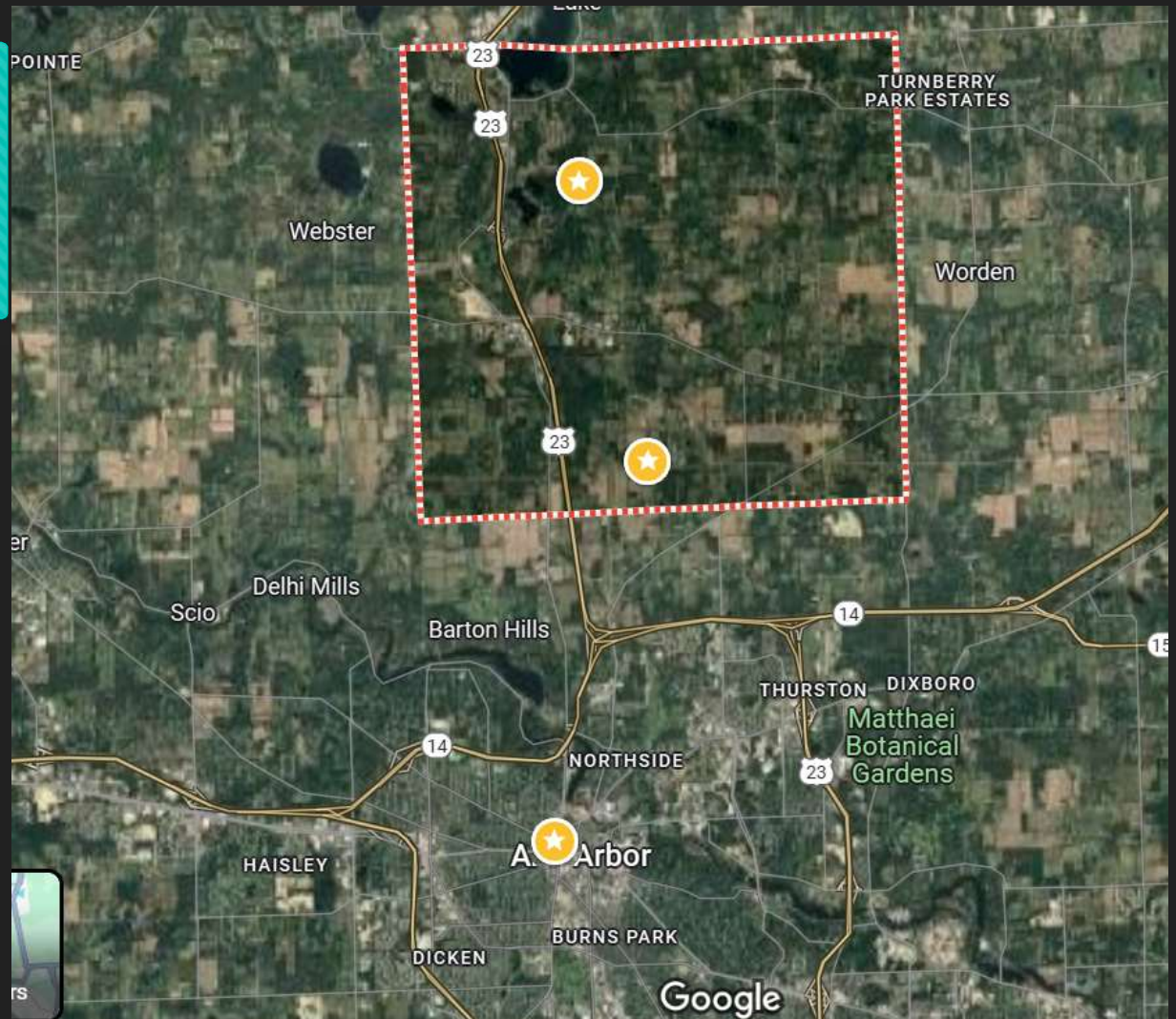
Undefined roles and responsibilities

**Dysfunctional government and conflict**



## LOCATION

- Growth vs. no growth
- Grand Sakwa
- North Territorial
- New housing desires



# Timeline

- 10/28/11 Public Comment, Donna Whittaker “Hearing rumors regarding supervisors position” She, along with neighbors, happy with supervisors position
- 12/13/11 Initial motion on Manager. Extensive discussion – no action taken
- 1/10/12 Manager position created, passes 4-2 (clerk and supervisor vote negative: Treasurer on disability. Trustees vs Elected fight  
Public safety director appointed interim manager
- 2/14/12 Dale Reaume, Grosse Ile Township Manager in Wayne County Appears for a discussion on the role of a Township Manager  
**Public request for Civility!**
- 3/13 Attempt to undue Jan 10<sup>th</sup> vote fails. Manager Job Description passed  
  
and the fighting continues for over a year.
- 10/9/2012 Board Votes to enter Contract negotiations with Howard Fink
- 12/11/2012 interviews with new board after turning down offer on ethical grounds. Accepts position and contract negotiations begin in January.

# Lessons Learned

- Do not be afraid to fall on your “ethics” / In the beginning: Be Bold in your leadership
- Resist systems that seek to divide policy decision making (i.e. committees {exec, personnel, fire, parks, etc.})
- Build relationships as your first priority. Protect your staff from the board.
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities, particularly that of the supervisor and manager. Identify and map staffing relationships early. Articulate the role of the Clerk and Treasurer in collaboration.
- In these communities, conflict is likely unavoidable. Stay focused on the pathway to creating professional government administration. This will ruffle some feathers, but stay the course.
- Do strategic planning early and often. Cast your vision. Leadership is not management.
- Engage your attorney in these strategies. They can and often will be your ally if you set out your vision.
- Identify your list of fixes in the first six months
- Assume you are going to work on the foundations of government, fund balance policy, codification, websites, basic budgeting, strategic planning, etc.
- Be a coach, when appropriate.