Bloomfield Township launches new mobile app

By: Mary Beth Almond | Birmingham-Bloomfield Eagle | Published September 10, 2024

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP — Bloomfield Township recently launched its first mobile app, designed to enhance communication and to put information regarding township services, meetings and events directly into the hands of its residents, business owners and visitors.

The Bloomfield Township App can now be downloaded for free in the app stores for iPhones and Google Play for Android.

"About a year ago I said that an app was coming — and it's finally here," said Carrie LeZotte, the director of cable and community relations for Bloomfield Community Television.

LeZotte said there was a bidding process where her team met with four vendors from across the country, comparing pricing along with functionality, before landing on "jācapps" of Bingham Farms.

"Then the fun really began, with the initial design, testing, changes, acceptance into the app store — which we had to wait for a while. … That took probably three months to get approved," LeZotte explained. "We were able to conduct focus groups, incorporate the feedback, soft launch, and now we have our mobile app ready to go."

The app is a free reporting tool that allows on-the-go access to live township meetings, a list of events, podcasts and more.

"We wanted another way to provide service and communicate with residents," said Amy McKaig, a digital content coordinator for Bloomfield Community Television.

From the app's home screen, users will see scrolling news items and four icons — "Click and Report," "Local Podcasts & Media," "Senior Center" and "Map." The three horizontal lines in the top left corner of the page opens more options, such as "Township News" and the "Budget Book."

"One of the most useful features is a click and report, where if you are walking around and you see something, you can snap a photo of it and send it directly to the department who can take care of the issue for you," said LeZotte.

For example, if users see a tree limb or debris blocking a safety path on their morning walk, LeZotte said, they can open the app, select "Click & Report," then select "Safety Path Maintenance." They can then select an image from their camera roll, or take a photo in the app, and an email will be generated to the Environmental and Engineering Services Department, and they can include any relevant information, such as the location on the safety path.

"It's just a quick and easy way for residents to inform us of something," McKaig said.

Additional app features include the ability to stream BCTV's content as it airs — including live Board of Trustees meetings — listen to podcasts produced by Bloomfield Community Television, and see all upcoming events offered through the Senior Center, including links to register.

"It was a lot of fun to create, and we have over 1,000 downloads so far, so I think that's pretty good," said McKaig.

The township is looking for feedback from the community to make the app more useful. Users can click "Contact" and select the Cable and Community Relations Department to provide input on their experience with the app.

"It has pretty basic functionality to begin with, and we will continue to add to that — you don't want to do everything all at once. You want to get people using it and be able to tell them about new things," LeZotte said.

The cost for development of the app was $2,000, and the township will pay $150 per month for access and maintenance for the next two years under the contract with jācapps. LeZotte said the funds came from the township's community promotion budget.

"It was certainly the most reasonable estimate we received for the app and does what we need it to for a community of our size," LeZotte added. "We will also continue to add features."

For more information on the app, visit bloomfieldtwp.org/app.