

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday November 13, 2024

Chair Hollerith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Hollerith, Forster, Thompson, Murphy

Absent: Green, Dohan, Osetek

Visitors: Glenn Remus, John Baker, Ed Taylor

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda as presented or with additions: **Murphy made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Thompson seconded. Four (4) ayes, three (3) absent.**

Public Comment - none

Approval of 10-9-24 Regular Meeting Minutes: **Thompson made the motion to approve the minutes of October 9, 2024, as presented. Forster seconded. Roll Call vote: Thompson – yes, Hollerith – yes, Forster – yes, Murphy- yes. Four (4) ayes, three (3) absent.**

Unfinished Business –

a. Master Plan Review

- i. Review timeline – Chair Hollerith stated that he and Vice Chair Forster met with ZA Lane to draft a timeline for the Master Plan review. Hollerith asked Lane to recap their conversation. Lane noted much of the work reviewing and updating the Master Plan will occur between December 2024 and June 2025. Afterwards, public input will be asked for, and a draft plan will be made public to take care of some formalities. Lane noted the importance of public input stating that June, July, and August PC meetings will have time dedicated specifically to receiving suggestions, comments or concerns from township residents. Feedback received will be incorporated into the plan along with any changes. Hollerith noted that in December they will begin with Chapter Six. Thompson questioned if the letter to stake holders is what will be sent out to the public. Lane stated that an Intent to Plan letter is required by the Planning Enabling Act, and that letter will be what goes out to the County, surrounding communities, utility providers and the Tribe. A similar letter will go out again in June or July along with advertising it in the newspapers and on the website letting everyone know that feedback is appreciated. Lane noted that an Open House can also be held here or at other locations throughout town if the Planning Commission wanted it. Hollerith asked if something could be added to the summer tax newsletter. Lane said that could be given consideration.

- b. **Discussion – 2024 Priorities and Work List Review** – Hollerith stated that Lane updated the 2024 priorities and Work List Review and that many items were checked off.

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In January, the committee will take time to look at the list once again to see if there are things that need to be added or reprioritized.

New Business –

a. Presentation – draft Parks & Recreation Plan - Hollerith asked Lane to give a synopsis of what has been done and what is needed to complete the plan. Lane touched on when the Township Board created the Recreation Committee, their monthly meetings, and the extensive work they have done over the past year to get this draft plan ready. He noted the similarity to the Master Plan and the difference in it being the focus on parks and recreational activities. Lane mentioned a state law provision under the Natural Resources Act that if a community has a recreational plan that is approved by the Michigan DNR, the community will become eligible for grants from the State of Michigan. Lane stated that there are specific items that need to be included in the plan and how the Recreation Committee has worked diligently to include those items. Lane states how it ties into the Master Plan; if the Master Plan has a recreational component, it is usually a “whichever one comes first” situation meaning if a recreational plan is not in place, the Master Plan will lay out the recreational aspects. He noted in this case, as the Township has a Recreational Plan, the Master Plan will borrow from the recreational plan for any related goals. A community survey was made available through a QR code on the website, and hard copies of the survey were made available at the Township Hall and at Thorne Swift. The results of the community survey helped shape the goals and objectives in the draft plan. Lane noted that the Township Board approved this draft for public distribution at their board meeting the night prior. The timeline now is a 30-day Public Inspection Period with the plan on the website along with an ad in the local newspapers informing the public that the Board has opened it up for inspection. At the close of the required 30-day period, the Rec Committee will hold a public hearing on December 17 and run another ad in the paper advertising a public hearing date with the intent to solicit any last-minute feedback from the public, the Planning Commission, the Township Board and/or from other surrounding communities. The information gathered will be incorporated into the final plan. At that point it will go before the Township Board of Trustees at their January 2025 meeting. If approved, it must be submitted to the DNR by January 31, 2025, to be eligible for grants in 2025. Lane summarized the chapters of the draft recreational plan.

Chapter One: Community Profile that holds data the DNR requires. It contains population numbers, education levels, income, age, disability, etc.

Chapter Two: Administrative structure of the Township.

Chapter Three: Recreational inventory which includes not only the recreational or public facilities that the Township owns, but nearby facilities as well.

Chapter Four: Public input. Includes the community survey questions, how feedback was obtained and a brief analysis of the responses received.

Chapter Five: Goals and Actions plan. Goals and objectives for the next five years. Hollerith questioned the responses from the survey. Lane noted the responses were thorough. Hollerith commented on the rating system components in terms of being ADA compliant, little to no beach access for the public, sidewalks on Cemetery and Hughston and the Township 80. Hollerith also commented on the recommendation of installing a Township Parks and Recreation Director. Murphy questioned if horses are allowed on Township 80. They are, with a few trails where they are prohibited. Murphy mentioned during the Township Board’s meeting last night in the Thorne Swift report Hammond discussed the possibility of holding Yoga and Exercise classes on the

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preserve. There was discussion on how much private property is surrounding Township 80. Forster commented on dogs with Baker confirming that they are allowed but must be on leash. Hunting on the Township 80 was discussed. Thompson commented on how well laid out the draft recreation plan was and if in the future the proposed trails could connect to the Township 80 or with other communities. Forster asked if copies of the Recreation Plan could be made available for people so they can see the benefits of what the Township has to offer. Hollerith asked if there were any steps the Planning Commission needed to take regarding the Rec plan. Baker commented on the benefits of having a Parks and Recreation Administrator/Director. Baker thanked Annie Mooradian and ZA Lane for all their hard work on the draft recreation plan.

b. **Discussion – House Bill 5557** – Hollerith asked Lane for a summary of the bill. Lane stated this bill will be an amendment to the Planning and Enabling Act requiring a Master Plan to include the assessment of the community’s existing and forecasted housing demands with strategies and policies for addressing those needs. It is a component that will have to be included in the Master Plan if the Governor approves it. Additionally, the composition of a planning commission where people with expertise in certain areas are appointed, such as financing - land natural resources will be expanded to include housing. Items such as what types of housing exist, how housing values changed over time, housing stock in the township in terms of quality and prices matching the current need with emphasis on “missing middle housing”, what will the needs be over the next five to ten years in terms of strategies and modifying the zoning ordinance to allow for different types of housing. There was a brief discussion on properties within the township that could be used for housing, the lack of adequate housing and housing for caregivers in the area.

Other:

- a. **Zoning Administrator Report** – included in packet. Hollerith questioned “Green Burials” and if that will come before the Planning Commission to be considered in the future.
- b. **Township Board Representative Report** – Green is absent, Olson spoke on the Parks and Recreation plan and noted the Harbor Point rezoning was approved.
- c. **Correspondence** – none

Planning Commissioner Comments (open discussion) – none

Public Comment – none

Next Meeting: Planning Commission next regular meeting December 11, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment: **Thompson made the motion to adjourn at 6:48 p.m. Forster seconded. Four (4) ayes, three (3) absent.**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Jim Osetek, Secretary
Transcribed by:
Amy Peters

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