

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday January 8, 2025

Chair Hollerith called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Roll Call: Hollerith, Forster, Thompson, Remus, Dohan, Osetek, Green

Absent: none

Visitors: Lindsey Dotson

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda as presented or with additions: **Thompson made the motion to approve the agenda as presented. Remus seconded. Seven (7) ayes.**

Public Comment – Lindsey Dotson introduced herself as the new Housing North Representative replacing Andrea Jacobs. Dotson spoke about the need for affordable housing within Northern Michigan and what Housing North can do to help the Townships across Northern Michigan.

Approval of 12-11-24 Regular Meeting Minutes: **Forster made the motion to approve the minutes of December 11, 2024, as presented. Dohan seconded. Roll Call vote: Green – yes, Thompson – yes, Hollerith – yes, Osetek – yes, Forster – yes, Dohan – yes, Remus- yes. Seven (7) ayes.**

Unfinished Business –

- a. **Master Plan Review** - Lane gave an update regarding the Intent to Plan letter that was reviewed last month. He informed the board that they were mailed on 12-13-24 and that they are officially in the Master Plan Five-Year Review process as, well as noting, that they are well ahead of the curve. Lane stated the task of the Planning Commission during that five-year-review period is to determine what option or route should be taken to continue the plan; meaning continue the plan as is with no changes to be made to the existing plan which was adopted in 2020; modifications/updates could be made or it could be determined nothing more extensive is required. Lane stated a good way to determine that is to review Goals & Objectives which will be discussed this evening. If they seem to be consistent & relevant with what the Planning Commissions is thinking from a land use perspective that then moves the Planning Commission into either a “make no changes” or “just do an update” scenario. Lane thought the General Goals are relevant and touched on points that needed attention. Lane suggested focusing on specific goals noting that those goals needed to be considered in such a way that in fifteen to twenty years, they will still be applicable. Lane suggested removing those that have no relevancy anymore.
- i. Chapter 6: Community Goals and Policies - The first one in the chapter to review is Natural Features. Lane thought it was well written and had one item for the

Proposed: 1-08-2025

Approved: 2-12-25

board to consider: Combined Driveways. It was discussed that the Combined Driveways fall under the jurisdiction of the Road Commission and should be removed. The board agreed to strike it from Chapter Six. The second item for review is Transportation. Lane thought it was very well laid out and written but wanted to discuss the phrase “*Strip Commercial Developments*”. Thompson asked if there was a better way to re-word it striking “strip” as it has negative connotations. Dohan asked if there were a more appropriate word that could be used. The board asked to Lane to find a better way to re-word it, Lane will bring suggestions to the board next month. The third item for review is Water & Waste Water. Lane thought it looked good but would encourage the use of “*Community Water & Waste Systems*” where appropriate. The board asked Lane to look at re-wording that and bring suggestions to the February meeting. The fourth item for review is Recreation. Lane didn’t have any suggestions for change within this item. Hollerith wondered if West Traverse Township could work with other townships and the city to come up with a comprehensive or regional Recreation plan. Lane noted that point was already in the Recreation Plan which goes before the Township Board on the 14th. The fifth item for review is Community Facilities. Lane stated there are good ideas, but wanted to point out the use of the word “require” in the sentence of “*require the development of shared septic, water access road or pedestrian trail infrastructure in future housing developments*”. Discussion followed and it was agreed to change the word to “promote”. Hollerith noted in the last bullet point the phrase, “*encourage the use of Township property for a future Township Hall and recreation area*” and asked if the wording could be a little stronger to encourage future development. Green updated the Planning Commission on the exploratory plans for potential new Township Office on that property. Thompson questioned the timeline for getting a new hall built. Thompson felt it was incumbent to change the wording from “encourage” to “promote” so to provide a pathway for the community to understand that the intent to develop will be more functional for everyone, i.e. new Township Hall and possible recreation area. The Planning Commissioners all agreed on changing the wording to “promote” instead of “encourage”. Lane will make the change. The sixth item for review is Housing. Lane reiterated the recently amended Planning and Enabling Act that requires that Master Plans include an assessment of the communities existing and forecasted housing demands along with including strategies and policies to address those demands. Lane noted that is best discussed in Chapter Four. Lane included a short memo in the packet for the commissioners to look over for future discussion. Hollerith asked if Beckett & Raeder is still working on the language to help meet some of the definitions. Lane is satisfied with the current goals and sees no need for change in Housing. The seventh item for review is Community and Industrial Development. Lane mentioned the “*Strip Development*” wording and will make the re-wording of that consistent with the other transportation category. Hollerith thought it would be good to encourage the development of Industrial Parks with planned parks. Remus questioned if there would be an update to the Future Land Use Plan map. Lane said there will be and it will be in chapter 7 which the Planning Commission is slated to review in May or June. Hollerith asked the commissioners if there were any other questions.

Osetek asked if there is any data about the percentage of industrial land uses verses residential land uses. Lane said he will look into it and bring it to the board. Remus asked if there will be a section of updated demographics and commercial housing starts from 2020. Lane said that is in the works and that will be in the chapter one and two reviews in May or June. Lane will make the revisions agreed on by the Planning Commission to Chapter Six and bring it back for review. The eighth item for review is Land Use Policies. Lane thought they were all well written and saw no need for change.

New Business –

- a. **2025 Election of Officers:** Four (4) positions that require filling for the 2025 year are: Chairman, Vice Chair, Secretary and the Planning Commission Board Rep to the ZBA. **For the position of the Chairperson for the West Traverse Township Planning Commission, Green nominated Charlie Hollerith. Thompson seconded. All ayes. For the position of Vice Chair for the West Traverse Township Planning Commission, Thompson nominated Hank Forster. Green seconded. All ayes. For the position of the Secretary for the West Traverse Township Planning Commission, Green nominated Jim Osetek. Thompson seconded. All ayes. For the position of ZBA Rep for the West Traverse Township Planning Commission, Hollerith nominated John Dohan. Thompson seconded. All ayes. Chairperson Hollerith closed the nominations for the four (4) positions and the nominations were certified by the West Traverse Township Planning Secretary Jim Osetek. All ayes.**
- b. **2025 Meeting Schedule:** Dohan questioned if the commissioners would be open to changing the meeting time from 6:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. After discussion, such as concerns of being too early for public attendance, the Commissioners agreed to change their meeting time to 5:30 p.m. effective February 2025. **Thompson offered the resolution, Dohan seconded. Secretary Osetek read the following resolution: “Be it resolved by the Planning Commission of West Traverse Township, of Emmet County, State of Michigan, establishes the following Regular Meetings of the West Traverse Township Planning Commission, to be held at West Traverse Township Hall, 8001 M-119, Harbor Springs, Mi 49740 as follows: January 8, February 12, March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11, July 9, August 13, September 10, October 8, November 12, December 10, 2025. Meetings will commence at 5:30 p.m. This will be at the discretion of the Planning Commission with due and proper notice as required by law.” Roll call vote: Green – yes, Thompson – yes, Forster – yes, Osetek – yes, Remus – yes, Dohan – yes, Hollerith – yes. Seven (7) ayes. The West Traverse Township Planning Commission Resolution #01-2025, approved on the 8th day of January 2025, is declared adopted by the Planning Commission Chairperson and declared certified by the Secretary.**
- c. **2024 Planning Commission Annual Report:** Lane gave an overview of the report that was included in the packet. Lane added that the priorities and work list were good thingd to add to the report. Lane questioned if there was anything else the commissioners would like to see added to the report. Lane noted it is important to share with the Township Board what the Planning Commission is planning for the coming year. Hollerith asked Green about the possibility of having a joint meeting with the Township Board, ZBA, and BOR later this year. Green agreed to the suggestion and relayed the gratitude and appreciation from the Township Board to the

Planning Commission for all their hard work and diligence. Hollerith asked Lane to keep the Annual Report on the agenda for February.

Other:

- a. **Zoning Administrator Report** – included in packet. ZA Lane informed the board that he spoke with the Hughston Rd Polo Field Architect, Fred Ball, the day after the PC meeting. They have engaged Benchmark for plans and etc. for the Polo Field. Green noted he was pleased with the timeline. Dohan mentioned the entrance to the property and did it constitute a private access way because it is serving two parcels. Dohan noted a concern about not mentioning a maintenance agreement associated with that access way that should be executed and recorded. Hollerith felt that the list of requirements and other items requested such as total number of cars, hours of operation and etc., that the applicants was given for SPU was good. Thompson inquired if anyone had come back with a list of revision as Mrs. Devon had spoken to such as adding additional dates. Lane informed the applicants that the application would not be approved unless the applicants provide specific dates & times for the matches, what to do if rain cancels an event, attendee numbers, how the events would be regulated and etc. Green noted the appropriateness of the timetable that Planning Commission laid out for the applicants to return with the adjustments and/or revisions. He stated that the West Traverse Township Board generally does not meet in April so bringing it the Township Board in May is appropriate. The commissioners asked Lane to continue to encourage the applicants to keep to the timetable and that the board is here to support them. Hollerith noted concerns regarding the importance of the level of detail required of the applicants and whether or not they, the applicants, are aware of it.
- b. **Township Board Representative Report** – Green noted an Office Personnel meeting regarding compensation on 1-09-25 with Supervisor Ed Murphy and John Baker. Green discussed the Recreation Plan that will be on the West Traverse Township Board agenda on 1-14-25 and stated, that in his opinion, the West Traverse Township Board will approve it so it can move forward within the required time frame. Green conveyed to the Planning Commissioners the gratitude and appreciation from the Board Members on all their hard work and dedication.
- c. **Correspondence** – none

Planning Commissioner Comments (open discussion) – none

Public Comment – Housing North Representative Dotson stated that the Planning Commission is free to pull any information from their Housing Needs Assessment program if it is needed.

Next Meeting: Planning Commission next regular meeting February 12, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment: **Thompson made the motion to adjourn at 7:01 p.m. Remus seconded. Seven (7) ayes.**

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

Proposed: 1-08-2025
Approved: 2-12-25