

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
Wednesday February 12, 2025

Chair Hollerith called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

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

Absent: none

Visitors: Mark Rondell, Ed Murphy

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

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

Public Comment – Ed Murphy, West Traverse Township Supervisor, passed along the gratitude and thanks from the West Traverse Township Board Members to the Planning Commissioner’s for their hard work and commitment.

Approval of 1-08-25 Regular Meeting Minutes: **Forster made the motion to approve the minutes of January 8, 2025, 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 recapped and provided a Timeline and Step Sheet in the meeting packet, noting that the Planning Commission is on track.
 - i. Chapter 6: Community Goals and Policies- revisions – Lane noted the changes discussed at last month’s meeting asking if everyone agrees with the changes. Lane noted that as the Planning Commission gets further in the process, there will be public input along with input from adjacent Townships in the County that may affect the final version of the goals. Thompson questioned the red lined items and if those were struck from the chapter. Hollerith questioned the Housing section and about possibly adding a bullet point for ways the Township can research the avenues regarding the housing needs for current and future residents.
 - ii. Chapter 3 Natural Resources: Lane provided a sample of a Natural Resources chapter from Little Traverse Township noting the similarities and differences. Currently West Traverse Township has “what’s needed” noting that it needs to be about what kind/type of land is available to be more suitable for developers to understand what is here. The board discussed what is needed to be added based on the sample: Climate; rainfall, snow, yearly, temperatures, etc. Geology & Topography; what challenges there are or may be. Hollerith suggested adding Climate Data. Hollerith asked about “Scenic View Shed.” and asked if the Township’s attractions such as Heritage Hwy, Thorne Swift, Pond Hill Farms, etc. should be included. There

Proposed: 02-12-25

Approved: 03-12-25

was discussion on Environmental concerns such as old dumpsites. Dohan suggested contacting EGLE and “LUST” to see if there are other sites that need to be pointed out. The board agreed to hold off on those until further research could be done. The board also agreed to put in a “Summary” paragraph. Beckett & Raeder will research Wetlands & Woodlands to be added later. Osetek questioned if Wellhead Protection Areas need to be noted. Chapter 4 will be discussed in March.

- b. 2024 Planning Commission Report – There was discussion on the Planning & Enabling Act stating that it requires Planning Commissions to prepare an Annual Report to the Township Board. Summaries, meeting information, member information, summary of activities from preceding year that includes any recommendations for the Township Board related to Planning, priorities along with a joint meeting with the West Traverse Township Board. Hollerith liked the work list recommendations and asked if under the work list for 2025, should amendments to the Birchwood PUD be added. Motion made by Green to approve the Planning Commission Annual Report for 2024 including the Planning Commissions Priorities and Work List for 2024. Seconded by Forster. All ayes.

New Business – none

Other:

- a. Zoning Administrator Report – Regarding the Polo Field at 6135 & 6331 Hughston Rd by the Devon’s, Lane informed the board that no official withdrawal has been submitted and that if the new owners wanted a Polo Field, they would need to reapply. Thompson questioned if there was any resolution pending. Lane noted that usage breakdown document from the current Township Master Plan was provided in the meeting packet and that it will be covered more in Chapter 7. Remus questioned is warehousing considered commercial. Hollerith questioned the Blight Violation at 4850 Lake St. and the Home Occupation at 7655 Lauers Lane. Lane is keeping an eye on it.
- b. Township Board Representative Report – Green updated the commissioners on the recent trip Ed Murphy, Jay Olson, and himself, took to visit an office building in Denmark Township as an example for a new West Traverse Township Hall. Green gave an overview of the similarities, discussed ways of funding, etc. Thompson inquired if applying for grants would be an option. Hollerith questioned the possibility of attaching a “Public Safety” building in conjunction with a new Hall. The new Town Hall discussion will be on the WTT Board agenda every month for discussion. Forster asked if anyone knew how much it would cost to maintain the current Hall when the new building is complete. Osetek asked if there would be a cost estimate for public notice. Thompson questioned the historical value of the current Township Hall and would an appraisal be obtained. Green also discussed that the West Traverse Township Board has agreed to allow Harbor Springs Fire Dept to use the small barn on the Cook/Township property for controlled burn training. He mentioned that compensation packages were approved for Township personnel along with approving the Beckett & Raeder contract for another two years and the discussion of curbside recycling within the Township.
- c. Correspondence – none

Proposed: 02-12-25

Approved: 03-12-25

Planning Commissioner Comments (open discussion) – Hollerith asked if the commissioners had any questions. Hollerith also stated that he attended the City of Harbor Springs Planning Commission meeting and that they are starting their revisions and timetable.

Public Comment – **Hollerith extended additional minutes during the Public Comment for Mark Rondell**. Mark Rondell of 181 Zoll St. Harbor Springs noted he has been following the Planning Commission and is pleased with the Master Plan and the Planning Commission's work. Rondell spoke regarding eliminating "sprawling growth" and that it may be beneficial to initiate discussion with the City of Harbor Springs regarding transfer of adjoining land. Remus appreciated Rondell's comments and wondered if there was a section in the Master Plan to address the growth potential that Rondell had spoken to.

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

Adjournment: **Thompson made the motion to adjourn at 6:37 p.m. Dohan seconded. Seven (7) ayes.**

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

Proposed: 02-12-25
Approved: 03-12-25