

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
September 10, 2025

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

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

Absent: Osetek

Visitors: Garon Gopigian, Ed Taylor, Paul Mooradian

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda as presented or with additions: **Dohan made the motion to approve the agenda. Thompson seconded. Six (6) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Public Comment – Paul Mooradian inquired about the opportunity to discuss the Master Plan during the meeting or if comments are to be held until Public Comment. Mooradian raised concerns about the Future Land Use Map noting discrepancies between the current map and the one in the meeting packet. Lane clarified that it was a typo and will be corrected. Mooradian asked about the status of the Recreation Plan, its impact on grant eligibility. Lane explained that that the Recreation Plan is separate from the Master Plan and that makes it eligible for grants. Hollerith asked for the following comments on the Master Plan to be added into the minutes. *“A Master Plan is a community’s land use policy document that guides decision making that affects its land, people and built environment, guides the community when faced with complex land use and infrastructure decisions that may have long term impacts on our community. This Master Plan inventory identifies West Traverse Township assets as well as its challenges empowering the Township to strengthen its systems and drive positive and appropriate change. The Michigan Planning and Enabling Act enables Townships and municipalities to create Master Plans to do the following. 1) Guide the use of the limited resources effectively. 2) Promote public health, safety, and general welfare. 3) Preserve the quality of the environment and to guide future zoning decisions. I want to stress that this plan is in draft form. Once the draft is finalized, it will need to be approved by the Township Board. If approved, then it will be sent out for review and comment by other governmental agencies and units. Those comments will come back to us here at the Planning Commission for consideration before the final document is approved and sent to the Township Board for final consideration. We hope those of you that are here tonight will stay engaged with us throughout this process.”*

Approval of August 13, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes: **Forster made the motion to approve the minutes of August 13, 2025, as presented. Remus seconded. Six (6) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Proposed: 09-10-25
Approved: 10-8-25

Unfinished Business –

a. Master Plan Review

- i. Open House Recap – Lane summarized the feedback received from the Open Houses held in July and August noting the low attendance but valuable input. The feedback showed support for home occupations, Agri-tourism, and cluster developments with mixed support for commercial and food uses. The Housing section of the plan received support for alternate forms of housing, including senior housing along with tiny housing. There was strong opposition to single family homes on large lots. Lane explained the Future Land Use Map noting that it represents how the Planning Commission envisions property use in the next 10-20 years which does not necessarily reflect the current zoning.
- ii. Review Future Land Use Map – The Planning Commission discussed various areas within West Traverse Township and what the designation of those areas should be. Areas discussed were Lake St (north of golf course) from Single Family Residence to Mixed Residential, State Rd from Commercial Industrial to Residential Buffer, and Hughston Rd from Farm/Forest to Residential Buffer. The Board had varying opinions of those areas and discussion followed on how to zone them on the Future Land Use Map. Lane emphasized the importance of aligning the Future Land Use Map with the Townships long term vision and the need for public input. The Board talked about the Otis and if in the future they want to expand, they would need to re-zone. Lane noted the map will reflect LTC Preserves.
- iii. Review Draft Chapter 8 – Implementation – The Planning Commission reviewed the goals and objectives and decided which ones to keep or remove. For Housing, the board agreed to focus on conservation design, mixed use design techniques` and preserving wetlands. Regarding the Commercial Industrial the goal is to empathize supporting individual facilities and incorporating the best management practices. The board stressed the importance of supporting the rural character of the Township and the need for appropriate site development plans. The Planning Commission agrees to support the Recreation Plan. Hollerith mentioned having a joint meeting with the Township Board to discuss the Master Plan and gather feedback in November.
- iv. Review Updated Initial Draft 2025-2026 Master Plan – Lane gave an overview of the process completed thus far.

New Business -

- i. Discussion – Zoning Ordinance 403.5: Lane informs the Planning Commission of a recent variance application for a property owner on Petes Run. The owner wanted to split a lot that was under an acre and submitted a land division application to the Township Assessor who denied the request. The property owner then applied for a variance from the ZBA. The ZBA denied the request as there was no proof of hardship. Lane consulted the Township Attorney about modifying Section 403.5 to eliminate any ambiguity and ensure the ZBA's authority. The attorney confirmed the Townships authority to grant variances for lot area and lot width but did suggest modifying the section. The process would involve a public

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hearing and if it is recommended for approval, it will be sent to the county and then to the Township Board.

Other:

- a. Zoning Administrator Report – Lane noted the ZA report is in the packet. There were no questions from the Board.
- b. Township Board Representative Report – Green updated the board on the progress towards the new Township Hall, noting an overview of the QBS architect selection system given to the Board by Steve Williams a retired Civil Engineering. Emails were sent out to a list of local architects along with running an ad in the Harbor Light with three firms responding. A date will be set for interviews with the responding architectural firms. Green mentioned the ECRC report and October meeting date for the Emmet County Road Commission. Forster asked Green about financing options for the new Township Hall. Green mentioned that there may be tree trimming around the current Township Hall to remove dead limbs hanging over the Hall.
- c. Correspondence – none

Planning Commissioner Comments (open discussion) – none

Public Comment – Mooradian thanked the board for the opportunity to speak and had comments on the Master Plan, clarifying the mixed residential, transitional zones and addressed the maintenance of private and wastewater systems. He also pointed out a typo that Lane said he would correct. Garon Gopigian stated he supports keeping private wells and mentioned a Township resident, Fred Ball, offering his services for the potential new Township Hall and inquired about the possibility of lifting the Township Hall.

Next Meeting: Planning Commission next regular meeting will be held October 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment: **Forster made the motion to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Thompson seconded. Six (6) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Jim Osetek, Secretary

Transcribed by:
Amy Peters

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