

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
May 13, 2026

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

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

Absent: none

Visitors: Elizabeth & Mason Lampton, Meg Wittner, Pat Lennon, Israel Hernandez, Jim Osetek, Ty Humpert, Jim Hurt, Susan Hughes, Garon Gopigian, Libbey Lince, Paul Matthews, Lindy Sobonya, David Grossi, Natalie Sobonya, Kaitlin Berry, Karin Offield, Mary Grace McCaskill, Bob Vala, Mark Prendenville, Carrie Anderson, Dana Phillips, Tracy Phillips, Jim Roznowski, Ed Taylor, Bev Osetek

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

Approve Agenda as presented or with additions: Dohan motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Thompson seconded. All ayes.

Public Comment – Bev Osetek appreciates the thoughtfulness regarding light fixtures but is still concerned about the lighting and traffic. Belinda Sobonya stated her concerns regarding the continuous construction, lighting, that landscape buffering won't be enough to cut down on noise, traffic concerns, the varying degrees of disabled persons on site and the propensity for violence and the loss of the "neighborhood." Jim Roznowski commented on the construction traffic/noise, general everyday traffic increase, lighting, snow piles melting onto his property and that the neighborhood will be ruined. Jim Osetek stated he is not opposed to a Group Home but feels it doesn't meet the Group Home standards, concerns on the impact for the neighborhood and the lack of integration into the area.

Minutes: **Remus made the motion to approve the minutes of April 8, 2026, as presented. Green seconded. All ayes.**

Unfinished Business

- a. **Case #01-2026- Postponed Decision – Chair Forster introduced Case #1-2026, a postponed decision, to consider a request for a site plan review and Special Use Permit approval as submitted by Ann's Nest to allow for the parcel at 7481 S. State Road to be used for an Adult Foster Care Facility/Assisted Living Homes. The property is more particularly described in tax parcel #24-16-12-100-082. Commissioner Osetek recused himself at 5:34 p.m. due to a conflict of interest with the case and left dais.** Lane provided comments on the Special Use Permit for an Adult Foster Care Facility at 7481 S. State Rd. stating the Planning Commission needs to make a recommendation to approve or deny the permit which will be sent on to the Township Board of Trustees. Lane noted the plans were modified to include five (5) six (6) bedroom buildings, community, and a maintenance building. Lane

Proposed: 5-13-26

Approved: 7-8-26

referenced Sections 307.2 and 307.3 for height and dimensional requirements and noted that the proposed updated site plan meets the RI zoning district requirements. Lane added that Section 504.1, Graphic requirements, Section 504.2, Site impact statement and Section 506, Site Plan Review Standards were also satisfied in staffs opinion. He added that staff findings for all the Zoning Ordinance requirements are included in the analysis memo in the meeting packet which the Planning Commission can use, modify or reject during your deliberations. Lane stated that a revised landscaping, screening, and buffering plan was provided by the applicants that staff believes allows the proposed facility to be harmonious with the surrounding properties and provides adequate screening in accordance with Section 604 of the Zoning Ordinance. Lane referred to the supplemental standards under Section 706 of the Zoning Ordinance and noted that only thirty (30) residents are allowed to be housed at the facility based on the acreage of the subject property. Lane added that the applicants had provided a lighting plan with signage details that staff has determined that it complies with Section 706. Lane added that parking requirements are satisfied as provided in the analysis memo and the Planning Commission should condition any approval on the project meeting all applicable State and Federal requirements. Chair Forster opened the meeting for the applicants to speak. Mary Grace McCaskill presented the revised plan and noted that the proposed access road was rerouted to avoid high elevation areas and the adjustment of the buildings for better placement and flow of the property. McCaskill noted the proposed staff housing is an option and can be removed if necessary. Dave Grossey, Ann's Nest Landscape Architect, explained the landscape and lighting plans emphasizing the desire for minimal impact on the area and consideration of the neighbors. Lane noted the staff will rotate in three (3) shifts and that staff are not considered residents so that should be subtracted from overall residential count. Dohan asked if they would consider reducing the number of residents to keep the count at thirty (30). Paul Matthews spoke about the disabilities of the residents, and the level of care they require. Dave Grossey said they are conscience of the needs of the neighbors in regard to landscaping. Hollerith asked about the number of events that will be held, how many events per month there will be and noted concerns about parking on State St. should the number of participants be larger than expected. Remus questioned the build-out period and how many phases of development there will be. Matthews responded that they would build as funds become available and that they hope to complete as much as possible as soon as possible. Dohan questioned the signage, where the lights from the sign would point, concerns of light pollution, the amount of time it is lit, is it down shielded at the driveway and could it be turned off or on a schedule. Hollerith pointed out conditions for approval, items such as all required Health permits and approvals from the County, maximum number of residents, staff housing, event capacity, hours of operation, reducing the activity building to its original size and requested that the Planning Commission reevaluate one year after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued. Lane will email the applicants the conditions of the approval. **Commission Thompson made the following motion: "Based on the information in the May 7, 2026, memo from the Township Planning and Zoning Administrator, and due to the Findings of Fact as stated therein and discussed by the Planning Commission, I move to recommend approval to the**

Township Board of Trustees Case #1-2026, a site plan review and Special Use Permit to provide for an adult Foster Care Facility/Assisted Living Homes at 7481 S. State Rd, Tax Parce \$ 24-16-15-12-100-082, as described and depicted in the application materials submitted by Ann's nest dated January 15, 2026, and April 30, 2026, the site plan dated January 14, 2026, the revised site plan, landscaping plan, and lighting plan dated April 30, 2026, the elevation drawings dated April 30, 2026, and the floor plan and elevation drawings March 29, 2024, because the applicable standards of the West Traverse Township Zoning Ordinance have been satisfied, subject to the following conditions:

- A. All required Health permits and approvals from all applicable regulatory agencies including District Health Department #3, the Emmet County Road Commission, and the Emmet County Building Department, shall be obtained and kept current by the applicant and a copy shall be provided to the Township and kept on file with the West Traverse Township Clerk.***
- B. The maximum number of residents onsite shall not exceed thirty (30).***
- C. The six-bedroom houses depicted and labeled A through E on the submitted plans shall have a maximum of six (6) residents per building.***
- D. The Staff Housing building depicted and labeled on the submitted plans shall be used exclusively for temporary staff housing with a maximum of two (2) staff members occupying the building at any one time.***
- E. Events held at the Community Center Building shall have a maximum of sixty-five (65) people per event and only one event may be held at the Community Center per month.***
- F. Hours of normal business operation shall be 6:30 a.m. until 9:30 p.m.***
- G. The Community Center Building shall not exceed 2,000 sq ft in floor area.***
- H. The proposed entry sign shall only be illuminated during the hours of normal business operation.***
- I. The Planning Commission shall re-evaluate this approval and these conditions within one year of the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy by the Emmet County Building Department and determine if any negative effects have occurred. If no negative effects have occurred, the Planning Commission may extend this approval to a future date or indefinitely. No public hearing or further amendment of the Special Land Use Permit is required for this review." Roll call vote: Thompson – yes, Hollerith – yes, Remus – yes, Green – yes, Dohan – yes, Forster – yes. Osetek abstained. Six (6) ayes, one (1) abstained. Commissioner Osetek rejoined the Board at 6:27 p.m.***

- b. Case #02-2026 – Chair Forster introduced Case #02-2026, consider a request for site plan review and Special Use Permit approval as submitted by Mason Hardaway Lampton, on behalf of Midland Farms, LLC, to allow for the parcels at 6135 Hughston Road and 6331 Hughston Road to be used as a Recreational Area for Polo matches. The properties are more particularly described in tax parcel #24-16-15-03-200-010 and #24-16-15-03-400-005. Chair Forster opened the Public Hearing at 6:50 p.m. and asked the Zoning Administrator to offer his comments. Lane provided an overview of the zoning ordinance requirements for a recreational area of fifty-two (52) acres at 6135 and 6331 Hughston Rd, noting the property is proposed to be used**

for Polo matches with a limit of one hundred (100) vehicles and two hundred (200) spectators. Lane noted the previous owners had constructed the Polo Field on the property pursuant to a soil erosion permit issued by Emmet County. Lane referred to the analysis memo included in the meeting packet and cited the site plan requirements in Section 504.1, 504.2 and 5061, the Special Use Permit requirements under Section 604.4 along with the supplemental standards under Section 713. Lane noted that staff findings were provided for all the Zoning Ordinance standards, and the Planning Commission may use, modify or reject staff findings during its deliberations. Lane went through his staff memo and pointed out that the applicants had provided letters from the County Road Commission, the Harbor Springs Fire Chief, a letter and a memo from Benchmark Engineering relating to site drainage. Lane stated that the Planning Commission needs to discuss ingress/egress, parking, and the proposed electronic ticketing system which is intended to monitor the number of vehicles and attendees. Mason & Elizabeth Lampton introduced themselves and discussed what they propose for the Polo Field noting their hours of operation, the number of matches held in the summer which will be ten (10) – three (3) days a week, Wednesday's Friday's and Saturdays, how many spectators they will allow per match, two hundred (200), the ticketing system they plan to use, that they will not allow spectators to mingle with horses or riders, they described the temporary scoreboard and provided a photo, that the proposed PA system will not exceed the one hundred (100) decibels from the speakers during matches and there will be no food or alcohol sales allowed on the property. Pat Lennon, on behalf of the applicants gave an overview and history of the project, the groundwork that has already been done, that the SUP standards remain the same, that it is a compatible use, commented on how the public is in favor of the events, that it is a tasteful amenity and how the Lampton's will carefully monitor all activities. Hollerith had questions about a practice track, how when the horses will warm up and the concern of spectators interfering with the horses, the maximum number of parking one hundred (100) spaces, whether or not there would be commercial boarding of horses, questioned the width of entrance and would Emmet County Road Commission require the widening of it. Hollerith also asked about the portable toilets being ADA compliant. Remus asked if the driveway and gates would be closed during matches. Green commented on how well operated the Bliss Polo matches are managed and looks forward to the matches held here. Osetek questioned the number of portable toilets, the distance to access them, screening to shield them from spectators and the road along with parking concerns along Hughston Rd. and wondered how many horse trailers would be going in and out. Forster asked if the ingress/egress is just one road. Dohan noted concerns of the aesthetics of the portable toilets and how the manure is disposed of after matches. **Public Comment:** Garon Gopigan supports the proposed Polo Field, has concerns about traffic and parking on Houston Rd and cautioned them not to underestimate the number of attendees. Susan Hughes expressed her concerns on how parking will be monitored, traffic, signage, and the loudspeaker. Ty Humpert expressed his support for the Lampton's, that they have obviously given this project a lot of thought, believes it would be a wonderful addition to the community and that the number of matches that will be held is reasonable. Karin Offield shared past experiences with large events and suggested a traffic supervisor during the matches to

monitor the traffic. Tracy Phillips supports the Lampton's and the Polo Field. Israel Hernandez stated his support of the project, questioned how the horses would be "protected" from visitors. Forster closed the Public Hearing and Public Comments at 7:18 p.m. and asked for Commissioner' comments. Dohan questioned if there would be no parking signs on Hughston Rd during matches. Hollerith outlined the conditions for approval of the SUP with items such as number of matches limited to 10 per season, one hundred (100) cars, two hundred (200) spectators, hours of operation 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., no admission fee, implement ticketing system, staffing of the main entrance, no boarding of horses, sound not to exceed one hundred (100) decibels, no onsite temporary housing, recommendation of four (4) portable toilets being ADA compliant, have adequate screening, no alcohol/food sales, and an one (1) year annual review after issuance of the Zoning Permit. **Commissioner Osetek made the following motion:** *"Based on the information in the May 7, 2026, memo from the Township Planning and Zoning Administrator and due to the Findings of Fact as stated therein and discussed by the Planning Commission, I recommend approval to the Township Board of Trustees Case #2-2026, a request for Special Use Permit approval as submitted by Mason Hardaway Lampton to allow for the parcels at 6135 Hughston Road, tax parcel #24-16-15-03-200-010, and 6331 Hughston Road, tax parcel # 24-16-15-03-400-005, to be used as a recreational area for Polo matches, because the applicable standards of the West Traverse Township Zoning Ordinance have been met, subject to the following conditions:*

- A. All required permits and approvals from all applicable regulatory agencies, including District Health Department #3 and the Emmet County Road Commission, shall be obtained and kept current by the applicant and a copy shall be provided to the Township and kept on file with the Township Clerk.*
- B. During Polo matches, temporary "No Parking" signs will be placed along Hughston Road adjacent to the subject properties.*
- C. Portable Toilets placed adjacent to Hughston Road shall be effectively screened from view on Hughston Road.*
- D. Ten (10) total Polo match days shall be allowed between June 1 and August 31 each calendar year, excluding practices.*
- E. A maximum of one hundred (100)spectator vehicles shall be parked onsite during Polo matches.*
- F. A maximum of two hundred (200)spectators shall be onsite during Polo matches.*
- G. Hours of Polo matches shall be between 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.*
- H. There shall be no admission charge to attend Polo matches.*
- I. The applicant shall implement an electronic ticketing system to monitor the number of vehicles and spectators.*
- J. The applicant shall provide staff at the driveway entrance to the subject properties to direct and monitor the number of vehicles and spectators.*
- K. The boarding of any horses on the subject properties shall not be for compensation.*
- L. The proposed scoreboard shall not be illuminated.Sound from the proposed PA system shall not exceed one hundred (100) dba.*

- M. Food and/or alcohol sales are not permitted.*
- N. A proposed schedule of Polo matches shall be provided to the Township Zoning Administrator each year.*
- O. The Planning Commission shall re-evaluate this approval and these conditions within one (1) year of the issuance of a Zoning Permit and determine if any negative effects have occurred. If no negative effects have occurred, the Planning Commission may extend this approval to a future date or indefinitely. No public hearing or further amendment of the Special Land Use permit is required for this review.*
- Additionally, as a recommendation, but not as a condition, the Planning Commission recommends that the applicant provide four (4) portable toilets and one handicap portable toilet during all Polo matches.” Commissioner Dohan seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Osetek – yes, Dohan – yes, Thompson – yes, Hollerith – yes, Remus – yes, Green – yes, Forster – yes. Seven (7) ayes.*

New Business:

- a. None

Other:

- a. Zoning Administrator Report – Lane noted memo in the packet and updated the Board on the recent Michigan Data Centers conversations.
- b. Township Board Representative – Green reported on the condition of the Lower Shore Rd washout and how it is affecting Thorne Swift, the Phase One Environmental Assessment results returned with no issues, that the Township is poised to move forward with construction on the new Township Hall, a proposal for removal of the two (2) Barns along with the various other wooden structures on Township property has been advertised and informed the Planning Commission about the vote to reject the proposal from Little Traverse Conservancy for the purchase of the Township 80.
- c. Correspondence – Lane referenced letters received from Belinda Sobonya, Jim & Bev Osetek, and Jim Bartlett.

Planning Commissioner Comments (open discussion) – Osetek thanked the Planning Commission for their consideration of the neighbors’ concerns regarding Ann’s Nest project. Remus pointed out that Ann’s Nest assisted with the Planning Commission’s decision as they were accommodating with proposed changes.

Public Comments – none

Next Meeting: Planning Commission next regular meeting will be held June 10, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment: Forster asked for a motion to adjourn. **Thompson made the motion to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. Green seconded. All ayes.**

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

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Approved: 7-8-26