WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
Thorne Swift/Parks & Recreation Committee
August 18, 2026 – 5:00 PM

1. Call to order

Chair Hammond called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Hammond, Olson, Ford, DeCamp

Absent: Baker, Mooradian, Arbaugh

Staff Present: Ken Lane, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Guests Present: None

3. Approve minutes of: July 15, 2026.

Motion by DeCamp, second by Ford, to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

4. Old Business

a. Recreation concept proposal discussion

1. Scope of recreational component

a. Map of proposed walking trail

b. Pavilion discussion

Chair Hammond presented a map of a proposed walking trail beginning and ending at the new Township Hall property and traveling across the remaining Township properties. Chair Hammond stated that the proposed trail will cross flatter, more accessible areas of the properties and will go past the existing garage building that the Committee had envisioned using for maintenance purposes. He added the trail length is about ¾ of a mile, and runs through some wooded areas. He added there are numerous spots for benches to be added along the trail route, and the proposed trail will be dirt that can be kept accessible by Township staff.

Member Olson stated that the proposed trail will not be near the existing big barn because it is still unknown what the Township is going to do with that structure.

Chair Hammond stated that if the barn was removed, the trail route could be adjusted to allow the remaining foundation to be included as a landscaping element. He added that some of the smaller existing sheds and other structures may present a hazard to people using the trail, and part of the project budget should include the demolition and removal of those structures.

Zoning Administrator Lane stated it appears the proposed trail route also leaves room for a pavilion.

Member DeCamp stated that he is skeptical of a pavilion and believes it will rarely be used. He added that a pavilion will increase the project budget, which may present a hurdle at the Township Board level.

Chair Hammond stated that perhaps an open picnic area can be developed rather than constructing a pavilion.

Member DeCamp stated that he can envision a picnic area with tables near the new Township Hall property.

Member Olson stated that where the proposed trail leaves the new Township Hall parking lot might be an ideal location for a picnic area.

Chair Hammond stated that there is a raised area near the big barn that is flat, open, has nice views, and is ideal for a picnic area or a future pavilion. He added this location is also more central to the Township properties and is an easy walk from the new Township Hall property.

Zoning Administrator Lane stated that at points where the proposed trail loops through the wooded areas, signage identifying the trees and vegetation may be a good idea. He added that such signage is mentioned in the Township's Parks & Recreation Plan.

Member Ford stated that perhaps preparation of the trail, signs, or picnic area could be a project for local Boy Scouts or Eagle Scouts.

The Recreation Committee agreed to consider contacting local Boy Scouts or Eagle Scouts as the project develops.

After some further discussion, the Recreation Committee determined to move forward with development of the proposed walking trail and to consider an open picnic area rather than a pavilion. The Committee also determined that placards identifying trees and other vegetation could be added, along with benches. The Committee also determined that a grant application should include use of the existing garage for maintenance and the demolition and removal of the smaller sheds and structures that present a hazard.

After some discussion, the Recreation Committee determined that the project budget should include maintenance equipment (chainsaw, riding lawn mower, blower).

c. Bench and picnic table discussion

Zoning Administrator Lane suggested that opportunities to sponsor or donate to a bench or picnic table can be an item to discuss at a public open house. The Recreation Committee agreed.

2. Schedule open house

Zoning Administrator Lane stated that it will be important to schedule an open house to receive public feedback and input and respond to any questions. He added that October might be a good month to allow input from seasonal residents before they leave for the winter.

The Recreation Committee determined that an open house should be scheduled for October 21, 2026, from 5-8PM. Zoning Administrator Lane stated that he will provide a draft open house notice for the Recreation Committee to consider at the September meeting.

b. Playground equipment discussion—Thorne Swift

Chair Hammond stated that he has received three quotes, and he will be obtaining one more. He added that he will also be contacting tree removal companies to take down the trees in the area proposed for the playground equipment. He added that he has started receiving donations, and he will continue to keep the Committee up to date.

5. <u>New Business</u>

None.

6. Public comments

None.

7. Committee member Comments

Member Olson handed out a letter providing an overview of the Project Centennial concept. He added that a groundbreaking for the new Township Hall is scheduled for August 24 at 11am.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for September 16, 2026, at 5:00 PM.

Submitted by: Ken Lane, Planning & Zoning Administrator