

WEST TRAVERSE TOWNSHIP
REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
September 9, 2026

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

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

Absent: Osetek

Visitors: Ed Taylor, Garon Gopigian, Molly Ballor, Rich Bachus, Lisa Morris

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

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

Public Comment – none

Approval of August 12, 2026, Regular meeting minutes: Dohan asked that the word “*alternate*” in the sentence “*alternate language was too restrictive*”, be changed to “*standard*”. **Remus made the motion to approve the minutes of August 12, 2026, as presented with corrections. Thompson seconded. Six (6) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Unfinished Business:

- a. Discussion – Data Centers – Lane reported on a recent MTA workshop regarding Data Centers and Public Act 233 noting that while the Township’s wind/solar provisions are more restrictive than state law, large scale projects may default to State oversight. The Planning Commission reviewed the information about Data Centers, including the potential impact on energy capacity and zoning requirements. Legal Counsel that spoke at the MTA Workshop suggested that communities consider adopting a moratorium to allow for time to research the impacts Data Centers will have before updating their zoning ordinances, that Industrial areas are better suited for Data Centers and Townships should consult with their local attorney regarding the wording of the moratorium as Data Centers are a “unique use.” It was also noted that “Hyperscale” Data Centers require significant resources, smaller “Edge” Data Centers may be less use intensive.
- b. Discussion –Battery Energy Storage Systems – Lane suggested using the same template for Data Centers and that a moratorium for Data Centers be in place before a Battery Storage System moratorium.

New Business:

- a. Case #5-2026 – Public Hearing to consider a temporary moratorium on applications for data centers in West Traverse Township. Forster opened the public hearing at 5:45 p.m. Lane pointed out the moratorium was drafted by the Township Attorney, a notice regarding the Public Hearing was published in the Harbor Light Newspaper on 8-19-

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26, that a letter against Data Centers was received and in the packets. Forster opened the meeting for public comment. Garon Gopigian questioned if Industrial Parks within the Township such as Franklin Park are areas they are interested in or are they looking at AG areas as well and would those areas be able to encompass the square footage of Data Centers. Rich Bachus questioned as wind & solar are currently allowed, could wind & solar energy production offset the pull from the electrical grid should Data Centers be allowed and stated concern of the possibility of rising electrical costs if Data Centers were allowed here. Lisa Morris asked that NDA's (non-disclosure agreement) not be allowed for Data Centers or Battery Storage Systems. She raised concerns regarding noise levels, suggested that the Township adopt a Noise Ordinance with a general decibel limit for both industrial & residential and asked that if any commercial building such as Data Centers were to come here then vacate the building/property, that there needs to be a decommissioning plan to return the land to its natural state and remove hazardous materials from the ground. Forster closed the Public Hearing at 5:59 p.m. Dohan suggested language for the motion with a more definitive time frame. Green suggested that the length of the moratorium be set at one year. Lane noted that once the Planning Commission approves the moratorium, it will go to the County Planning Commission for its thirty (30) day review, then to the Board of Trustees for their approval. Once the Township Board approves it, that is the beginning date of the one (1) year moratorium. **Hollerith made the following motion.** *"I move to recommend approval to the West Traverse Township Board of Trustees an ordinance to impose a temporary moratorium, in the form drafted by the Township Attorney and labeled "Public Hearing Draft 09-09-26", on accepting or considering applications for Data Centers while West Traverse Township completes a study of Data Centers and related potential benefits and potential impacts along with Zoning Ordinances and Zoning Regulations pertaining to Data Centers and undertakes any required drafting and adopting of such ordinances and regulations for West Traverse Township."* **Green seconded. Roll call vote. Hollerith – yes, Green – yes, Forster – yes, Remus – yes, Thompson – yes, Dohn – yes. Six (6) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Other:

- a. Zoning Administrator Report – Lane reported an update on a storage unit project on State Rd that deviated from the previously approved March 2024 site plan. The Board discussed its purpose, why it is a stand-alone building, is there a chance that the builders could come back to ask for another addition, were the setbacks met, is it ok to approve it administratively or does it need to come back before the Planning Commission and the if the landscaping needs to be adjusted for the stand-alone building. The Planning Commissioners unanimously approved allowing ZA Lane to approve changes within the revised site plans that resulted in the reduction of storage units.
- b. Township Board Representative – Green reported on the previous nights Board of Trustees meeting. He noted that the Bond for the new Township Hall construction was approved, that the loan closed as well as updating the PC on a proposal from Karin Offield regarding preserving the Cook Barns, the current Township Hall and that the Township Board approved pursuing a grant from Petoskey Rotary Club to help offset the costs.
- c. Correspondence – Lane noted a letter of support in the packet for a moratorium on any data center permits.

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Planning Commissioner Comments (open discussion) – Lane addressed upcoming changes to state land division laws effective March 2027 which will increase allowed splits on ten (10) acre parcels. Hollerith inquired about short term rentals & noise ordinances, the enforcement challenges and whether or not it is necessary to have dedicated personnel rather than relying solely on the ZA for enforcement issues if those ordinances were to be adopted.

Public Comments – Lisa Morris requested a name correction for the minutes, Karin Offield, not Brenda Offield, was the one who approached the Township Board Tuesday night with a presentation for the Cook Barn & current Township Hall. Morris also asked if there could be an ordinance to limit the size of Data Centers and make sure there are no public subsidies which might encourage them to come here. Rich Bachus questioned if it would be possible to have a curbside recycling program in the Township.

Next Meeting: Planning Commission next regular meeting will be held October 14, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment: Forster asked for a motion to adjourn at 6:27 p.m. **Thompson made a motion to adjourn. Green seconded. Six (6) ayes, one (1) absent.**

Respectfully Submitted by:
Jim Osetek, Secretary

Transcribed by:
Amy Peters

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