



**West Traverse Township**  
(Est. 1897)

**Township Board**

Bob Sandford - *Supervisor*  
Cynthia Fisher - *Clerk*  
Kristi Hollingsworth - *Treasurer*  
Sophy Carpenter - *Trustee*  
Sam DeCamp - *Trustee*

**Planning Commission**

Jim Bartlett - *Chair*  
Paul Mooradian - *Vice Chair*  
Joey Arbaugh - *Secretary*  
Kristi Hollingsworth  
Richard Horan  
Pete Wallin  
Ann Wilderom

**Zoning Board of Appeals**

Ken Parada - *Chair*  
Sophy Carpenter  
Ed Gray  
Tim Hayner  
Paul Mooradian

**Board of Review**

Joretta Bethke - *Recording Secretary*  
Craig Cottrill  
Jim Frang  
Open

**Thorne Swift Nature Preserve Committee**

John Baker - *Chair*  
Joey Arbaugh  
Sam DeCamp  
Carolyn Sandford  
Sally Stebbins

**Recreation Committee**

Carolyn Sandford - *Chair*  
Sandy Baker  
Paul Repasky  
John Riggs

**Water Board**

Bob Sandford - *Chair*  
Jim Bartlett  
Wayne Chellis  
Sam DeCamp

**Planning/Zoning Administrator**

Randy Frykberg

**Assessor**

George Tupa

**Secretary**

Sue Matsko

**Office Hours**

9:00 am - 1:00 pm daily

**Board Meetings**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays - 7:00 pm

**Planning Commission Meetings**

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

**West Traverse Township 2007 Fall Newsletter**

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www.westtraversetownship.com

**From The Treasurer - Kristi Hollingsworth**

You will notice that the winter 2007 tax bill does not include a county allocation. All of the county allocation is now included on the summer tax bill.

The TWP ALLOC '04 for 1.4 mils includes 0.7 mils for the township general fund and 0.7 mils for local road projects. The TWP VTD PRSV '04 for 0.15 mils is for the Thorne Swift Nature Preserve.

Please remember that winter taxes are due February 14, 2008. The township hall will be open all day to collect taxes on December 28<sup>th</sup> and February 14<sup>th</sup>. Taxes paid after February 14<sup>th</sup> will be considered late and are subject to interest, with no exceptions.

Please also review your tax bill carefully. Make sure your HOMESTEAD % and mailing address are correct. Every effort is made to send taxes to the correct address, however it is your responsibility as the taxpayer to ensure that we have your correct mailing address.

**From the Clerk - Cynthia Fisher**

As the new Township Clerk, the last 6 months have been filled with new experiences and challenges. (All enjoyable!) Next year, 2008 will be a flurry of activity for the Clerk's office with 4 elections. I encourage all township residents (of legal age) not registered to vote, to do so. The deadlines to register are as follows: December 17<sup>th</sup> for the **Presidential Primary election** on January 15<sup>th</sup>, April 7<sup>th</sup> for the **School election** in May, July 7<sup>th</sup> for the **Primary election** in August, and October 6<sup>th</sup> for the **General election** in November. Absentee ballots for the Presidential Primary will be available after December 1, 2007. Voting is a privilege, please take advantage. See you at the polls!

Also, I would encourage residents to attend a monthly Township Board meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month and/or a Planning Commission meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. The township would benefit from your comments and suggestions.

In closing I would like to wish each township resident and family a safe and wonderful holiday season. May the New Year bring you prosperity and good health.

**Water System Update**

The addition of a reservoir to the Township Water System is tentatively scheduled for construction in 2008. The Michigan DEQ requires a reservoir when the number of customers exceeds 150 in order to satisfy peak demand, provide adequate fire protection, stabilize water pressure, and provide for emergencies in the event the wells and/or pumps supplying the system are not operating. The Township Water System is currently supplying near the maximum number of customers that may be allowed without a reservoir. The 125,000-gallon reservoir, consisting mainly of a green colored tank on the ground, will be located at the southeast corner of the Township 40 acre parcel along Hughston Road. It will be paid for out of existing funds. The project will include running pipes down the middle of Hughston Road from Cemetery Road, and rebuilding that stretch of Hughston Road.

The Township is working with the City of Harbor Springs on an amendment to the Water Supply Contract to include the reservoir.

**Thorne Swift Nature Preserve - John Riggs**

Hello All. Thank you for your continued support and helping to make our 2007 season a success. We added Australian Aboriginal themes to our children's programs which was as much fun for our staff as it was for the kids. We are also able to host four Birds and Blooms walks thanks to the help of Sally and Kenyon Stebbins, members of the Petoskey Regional Audubon. The attendance at our scheduled and unscheduled Story Telling and Night programs was strong as were the two extra Telescope programs we added to the ones listed in our newsletter. In addition to regular programming, our two-day Haunted Woods attracted 260 visitors. Thank you for allowing us to scare you!

This past year we received several large donations, including an 8 inch telescope, funding for laminated interpretive trail signs to add information and greatly reduce the amount of paper used for brochures, and a bench in memory of Don Friend.

For the 2008 season we would like to add a nighttime trail camera with an infrared trigger and flash system and several binoculars to our wish list. The trail camera would give us the ability to survey and make photographic displays of the secretive creatures that roam the preserve after the sun goes down, and the binoculars are very useful tools that could be used on a day-to-day basis.

Thank you and we hope to see you all next year.

**Board of Review Openings**

There are two openings on the BOR for 2008. The BOR meets six times during the year - one-hour meetings in March, July, and December, and 6 hour hearings on March 10 and 11. A training seminar is available in February. The Township pays for training and BOR members are compensated for all meetings. BOR members must be registered voters, landowners, and taxpayers of the Township. If you are interested in serving on the BOR or need more information, please contact the Township Office as soon as possible.

**Zoning & Planning Activities: June - November**

Zoning permits were issued for 6 new residential houses, 1 major remodel & expansion of a clubhouse, 4 accessory buildings, 6 additions, 1 agricultural exempt building, and 1 sign.

Planning Commission activities included:

- Continued work on updating the Comprehensive Plan.
- Drafted an amendment to the zoning ordinance for sexually oriented businesses, held a public hearing, and recommended that it be adopted by the Township Board.
- Worked on several drafts of regulations for wind turbine generators.

**Road Projects**

All of the township’s local road projects listed in the summer newsletter have been completed. The total cost was \$189,265. In addition, the federally funded work on Middle Road was completed in early November.

**Township Audit**

The biennial audit of the Township finances was completed this summer for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007. The audit opinion was that the Township’s financial statements “present fairly, in all material aspects, the respective financial position of” all of the activities of the Township. A copy of the audit report is available for viewing at the Township Office during normal business hours.

**Consolidation of Township Services**

As communicated in the summer newsletter, for the past six months, there has been a cloud over the future of township government, caused by the introduction of Michigan House Bill 4780 to shift the basic township services of assessing, elections, and tax collection to the counties. The good news is that, after being presented with the facts that HB 4780 would do nothing to resolve the State’s financial problems and would likely cost tax payers more for these services to be performed by the counties, many state legislators have distanced themselves from the bill.

While it is too soon to declare that HB 4780 is “dead”, it is unlikely that it will be adopted into law, at least in its present form. According to the Michigan Townships Association, “there is a growing perception among legislators that the logistical issues resulting from radically altering township government would be totally unworkable for a variety of political, practical, and constitutional reasons.”

A group of Emmet County township supervisors continues to take every opportunity to meet with our local legislators – Rep. Gary McDowell and Sen. Jason Allen - to provide them with additional examples of how townships are efficiently and effectively providing services to the taxpayers.

**Recreation Committee – Cook Family Barn**

Several years ago, West Traverse Township purchased the land across Lake Street from the current township hall. This land had belonged to the Walter Cook family and the Cook family barn from the 1890’s is still standing near the east boundary. Over the years, various people from the township have expressed interest in restoring this barn, even to the extent of making it usable for group events, gatherings, picnics, etc.

An estimate was recently procured from Great Lakes Barn Restoration, Inc. for restoring the barn. Phase I to stabilize the barn structure for another 50 years would cost \$40,000. Phase II to add new exterior rough sawn pine siding and replace doors and windows would cost an additional \$40,000. To bring the barn up to code so it could be used for public events would exceed a total cost of \$200,000.

Before recommending any action to the township board, the Recreation Committee needs to know what the taxpayers want to do with the barn. A brief survey has been included with this newsletter that we ask you to fill out and return with your tax bill.

**Heritage Highway Committee**

The November Meeting of the Heritage Highway Committee was held at the West Traverse Township Hall. Appropriately, it was announced at this meeting that MDOT had officially accepted West Traverse Township as a partner, along with Friendship, Readmond, and Cross Village Townships, in the M-119 Tunnel of Trees Scenic Heritage Route. On M-119, near the sign that designates the beginning of West Traverse Township as you leave Harbor Springs, you will soon see a sign that indicates this is now the start of this historic and scenic route that runs all the way to Cross Village.

**Library Services**

West Traverse Township currently contracts with the Petoskey Library (PL) for library services. Per the contract, the township assigns its penal fees, \$7,574 for 2007, to the PL and pays the PL \$5 per library card issued to township residents – 209 cards in 2007 totaling \$1,045. Next year, the PL will charge \$10 per card and has indicated that the cost per card will continue to increase.

The current private Harbor Springs Library has indicated a desire to become a public Harbor Springs District Library (HSDL). The Harbor Springs Library Board has held preliminary meetings with the municipalities in the Harbor Springs school district to determine their interest in participating in the process to form a district library. The Township Board voted to participate on the HSDL planning committee, designating Bob Sandford as the representative and Cynthia Fisher as the alternate. As more details become known about the potential HSDL, they will be communicated in future newsletters

**Sexually Oriented Businesses Ordinance Amendment**

Following a highly publicized situation in 2006 regarding the establishment of a sexually oriented business in Bear Creek Township south of Petoskey, Emmet County revised its zoning ordinance to reflect that the First Amendment guarantees the right of such businesses to locate within any municipality, but that municipalities retain the right to regulate such businesses to minimize their negative secondary effects. Since West Traverse Township is one of the four townships (out of 16) in the county that has its own zoning and does not fall under the county zoning, earlier this year the Township Planning Commission drafted a sexually oriented businesses amendment to the existing Township zoning ordinance along the lines of the county ordinance, and recommended that it be adopted by the Township Board. Among other things, the proposed sexually oriented businesses amendment requires that sexually oriented businesses be located on commercial property, 500 feet from residential property, and 1000 feet from churches, day care facilities, libraries, parks, schools, cemeteries, and government offices. Based on these criteria, 4 lots currently occupied in Franklin Park were identified as potential locations for sexually oriented businesses.

Because of the nature of this proposed amendment, it has been necessary for the Township Board to establish a solid legislative history with regard to understanding the regulation of sexually oriented businesses to minimize their negative secondary effects. Board members have reviewed all of the materials used by the county and have discussed the proposed amendment at two board meetings. Another public hearing will be held at the board meeting on December 11, after which the board will vote on the proposed amendment.