



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 Heneks
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

2nd Tuesdays - 7:00 pm

Planning Commission Meetings

2nd Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

West Traverse Township 2007 Summer Newsletter

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www.westtraversetownship.com

From the Treasurer

Please review your summer tax bill carefully for correct address, taxable value and principal residence exemption (PRE). Beginning this year, the summer tax bill now includes the full amount of the county allocation. In addition, the Harbor Springs Public School "sinking fund" millage approved in the recent May election has been added. The total approved amount is 0.66 mils, with half (0.33) billed in the summer and the remaining half billed in the winter.

Taxes are due on September 17th, 2007 and the treasurer will be in the office all day on the 17th to collect taxes. Postmarks will be accepted. After the 17th, 1% interest will be added with no exceptions.

Summer tax deferments are available at the township office and must be filed prior to the summer tax due date. To be eligible, you must have a homestead and household income not to exceed \$40,000, among other criteria. To see if you qualify, contact the township office.

On your tax bill, you will see an abbreviated statement indicating that a wetland inventory has been completed by the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. To view the complete statement, please visit the township web site.

Last, although the Township taxes are only on your winter tax bill, please note that the Township allocation will remain the same as last year at 1.4 mils, of which 0.70 mils is designated for local road repairs and improvements. The allocation for Thorne Swift Nature Preserve will also remain the same as last year at 0.15 mils.

Thanks to Eve Lauer

On June 13, 2007, Eve Lauer resigned as Township Clerk. Over the many years that Eve served as treasurer and clerk, no one has been more dedicated to doing the right thing for the Township. We wish Eve the very best as she pursues the many other facets of her life, knowing that she will always be there to make sure the Township continues to move in the right direction.

Welcome to New Clerk Cynthia Fisher

The Township was very fortunate to have three well-qualified residents apply to serve the remainder of the clerk's term until the next general election in November, 2008. The Township Board selected Cynthia Fisher in recognition of her long-standing interest in the township through attendance at Board and Planning Commission meetings and by serving as an election worker. Please join us in welcoming Cynthia to her new position.

Fire Authority

The Township is a participant in the Harbor Springs Area Fire Authority, along with the City of Harbor Springs, Little Traverse Township, and Pleasantview Township. Construction has begun on a second fire station adjoining the Little Traverse Township Hall on Pleasantview Road. Our Township will be contributing 25% of the cost of the new station, the same percentage that we typically provide for operations and the equipment fund. A used aerial truck and a new tanker/pumper truck have been purchased for the new station, using the equipment fund and generous donations from various parties.

Recreation

On December 14, 2007, we were notified that the Township's Five-Year Recreation Plan for 2006-2011 had been approved by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Having this Plan approved is required in order to apply for and receive grants from the State of Michigan and others for recreational improvements.

On April 10, 2007, the Township Board approved a resolution in support of finalizing the Harbor Area Recreation Plan developed by six townships and the City of Harbor Springs, in conjunction with HARBOR, Inc. The elements of this plan are trails, open space, and a recreation authority. It is anticipated that our Township will benefit from collaborating with our neighbors in completing this plan. The part that has raised some concern is the recreation authority. While this authority would theoretically have taxing powers, any such levy would have to be approved by the governing body of each of the seven jurisdictions and by the voters of each jurisdiction. The intent is that funding will be sought through donations and grants.

Water System Update

The Water Board continues to evaluate options for expanding the Township water system. Discussions are ongoing with other parties relative to their participation in addressing water supply and water quality concerns. No construction is planned for 2007.

Zoning/Planning Activity

11 Zoning Permits issued for:

- 1 new residence
- 1 major remodel & expansion of Clubhouse
- 2 accessory buildings
- 5 major additions & 2 minor additions

Planning Commission:

- Recommended approval of Birchwood Farms Clubhouse expansion
- Recommended revised zoning fees for new fiscal year
- Continued work on update of Comprehensive Plan, concentrating on Future Land Use
- Recommended amendments for Private Access Way regulations

Township Committee Members Needed

A lot of the work of the Township is done by the committees listed on the left of the front page of this newsletter. Every year, it is a challenge to find Township residents willing to make a commitment to serve on these committees. The Thorne Swift Nature Preserve and Recreation Committees are voluntary, whereas the Board of Review, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Planning Commission receive modest per hour or per meeting compensation.

Openings on these committees will not be posted until November, but we want to give our residents time to think about their interest in becoming a member of a valued committee. If you are interested in applying for any position, please send a brief letter to the Township Clerk. Please note that you must be a West Traverse Township resident. Appointments will be made at the December 11th Township Board meeting and become effective January 1, 2008.

2007 Road Repairs

The following local roads were selected for repair by the Township Board in conjunction with the Emmet County Road Commission at an estimated cost to the Township of \$172,065, with funds coming from the additional voted Township millage:

Cracksealing:

- Cemetery From Cottontail to Hughston
- Cottontail Lane From Tamarac to Cemetery
- Franklin Street From State for 0.54 miles
- Pinehill Drive From Tamarac to Cemetery
- Tamarac Trail From Cemetery to Golf Side
- Tamarac Trail From Pinehill for 0.06 miles

Patching and Sealcoat:

- Lightfoot Road From Heynig to State
- Quick Road From Lightfoot west 0.50 miles

Asphalt Wedge and Sealcoat:

- Cemetery Road From Lake to Cottontail
- Heynig Road From State west for 0.79 miles
- Lightfoot Road From Harbor Springs to Quick Rd
- Lightfoot Road From State to LaCount

Asphalt Wedge and Cap:

- 5 Mile Creek Road From M119 to Friendship Twp
- Quick Road From Lightfoot to State

The Township Board also elected to install a blinking light at the intersection of State and Quick Roads, blinking amber on State Road and blinking red on Quick Road.

In addition, Middle Road, recently designated a primary road eligible for federal funding, will be widened and resurfaced from State Road to West Hughston Road at no cost to the Township. Scheduled to be done after September 1, this work could be postponed until 2008 depending upon the fall weather.

Handicap Ramp

The Township received notification that it has been awarded a polling place improvement grant of \$15,000 for upgrading the Hall entrance ramp to meet handicap requirements. That will cover about 75% of the cost.

From the Supervisor

As we are all too well-aware, the Michigan state government is currently suffering from severe budget deficit problems. Some politicians in Lansing have somehow determined that the local township governments are part of the problem. Bills have been introduced in the House to shift all tax collection, election, and assessing functions from 95% of the townships to the counties, and furthermore require the townships to reimburse the counties for performing these services.

How shifting tax collection, assessing, and elections to the county will save the state money is a mystery. There is no evidence to prove this is a cost savings. Townships, at least the ones here in Emmet County, are efficient, low-cost units of government. Shifting these labor-intensive duties to higher-paid county officials will most certainly raise the costs significantly, again at township expense. Townships are the most accountable form of government because they are closest to the people. Townships also provide many services to local residents in addition to tax collection, elections, and assessing.

Several area township supervisors have joined together to carry the message that townships efficiently and effectively serve local residents to our officials in Lansing – State Representative Gary McDowell and State Senator Jason Allen. So far, Rep. McDowell has expressed his non-support for the legislation that has been introduced and Sen. Allen has said he would only support legislation that gives townships options, not mandates. However, we will not know their positions for sure until they vote.

The message carried to Rep. McDowell and Sen. Allen included examples of how our townships are already taking a regional approach and sharing services. Examples for West Traverse Township include: fire protection, sewer maintenance, airport authority, library, recreation, water system, road maintenance, solid waste disposal, cemetery, school districts, etc. For a more detailed list, please visit the Township website.

If you agree that townships effectively and efficiently represent your interests, please take the time to communicate that to our officials in Lansing.