



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*
Jim Frang - *Chair*
Curt Regentin
Lou Zako

**Thorne Swift Nature
Preserve Committee**

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

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

Tim Grimm

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 2008 Summer Newsletter

8001 M-119, PO Box 353, Harbor Springs, MI 49740
(231) 526-7361 Fax: (231) 526-0028 E-mail: secretary@westtraversetownship.com
www.westtraversetownship.com

From the Treasurer

Taxes are due on September 15, 2008 and the treasurer will be in the office all day to collect taxes. Postmarks will be accepted. After the 15th, 1% interest will be added, no exceptions.

Summer tax deferments are available at the township office and must be filed prior to the summer tax due date. An owner of eligible property may file a completed form with the Treasurer by September 15. A valid deferment permits summer property taxes to be paid by February 14, 2009 without any additional penalty interest. To be eligible, you must have a homestead and a total household income of \$40,000 or less for the tax year 2007 among other criteria. To see if you qualify, please contact the township office.

Finally, please review your summer tax bill carefully for correct address, taxable value and principal residence exemption. If there is anything that appears incorrect, contact our office immediately.

From the Clerk

West Traverse Township voters give yourselves a round of applause! We are 2 for 2. In all of Emmet County, West Traverse Township had the highest percentage of voter turn-out in the January Presidential Primary and the highest number of voters at the May School Election. Congratulations!

Please mark your calendars for August 5th - the Primary Election and November 4th - the General Election. If you are not a registered voter, there is still time. You may register for the August Primary by July 7th or for the November General Election by October 6th. If you need an Absentee Ballot for either election, please call the Township Hall at 526-7361 or stop at the Township Hall for an application. Remember, Every Vote Counts!

In closing, I hope everyone has a fantastic summer filled with family, friends, and good times. See you on the water!

Township Officials

The Republican Party candidates for township office in the August 5th Primary Election are: Cynthia Fisher and Teri Morse for clerk; John Baker, Jim Bartlett, and Sophy Carpenter for two trustee positions; and Kristi Hollingsworth and Bob Sandford unopposed for treasurer and supervisor, respectively. There are no Democratic Party candidates. Independent candidates have until July 17 to file for the November General Election.

New Township Assessor

George Tupa, with whom the township has contracted to be the assessor since 1998, chose not to renew his contract when it expired at the end of May. After advertising for and interviewing applicants, the Township Board chose to contract with Tim Grimm to be the new township assessor. Tim previously was the township assessor from 1985 - 1998, and is currently the assessor for the City of Harbor Springs and four other townships. Tim is a Level III assessor. His son, Brian Grimm, a Level II assessor, will be working with him in our township. Brian will be holding office hours at the Township Hall on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tim is available by appointment through the Township Office.

One of the first things that Brian will be doing starting June 1 is taking photographs of the principal buildings on all parcels within the township. These pictures will be very helpful for discussing assessments and especially for the Board of Review. When Brian visits your property, he will be wearing an identification badge and will also have a sign on his vehicle.

Library Services

The Township Board approved the agreement with the Petoskey Public Library for July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009, thus allowing township residents to continue to use the Library at no cost. Per the agreement, the township contributed \$10 per card for the 217 cards used by township residents in 2007, in addition to assigning its penal fines to the Library.

Contrary to the article in the previous newsletter, the current Harbor Springs Private Library has decided not to convert to a public library. A local committee has been formed to promote the concept of a Harbor Springs Area District Library to include all of the municipalities in the Harbor Springs School District and to provide full library services locally.

Water System Update

Construction has begun on the addition of a water storage tank (i.e.reservoir) to the West Traverse Township Water System. The purpose of the storage tank is to provide improved fire protection, stabilized water pressure, and emergency backup to current water system customers. The 130,000-gallon, green colored glass-fused-to steel tank will be located on the ground at the southeast corner of the Township 40 acre parcel along Hughston Road. The project includes running pipes down the middle of Hughston Road from Cemetery Road, and rebuilding that stretch of Hughston Road. The Hughston Road portion of the project should be completed by the end of July, with the storage tank portion to be completed by the end of September.

Road Repair Projects

In conjunction with the water reservoir project, the main road repair project in 2008 will be to rebuild Hughston Road for 0.99 miles north and west from Cemetery Road. The remaining 1.15 miles to Middle Road will be patched with asphalt where needed and completely seal coated with a fog seal topcoat.

The Township Board is also considering other projects that might yet be scheduled in 2008.

There have been a number of inquiries about possible repairs to Hoyt Road, especially between Quick Road and Lake Road. Because Little Traverse Township, the City of Harbor Springs, and West Traverse Township share responsibility for this road, all three municipalities have to agree on the timing of the repairs, with the current plan to do it in 2010. In addition to repairing the road itself, the three municipalities are working with HARBOR, Inc. to explore the options for a non-motorized trail from Lake Road to Quick Road, possibly along the west side of Hoyt Road.

Thorne Swift Nature Preserve

The trails have all been chipped and the 2008 season is well under-way. We hope to see everyone in the township make it out to the Nature Preserve as often as possible. If you are lucky, you might even catch a glimpse of the black bear that left its tracks on the dune platform.

When you visit, you will see the minor, but hopefully effective, improvements listed in the enclosed annual newsletter and program schedule from John Riggs and family.

The Thorne Swift Committee is beginning to work on a longer-term repair and improvement plan, given that some of the facilities – the boardwalks, dune platform, and nature center building - are approaching 25 years old. The purpose of the plan is to spread out the needed repairs and replacements so they don't all occur at once and can be handled within the annual budget.

Township Hall

Sometime this summer, the Township Hall will have a slightly changed appearance. After considering the various options for several years, the Township Board decided to replace the dangerously deteriorated brick chimney with a new wood chimney, to match the siding on the Hall.

Planning & Zoning Activities

There has been a lot of activity since the last newsletter.

- The Township Board approved the Sexually Oriented Businesses amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance, regulating the location of such businesses within the township.

-- In response to input from several property owners, an amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance was drafted regulating helicopter landings and takeoffs. The Planning Commission recommended approval of this amendment following a public hearing, and it was subsequently approved by the Township Board.

--The Planning Commission completed work on an amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance regulating wind turbine generators and recommended approval following a public hearing. The amendment is currently awaiting Township Board action.

--The Planning Commission completed the update of the township's Master Plan. The Township Board approved the distribution of the Master Plan to the surrounding municipalities for their review as required by law. Following the 63 day review period, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Master Plan, after which it can be approved. Prior to the public hearing, the Master Plan will be available at the township office and on-line at the township website.

Recreation Committee - Cook Family Barn Survey

Thank you to the 214 of you who responded to the Barn Survey that was included with the Fall 2007 newsletter. The majority of the responses indicated little or no interest in the barn. However, at the same time, an overwhelming majority of the responses supported limited maintenance to keep the barn from deteriorating further. It was very helpful to the Recreation Committee to have this information.

As part of the limited maintenance, the vegetation growing around the perimeter of the barn has been removed to help the barn walls from rotting out. In addition, a lot of the non-historical items that have accumulated in the barn over the years have or will be removed

Millages

Included on the ballot for the August 5th Primary Election are two millage renewal proposals, both of them for a four-year period. The first is the County fixed millage proposal that includes renewal authorization for the maximum millage that a township can levy. Historically the maximum authorized township general millage has been 1.0 mill. In 2004, the area townships requested authorization to levy up to an additional 1.0 mill for a total maximum of 2.0 mills, with proceeds from the additional authorized 1.0 mill to be used for township road repairs. The actual total amount levied by West Traverse Township over the past four years has been 1.4 mills.

The second millage renewal proposal relates to operations and maintenance of the Thorne Swift Nature Preserve within the Township. This millage has been in place and renewed since 1982. The renewal seeks authorization to continue a maximum levy of 0.25 mills for this purpose. The actual amount levied by the Township over the past four years has varied from 0.25 to 0.15 mills. The Township has worked to keep the amount levied below the authorized amount while still maintaining the flexibility to respond to major repairs or replacements that may be needed at the Preserve.