



West Traverse Township 2009 Summer Newsletter

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West Traverse Township (Est. 1897)

Township Board

Bob Sandford - *Supervisor*
Cynthia Fisher - *Clerk*
Kristi Hollingsworth - *Treasurer*
John Baker - *Trustee*
Jim Bartlett - *Trustee*

Planning Commission

Paul Mooradian - *Chair*
Joey Arbaugh - *Secretary*
Kristi Hollingsworth
Paul Repasky
Nancy Sarowski
Pete Wallin
Ann Wilderom

Zoning Board of Appeals

Chris Baiardi
Jim Bartlett
Tim Hayner
Paul Mooradian
Ken Parada

Board of Review

Joretta Bethke - *Recording Secretary*
Jim Frang - *Chair*
Bill Borglin
Curt Regentin

Thorne Swift Nature Preserve Committee

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

Recreation Committee

John Baker - *Chair*
Laurie Ford
Paul Repasky
John Riggs
Bob Sandford

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

From the Treasurer

Please review your tax bills carefully for correct address, taxable value, and principal residence exemption (PRE). Report address changes or changes of ownership promptly to the Treasurer. Failure to receive tax statements does not exempt taxes from penalties. The Township Office is open daily from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. to receive tax payments and will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the following dates:

- Monday September 14, 2009
- Monday December 28, 2009
- Tuesday February 16, 2010
- Monday, March 1, 2010

Payments must be received by the due dates specified on the tax bill. Postmarks are honored and there are no exceptions to late payments. Please confirm that your check is signed and that it matches the total amount due for the bill. Any payments that are not correct or signed will be returned as unpaid and may result in additional interest charges.

The Township millage that will appear on the winter tax bills will remain the same 1.55 mills that it has for the past 3 years - 0.70 mills for general operations, 0.70 mills for road projects, and 0.15 mills for Thorne Swift Nature Preserve. You will also notice that the property tax administration fee has been reduced from 1% to 0.60 %, for both the summer and winter tax bills, to help offset any increase in taxable value.

From the Clerk

Have you checked out the Township website at www.westtraversetownship.com? Information you will find there includes: Township contacts; complete Township Board and Planning Commission minutes; the Master Plan; the Zoning Ordinance; recent Zoning Ordinance amendments; zoning permit application forms; the Recreation Plan; a link to the updated M-119 Heritage Route Management Plan; latest financial audit results, and more. Let us know if there is other information you'd like to have added.

Planning Commission

Recent activities include:

- Final approval of the Township Master Plan by the Township Board, which is available on the Township website.
- Completion of the amendment to the Township Zoning Ordinance for Wind Energy Systems, which was subsequently approved by the Township Board and is also available on the Township website.
- Continued work on separating the existing Commercial-Light Industrial District into a Commercial District and a Light Industrial-Commercial District.

Planning Commission Opening

There will be an opening for a 3-year term on the Township Planning Commission starting in January 2010. The Planning Commission is responsible for keeping the Township Master Plan current and for reviewing development projects for consistency with the Plan and for compliance with the Township's Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission also develops and recommends changes to the Zoning Ordinance for final approval by the Township Board.

If you wish to be considered for the Planning Commission, or any of the other Township Committees in 2010, a brief form is available on the Township website or at the Township Office. Forms should be submitted by November 1, 2009 to the Township Office.

Library Services

The Township Board renewed the annual agreement with the Petoskey Public Library for July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010, thus allowing township residents full access to the Petoskey Library at no additional cost. Per the agreement, the Township contributed \$3,375, at the rate of \$15 per card for the 225 cards used by Township residents in 2008, in addition to assigning its penal fines (about \$9,800 in 2008) to the Library.

Work continues with other townships and the City of Harbor Springs on drafting an agreement to form a Harbor Springs Area District Library.

Curbside Recycling

The topic of curbside recycling within the Township has recently come up again. When it was initially proposed in 2004, the Township Board chose not to participate. Curbside recycling programs were instituted at that time in Petoskey and Harbor Springs and Little Traverse, Bear Creek, and Resort Townships.

While the current Township Board fully supports the general concept of recycling, the Board is undecided when it comes to curbside recycling – having recyclable materials picked up weekly at or near individual households by the Emmet County Department of Public Works (DPW). The rural nature of the Township, the diversity of household types (only 42% of the households are located on public, year-round accessible roads), the high percentage of seasonal residents, the cost effectiveness, and the DPW's requirement for a 5-year commitment are all factors that need to be considered. The DPW has tailored a program that addresses most of these factors, but in the end it comes down to cost effectiveness – will the service actually be used enough to justify the cost.

The base cost for weekly pick-up at the 600 households on public, year-round accessible roads is about \$17,000 per year. Adding in the various private associations, even with limiting the pick-up to 3 or 5 month seasonal-only service would bring the cost to \$25,000 - \$30,000 per year. Over the 5 years required commitment, the total cost would be \$125,000 - \$150,000. To put this into perspective, curbside recycling would use about 0.1 mills or 14% of the current township general fund millage of 0.7 mills.

To aid in arriving at a decision on curbside recycling, the Township Board is requesting your assistance. Included with this newsletter is a non-scientific survey aimed at determining to what extent households would use the service and if there is support for a millage increase to pay for it. Please fill out the survey and return it with your property tax payment.

2009 Road Projects

The road projects approved by the Township Board for 2009, at an estimated cost of \$242,260, are:

- Crack sealing on Cemetery Road, Lower Shore Drive, and Quick Road.
- Asphalt wedging on LaCount Road and Hughston Road north of Middle Road, to be followed in 2010 by an asphalt overlay.
- Asphalt wedging and asphalt overlay on Middle Road from State Road to Amy's Way.
- Asphalt overlay on the northern part of Ridge Road.
- Asphalt wedging and asphalt overlay on Middle Road from Hughston Road to Birchwood.

The preliminary plans for 2010 still include joining with Little Traverse Township and the City of Harbor Springs to repair Hoyt Road from Lake Road to Quick Road.

Recreation Committee

The Recreation Committee has met twice recently to plan ways to enhance the use of the Township properties - the 80-acre park on Ridge and Griffen Roads, and the former Walter Cook barn and adjacent land on Lake Road across from the Township Hall.

The trail on the north end of the 80-acre park off Griffen Road has been blocked to car traffic by boulders, leaving enough room for hikers, skiers, bikers, and snowmobiles. The clearing this trail leads to has been 'trashed' many times in recent years from parties and illegal dumping, and the boulders should prevent this in the future. The Committee plans to locate several new trails on the property and open them up for hiking and skiing.

A past questionnaire to Township taxpayers showed support for limited maintenance of the Cook Barn to prevent further deterioration, and the Committee is considering different ways to do this. The Committee is also hoping to clean up the adjacent woods and perhaps establish a simple walking trail accessible from the Township parking lot and the barn.

Hoyt Road Trail

There has been a lot of press regarding the proposed non-motorized trail along Hoyt Road from Lake Road to Quick Road. The Township Board supports the concept of the trail and would consider funding some engineering work on a matching basis with Little Traverse Township and the City of Harbor Springs. However, the Board feels that the funds for constructing the trail should come from grants and donations, both of which are being actively pursued by HARBOR, Inc.

Water System Update

The new water reservoir on Hughston Road finally became operational the week of June 22. With this reservoir, the Township water system is now in full compliance with Michigan DEQ requirements.

As you may know, the City of Harbor Springs has identified critical deficiencies in its water system and is moving quickly to implement improvements. In the meantime, to manage the peak demand on its water system, the City has imposed restrictions on lawn watering. While the Township's water system is in compliance and does not share the City's deficiencies, the Township purchases its water from the City. Therefore, the Township also must manage peak demand and has imposed the same restrictions. For all Township water system customers, beginning July 1, 2009, lawn watering is only permitted on alternate days per the following schedule:

- Even numbered addresses – Sunday, Tuesday, & Thursday
- Odd numbered addresses – Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday
- No lawn watering on Friday

The City's improvements include 2 new reservoirs near Kiwanis Park, on vacant land owned by the City that was actually in the Township. Since the health of the City's water system is obviously important to the Township, the Township joined with the City in transferring this land to the City through mutual resolutions.