



West Traverse Township - 2011 Fall Newsletter

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www.westtraversetownship.com

West Traverse Township

(Established 1897)

Township Board

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

Planning Commission

Nancy Sarowski - Chair
Neil Ahrens
Kristi Hollingsworth
Paul Repasky
Larry Rychlick
Pete Wallin
Ann Wilderom

Zoning Board of Appeals

Neil Ahrens
Chris Baiardi
Jim Bartlett
Sam DeCamp
Eva Lauer

Board of Review

Jim Frang - Chair
Bill Borglin
Curt Regentin
Joretta Bethke

Planner/Zoning Administrator

Randy Frykberg

Assessors

Tim Grimm
Brian Grimm - Assistant

Administrative Assistant

Sue Matsko

Office Hours

9:00 am - 1:00 pm daily

Township Board Meetings

2nd Tuesdays - 7:00 pm

Planning Commission Meetings

2nd Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

A complete list of committees and appointees is maintained on the Township website

From the Treasurer

Please read the following tax information thoroughly:

- Tax payments **MUST** be received by the due date of February 14, 2012
- Postmarks are accepted. However, lately there have been numerous requests that interest be waived due to a "special circumstance". **There are NO exceptions for late payments.** The date the check was written or on-line payment issued is not considered a postmark.
- Cash is accepted in the office only and must be for the exact amount due.
- Receipts for payments will not be sent unless you request one.
- Please confirm that your check has cleared the bank to ensure that the township has received your payment. **The Township is not responsible for lost mail.**
- Please review your tax bill carefully for correct address, taxable value and principal residence exemption (PRE).
- Taxes are mailed to the address on record, so promptly report all address changes or changes of ownership to the treasurer.

The Township Treasurer and the Deputy Treasurer are in the township office daily from 9 am to 1 pm to receive your tax payments. Additional office hours are:

- Friday December 30, 2011 9 am to 5 pm
- Tuesday February 14, 2012 9 am to 5 pm
- Wednesday February 29, 2012 9 am to 5 pm

Any tax not paid prior to March 1st, 2012 will be turned over to the Emmet County Treasurer as delinquent. **Again, no exceptions for late payments.**

From the Clerk

Thank you to all the voters who ventured out on such a dreary day for the Special School Election held on November 8, 2011. 331 votes were cast in comparison to the 161 votes cast at the May 2011 School Election. To date, the Township has 1,515 registered voters, the highest number since I have been in office (June 2007).

The upcoming Presidential Primary will be held February 28, 2012. The last day to register is January 30, 2012. You may register at the Township Office, the County Clerk's Office or the Secretary of State Office. The Township Office will be open from 9 am to 4 pm on January 30, 2012. Absentee ballots will be available by January 14, 2012. I recommend voting an absentee ballot to avoid a long line to vote. Please stop in or contact the Township (526-7361) for an A.V. ballot application to receive a ballot. Please contact the Clerk if you have any questions.

In closing, may all West Traverse Township Residents have a wonderful and safe holiday season and a joyous New Year.

From the Planner / Zoning Administrator

The township has issued zoning permits for the following (2011 through 11/5/11):

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
New dwellings	0	4	1
Major additions/remodels	15	4	9
Minor additions/remodels	4	4	8
Accessory buildings	6	4	6
Sign permits	1	0	2
Other	0	2**	0

** 1 home occupation and 1 wind energy system

The Planning Commission continued fine-tuning the Township Zoning Ordinance to better serve the present needs of our community.

Birchwood Medical First Responders

Thanks are again in order to the Birchwood Farms Security & Emergency Medical Services for providing medical first responder services throughout the Township. Of the total of 146 medical runs so far in 2011, 105, or 72%, were off Birchwood property. The Township is fortunate to have this capability close by. Remember, if you have a medical emergency, call 911 immediately. The 911 dispatch center will send out the nearest available ambulance as well as the Birchwood first responders.

Medical Marijuana

In 2008, the voters in Michigan approved the Medical Marijuana Act (Act) intended to allow those suffering from debilitating medical conditions to obtain marijuana to relieve their pain and suffering. Unfortunately, the Act did not address how local governments should regulate the growing and use of medical marijuana, consistent with other residential uses, especially given the backdrop that the possession and use of marijuana is still illegal under federal law and that a recent Court of Appeals case determined that the sale of medical marijuana is not lawful under the Act. Thus local governments have been walking a tightrope between trying to respect the will of the Michigan voters while at the same time not being in violation of any laws. Many attempts are underway to lend clarification to this situation in the form of court cases, bills introduced in the Michigan legislature, and state attorney general opinions. As a result of all this uncertainty, many local governments have either instituted temporary moratoriums on all activities associated with medical marijuana or banned them totally.

In July, the Township Board adopted a moratorium, for a period of six months, to allow the "Township to study and receive public input regarding the best and safest way to comply with both the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act and the Michigan Zoning Enabling act in order to protect the public health, safety, and welfare." In September, the Township Board created a committee to study the issue with the goal of presenting a proposed amendment to the Township's Zoning Ordinance to the Planning Commission for consideration. The members of the committee are Nancy Sarowski, Randy Frykberg, and Bob Sandford. While there will be public hearings prior to any action on an amendment, if you would like to provide input in the meantime, please send an e-mail to supervisor@westtraversetownship.com.

2011 Road Improvement Projects

The following road improvement projects were completed:

- Five Mile Creek Road – crack sealing
- Franklin Street – reconstruction and repaving
- Ann Street – resurfacing in conjunction with the City of Harbor Springs

The resurfacing of Cemetery Road from Lake Road to Cottontail Lane was scheduled too late to be started due to the weather conditions and will be done in 2012.

Regarding Lower Shore Drive, the latest readings indicate that the slope near the east end where it failed in 2004 continues to move at the rate of about 1/4 inch per year. The recommendation from the engineering study is to build a soldier pile retaining wall to stabilize the slope, at a cost approaching \$500,000, but without a guarantee that the slope still won't fail at some point. In addition, the estimated cost for repairing the road surface itself is about \$200,000. The option recommended by the Emmet County Road Commission is to enhance the drainage that was installed on the upside of the slope in 2004 and seems to have been working, and then simply repair the road surface. The Township Board has yet to make a decision on which way to go.

The Hoyt Road project from Quick Road to Heynig Road, funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was also scheduled too late to be completed due to the weather conditions and will be completed in the spring.

Hoyt Road Trail

The proposed non-motorized trail along the west side of Hoyt Rd. from Lake Street to the Forest Ridge neighborhood just north of Quick Road is in its final design stages, and the funding has been approved. A new 6' sidewalk will extend from the existing sidewalk in the City up the Hoyt Road hill to Pete's Run. From there the trail will be 10 feet wide to Quick Road and on to Forest Ridge. The Safe Routes to School program administered by M.D.O.T. approved the 6' width up the hill and allocated an additional \$40,000.00 for construction of the trail. In addition, the Baiardi Family Foundation has offered funding to pay for additional design costs.

All of the necessary easements from neighboring land owners and utility companies have been signed, and construction should begin by early next summer.

Thorne Swift / Recreation Committee

Thorne Swift had another very busy season. Slightly over 6200 visitors enjoyed the Park this season, about the same as 2010. Parking fees and donations totaled nearly \$5,000.

The Park offered 43 separate educational programs this summer, 22 by Thorne Swift staff and 21 by the Little Traverse Conservancy. In addition, John Riggs and crew replaced 420 feet of boardwalk on the Cedar Trail with an attractive wider walk and continued to correct drainage issues on the Beach Trail. They installed several new interpretative signs and built several new displays, some 'hands-on', in the Nature Center building.

Along with the expected animal sightings, a solitary sand piper, green heron, saw whet owl, and badger were all spotted. Trail cameras photographed a wide array of nocturnal animals.

The trails on the Township '80' park on Ridge and Griffen Roads were cleared again this spring, resulting in more usage. There will be signage on them for fall and winter use as well, and a trail map is available on the Township web site. The Committee would appreciate receiving suggested names for this park on Ridge and Griffen Roads.

Township Website

Be sure to check out the information on the Township's website at www.westtraversetownship.com. Let us know if there are other items you would like to have available on the website.