

## M-119 TUNNEL OF TREES

Committee Meeting  
April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026 at 9:30

**Location:** West Traverse Township Hall  
**Address:** 8001 M-119, Harbor Springs, MI 49740

**Meeting Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2319295012?omn=81624282082>

**Meeting ID:** 231 929 5012



1. Call to Order
2. Additions to Agenda (Action Item - if any)
3. Approval of Previous Minutes: October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Action Item)
4. Public Comment
5. Subcommittee Updates/Recommendations
  - A. Management Plan Review Committee
6. Partner Updates
  - A. Networks Northwest
  - B. MDOT:
    - a. North Region
    - b. Pure MI Byways
  - C. County Representatives:
    - a. Emmet County Planning and Zoning
  - D. Municipal Representatives:
    - a. Friendship Township
    - b. Readmond Township
    - c. Cross Village Township
    - d. West Traverse Township
  - E. Organization Representatives:
    - a. Little Traverse Conservancy
    - b. Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
7. Committee Member Comments
8. Public Comment



9. Old Business
  - A. Item 1: Work on Fiscal Year 2026 Work Plan/Activities
10. New Business
11. Next Meeting/Adjournment
  - A. Next meeting: Tuesday, May 12th at Friendship Township Hall - 3018 S Beacon Hill Ln, Harbor Springs, MI 49740 at 9:30 AM.





www.M119TunnelofTrees.org

**M-119 TUNNEL OF TREES SCENIC HERITAGE ROUTE COMMITTEE**

**DRAFT Minutes**

Tuesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Readmond Township Hall**

6034 Wormwood Ln, Harbor Springs, MI 49740

**Present**

Naomi Singer, Cross Village Township  
Garon Gopigian, West Traverse Township  
Dale Scott, Friendship Township (Chair)  
James Fisher, Friendship Township  
Laurelynn Harris, Cross Village Township  
Sue Rentrop, Cross Village/Emmet County Lakeshore Association  
Ben DuBois, MDOT  
Tammy Doernenburg, Emmet County Planning and Zoning  
Laura Moreau, Emmet County Planning and Zoning  
Cassidy Robarts, Networks Northwest  
Jay Olson, West Traverse Township Clerk  
Lisa Morris, Resident (West Traverse)  
Steve Wolf, Resident (Readmond)  
Sheridan Jones, Resident (Readmond)  
Dave Berryman, Resident (West Traverse)

**Online presence** – Clayton Sigmann, MDOT

**Absent**

Don Schaplowsky; Readmond Township; Carolyn Sandford, West Traverse Township; Jerry Root, Readmond Township; Franz Neubrecht, Emmet County Lakeshore Association; Joey Arbaugh, West Traverse Township; Larry Wallen, Readmond Township

**I. Call to Order and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 by Chair Dale Scott. Attendance was recorded for those present and of online participants.

**II. Additions to Agenda - None.**

**III. Approval of Previous Minutes from September 9, 2025**

*Motion by Naomi to adopt the meeting minutes from September 9, 2025 as distributed, supported by Garon. All in favor, none opposed.*

**IV. Chair Opening Remarks**

**a.** Dale opened the meeting by noting the end of the fiscal year and encouraged members to

continue reviewing the Committee's Mission Statement as changes occur within the group and its partners. It was noted that Jim Anderson resigned from the Committee on September 27 and Dale thanked him for his service. Dale noted that the planned Tree Session was canceled but may be rescheduled for spring or summer 2026. Arborist Ben Vehling recently reported a case of oak wilt in Good Hart. Dale also expressed ongoing concerns about the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline and the proposed tunnel under the Straits of Mackinac, suggesting members consider making concerns known to the public and local municipalities due to potential environmental and economic risks.

**V. Public Comment** - None.

**VI. Subcommittee Updates/Recommendations** - None.

**VII. Committee Member Comments** - None.

**VIII. Partner Updates**

**a. Networks Northwest**

Cassidy reported that Adopt-a-Highway Fall clean up was completed by Jerry Root, Joe Tomlinson, Carloyn Sandford, Jane Newbury, and Arielle Newbury.

Cassidy reminded the committee that the new website went live at the end of September and thanked members for helping review the site during the transition process.

Cassidy reported that printing of more guidebooks, share the road brochures, and the M-119 brochure was completed in September to utilize the remaining fund for FY2025.

Cassidy presented the final draft of the 2025 Annual Performance Evaluation for review. Dale thanked Sherry for her written testimonial. It was discussed that an exact date of the sign cleaning could not be located, however the month could be. It was requested that the date of "June 2025" be added to the sign improvement item.

*A motion was made by James to approve the 2025 Annual Performance Evaluation pending the requested addition, second by Sue. All in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.*

**b. MDOT**

**o North Region**

Ben announced that Doug Bates has been hired as the new resource analyst for the region and that wedging and striping along the roadway has been completed for the chip seal project next year. It was also discussed to invite Doug to a future meeting.

**o Pure Michigan Byways**

Clayton reminded everyone about the upcoming Pure Michigan Byway Workshop on November 3 in Gaylord, MI. Dale inquired about which session would be most beneficial for members. Clayton noted that the morning session would provide the most beneficial information to committee members.

**IX. County Representatives**

**a. Emmet County Planning and Zoning**

Tammy shared that she sent out 7 packets to new homeowners along the Tunnel in Q4. She also shared that the Master Plan Update open houses have been completed with good turnout and feedback. Focus groups and public outreach will continue for several months. Tammy noted that they had received the committee's letter regarding a tree cutting ordinance suggestion, which will be shared with the commission.

**X. Municipal Representatives**

**a. Friendship Township** - None.

**b. Readmond Township** - None.

**c. Cross Village Township** - None.

**d. West Traverse Township**

Jay shared that West Traverse Township's historic township hall is becoming obsolete for business needs, and that the township plans to build a new office, aiming to break ground next summer. The township hopes to preserve the historic hall by finding a historical society or group to manage and maintain it under a long-term lease. Jay noted that the main challenges for the hall are accessibility requirements but it is otherwise structurally sound. The broader vision is to create a civic center and community gateway.

**XI. Organization Representatives**

**a. Little Traverse Conservancy** - None.

**b. Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians** - None.

**XII. Public Comment**

Lisa Morris shared that the Little Big Outdoor Adventure school held a successful Summer program at the Five Mile Creek School House and that in the future this children's program potentially could be a user of the West Traverse Township's historic hall, should it be managed by a non-profit, etc. She also expressed the desire to preserve the large barn on the property. She informed the group that she would be giving a presentation to the board on October 14th and 6pm regarding preservation of the barn.

**XIII. Old Business**

**a. FY2026 Work Plan**

The committee asked if the FY2026 Work Plan had been approved. Cassidy said as far as she knew there were no issues with the plan but would check with MDOT on the plan's status.

**b. Dark Sky Initiative** - None.

**c. Readmond Township Restroom Proposal Update** - None.

**d. Information Brochure for Realtors**

As noted earlier, more copies of the brochures and guidebooks have been printed and are available for distribution to local realtors and the builders association.

**e. FY2025 Meeting Schedule**

Cassidy brought it to the attention of the committee that a majority of the meeting dates outlined in the 2026 Work Plan were not the 2nd Tuesday of each month. It was determined that these dates were an error and all meetings April through October are now scheduled for the 2nd Tuesday of each month. The committee decided on meeting locations for all of these dates as well. Please see below for the 2026 meeting dates and locations. All meetings will begin at 9:30AM and have a virtual attendance option.

- April 14, 2026 at West Traverse Township Hall – 8001 M-119 Harbor Springs, MI 49740
- May 12, 2026 at Friendship Township Hall - 3018 S Beacon Hill Ln, Harbor Springs, MI 49740
- June 9, 2026 at Cross Village Township Hall – 5954 Wadsworth Rd, Harbor Springs, MI 49740
- July 14, 2026 at Readmond Township Hall - 6034 Wormwood Ln, Harbor Springs, MI 49740
- August 11, 2026 at West Traverse Township Hall – 8001 M-119 Harbor Springs, MI 49740
- September 8, 2026 at Friendship Township Hall - 3018 S Beacon Hill Ln, Harbor Springs, MI 49740
- October 13, 2026 at Emmet County Building - 3434 Harbor-Petoskey Rd, Suite A, Harbor Springs, MI 49740

**XIV. Public Comment**

The committee discussed the importance of having clear, coordinated messaging on the M-119 website and possibly roadside signage to inform visitors about limited resources along the Tunnel of Trees corridor, such as gas and restrooms. The committee agreed to draft specific wording for the website and provide it to MDOT for use on state websites for consistency. The committee also discussed the value of signage along the roadway. Ben mentioned that he would look into this possibility.

**XV. Adjourn**

Next meeting on April 14, 2026 at West Traverse Township Hall – 8001 M-119 Harbor Springs, MI 49740 at 9:30AM.