The Traverse City Community, the City of Traverse City, the Charter Township of Garfield, Grand Traverse County, and the Minervini Group

The preservation of the Northern Michigan Asylum, known today as Grand Traverse Commons, has been ongoing since the complex was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. In 1980, when the state of Michigan threatened to demolish the hospital buildings, the city of Traverse City, under the leadership of then-mayor pro-tem Carol Hale, passed local initiatives to impede demolition. Under pressure from organized citizens and the local governing bodies, the state transferred the property to the Grand Traverse Commons Redevelopment Corporation, the local stewards for the property. During this time, a number of citizen groups came and went, each one playing a role in mustering the city, township, and county to do what they could to protect the property and to find a developer who would redevelop the site and preserve the historic character of the buildings.

In 1999, the Traverse City Commission approved the appointment of local builder/developer Ray Minervini to the board of Grand Traverse Commons. Ray Minervini and his company, the Minervini Group, eventually took on the project, committing to the rehabilitation of the historic buildings, including the one quarter-mile long Building 50, the centerpiece of the complex. Work began in 2002 and more than 200,000 square feet of space has been rehabilitated as office, residential, retail and restaurant space.

The rehabilitation of the Northern Michigan Asylum is ongoing and will be for years to come, but the fact that this complex remains is due to the collaboration, the commitment, and the vision of volunteer citizens, public officials, and a local developer who believes in preserving the buildings for all to enjoy.