

VILLAGE OF NORTHPORT
PLANNING COMMISSION
116 W. Nagonaba St.
Tuesday, April 25, 2023
MINUTES

Note: upon request a Zoom recording is available for this meeting.

Call to Order, Roll Call:

Chair Arbury called the meeting to order at 9:04am.

Members present: Arbury, Gale, Cavendish, Woomer, Newell, and Wessell. Excused Absences: Caudill.

Public Present:

none

Staff Present:

Zoning Administrator- Joni Scott

Approval of Minutes:

April 4, 2023 special meeting minutes were approved as amended, **moved by Commissioner Gale, seconded by Commissioner Newell, motion carried**

Approval of Agenda:

Agenda lists date as 3/25/23 but it is 4/25/23. Agenda was approved as amended, **moved by Commissioner Woomer, seconded by Commissioner Wessell, motion carried**

Correspondence:

Susan Manson - two email correspondences, one about 7th street and one a screenshot about the importance of wetlands.

Mary Cermak Betzoldt - email correspondence sharing her concern for the environmental impact of the 7th Street property if developed, and that she has not seen any formal or informal study done by a qualified personnel on the wetland property. She feels we should reforest the property with natural species and trees native to Northern Michigan and that the village of Northport should maintain ownership and usage as it was deeded to them in 1941.

Public Comment:

Gerry Schatz of Mill Street. He shared that he had also sent correspondence correcting the record as to the availability of US Environmental Protection Agency grants for environmental cleanup. He had conversation with Commissioner Gale about the opportunities for brownfield redevelopment funds and that there are some opportunities for developing green space in parks and he has provided some references for that information.

Mary Cermak Betzoldt of North Shore Drive. She shared that her nephew Dan had also sent correspondence about 7th Street. He echoed Mary's sentiments and has asked that we leave 7th Street in its natural state. Mary also shared information about a property she is aware of on Christmas Cove that recently filed to build on wetlands there, and that they were denied, and we should be aware of that possibility if trying to develop the property. She also shared that she feels that in Proposed Use 1 - Leave in its Natural State, that we should have that and only that, as the options for that plan. If the village would like to create a passive park, etc, that those options should be included in Proposal 2, because that is the option

that is making changes to the property.

7th Street Evaluation Continuation:

Review Proposed Use 1, 3, and then 2 Evaluation*:

Planning Commission revisions (from 4/25/23 special meeting) to “Proposed Use 1: Preserve Land in its Current State” for 7th Street are documented in the file, PC_1_7thStProposalEvaluationTool.pdf* and were created through lengthy discussion in the meeting.

Planning Commission revisions (from 4/25/23 special meeting) to “Proposed Use 3: Partial Combo B - using 7th Street portion for Development at the discretion of the village and sell the remaining build-able lots” for 7th Street are documented in the file, PC_3_7thStProposalEvaluationTool.pdf* and were created through lengthy discussion in the meeting.

Planning Commission revisions (from 4/25/23 special meeting) to “Proposed Use 2: Partial Combo A - using 7th Street portion for Development at the discretion of the village and the rest remains in its natural state” for 7th Street are documented in the file, PC_2_7thStProposalEvaluationTool.pdf* and were created through lengthy discussion in the meeting.

Chair Arbury also discussed the current thinking on the next steps of this process:

1. Evaluations are updated and completed to reflect meetings decisions and discussions.
2. Evaluations are submitted to council for review.
3. Planning Commission and Village Council hold a public hearing to review and hear comments.

Zoning Amendments - Work Session And Discussion Items:

Meeting has reached its outlined timeframe and commission decided to move zoning discussion to another special meeting on Monday, May 8th from 9am-12pm.

Public Comment:

Gerry Schatz of Mill Street. He explained that he has been trying to bring the village’s attention to the reformulation of the federal definitions of the Waters of the United States. Those definitions are primary to the decision, latitude of local jurisdictions. He wanted to ensure we realized that the wetland delineations have been outdated by events. He notified the commission in January of the new and pending definitional regulations on this topic by the federal government. Those regulations went into effect April 15 and he feels that if we are going to refer to the relationship of upland waters, tributaries, and wetlands, for the 7th Street site or any other business that we’re doing, we need to ensure that those definitions are compatible with the federal government’s new requirements.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Woomer suggested that perhaps we speak to EGLE and ask how we can comply with the new federal regulations, as Gerry Schatz’s has mentioned.

Commissioner Gale shared that the links Gerry shared can get into the dropbox.

Commissioner Cavendish suggested perhaps including the documents provided that include those definitions as a footnote in our evaluations, as we are including multiple other source documents. Commissioners agreed.

Chair Arbury thanked everyone attending and apologized for her missing getting some of the correspondence into the dropbox.

Adjournment:

12:10pm Motion to Adjourn - **moved by** Commissioner Newell, **seconded by** Commissioner Wessell, **motioned carried**

Next Special Meeting - Monday, May 8th, 2023 at 9am

Next Regular Meeting - Wednesday, May 17th, 2023 at 6pm

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Cavendish, Secretary

** draft evaluations are in the 7th Street Documents folder on website near the bottom of the planning commission page: villageofnorthport.net/planning-commission/*