VILLAGE OF NORTHPORT PLANNING COMMISSION
TREE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
February 18, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Chair Bob Newell.
Members in attendance: Bob Newell, Jane Gale, Anne Harper (via Zoom)

Two items were added to the agenda at the suggestions of Ms. Harper - Tree Ordinance (to regulate the removal of trees on private property) and Regulation of gas-powered leaf blowers.

No public comment.

Mr. Newell shared a letter he sent to Bay Area Recycling for Community to thank the organization for their donation of deposit bottles and cans from Leelanau Uncaged in 2023 and 2024. The 2-year total was $689 which translated to 4 - 5 trees for the community.

No trees were planted or removed in the past month.

OLD BUSINESS:
The bank balance is unchanged. Mr. Newell has $1,680 in cash to apply to the 2025 spring planting. He has also accumulated another $200 - 300 in returnables. It is anticipated that the cash balance will exceed $2,000 before the planting season begins. The CD will mature in March. The committee agreed to reinvest at most favorable terms since we have adequate funds on hand to purchase trees this year.

NEW BUSINESS:
Jane Gale passed along a question from the Northport Women's Club/Peninsula Perennials/Northport Omena Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber is uncertain whether they can raise funds to purchase flowers for the village planters and asked if the Women's Club could share the cost. DPW Supt. Holton told the Women's Club representative to ask if the Tree Committee would consider funding the flowers. The committee agreed to cover any shortfall, but encouraged the Chamber to seek funds first.

Plans are in place for the April 25 celebration of Arbor Day with the exception of the location. Possible sites include the Township Cemetery, Mill Pond, and Northport Public School properties. The cemetery location might pose logistical problems for student participation. Final decision on the location will be deferred until February or March.

Mr. Newell and Dave Tompkins have been working to identify planting locations for the spring. Some possibilities include W. 6th Street and the extension of Warren Street east of the cemetery. There may be an opportunity to partner with the owners of the business on the cost of planting a privacy screen of trees. The Warren Street location would also lend itself to cluster-planting. Mr. Newell will consult with Kama Ross about this technique. The Township has offered to extend irrigation to the site. Mr. Newell has also spoken with Edgecomb Farms about an annual planting of sunflowers at that site. He is also exploring the sowing of coreopsis by the MSU Extension Service Master

Gardener program. Master Gardeners might be able to earn continuing credits for establishing and maintaining this community site.

Four Seasons Nursery has identified a cold-tolerant variety of willow (Prairie Cascade) that they recommend for replacing the old willows that were recently removed and/or adding trees along Northport Creek. Mr. Newell and DPW will identify sites.

Ms. Harper asked the committee to revisit the idea of an ordinance to restrict/regulate the cutting of mature trees on private property. She is aware of many jurisdictions that have ordinances of this type and they have not experienced legal challenges. In her experience, once builders are aware of the ordinance they plan construction accordingly. There was a discussion of the importance of early and frequent education that explains the rationale and also a question of whether trees should be addressed in the zoning ordinance or as a more-enforceable village ordinance. The committee recommends asking Village Manager Dyer to review the request and recommend a course of action. In the meantime, the Planning Commission will consider additional language in the Master Plan regarding the preservation of trees when possible.

Ms. Harper also would like the committee to extend its scope to include leaf maintenance, particularly the use of gas-powered leaf blowers. She notes these tools are sometimes used during summer months for routine flower maintenance. Mr. Newell agreed to add potential ordinances as standing agenda items.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 18 at 11:00 a.m. at the Village Office and via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

Submitted by,
Jane Gale