PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)

REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

April 30, 2025

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order, Roll Call

Chair J. Gale called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Commissioners present: L. Cavendish, J. Gale, M. McMillan, B. Newell, H. Scott K. Wessell (via Zoom), and J. Woomer
Absent: none
Staff present: J. Ottenwess, Zoning Administrator
Public present: several via Zoom and in person

2. Additions or corrections to agenda

None. Commissioner McMillan asked to place a discussion of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) on the May agenda. He will provide some resources prior to the meeting.

3. Approve March 19, 2025 meeting minutes.

J. Woomer moved, seconded by H. Scott, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried 7 - 0. Chair Gale and ZA Ottenwess are attempting to retrieve the recording of the February 2025 meeting to complete the minutes.

4. Correspondence

Four letters opposing development of the Flees Road property were included in the meeting packet.

5. Public comment

M. Cermak thanked Commissioner Newell for his leadership of the Tree Committee. Several members of the public raised concerns focusing on: preservation of wetlands (D. Moore, D. Clark, M. Cermak, J. Swanson); lack of clarity around process/criteria for possible rezoning (N. Arbury); vehicle access to the property (D. Winowicki) and safety related to seasonal boat traffic (Stevens).

6. Planning Commissioner and Zoning Administrator Introductions

ZA Ottenwess and the commissioners provided information on their backgrounds and interests that led to their appointment to the Planning Commission.

7. Reports

a. **Zoning Administrator Report**

ZA Ottenwess provided a written report. He also reported that he received an application for a new short term rental that he is processing.

b. **Trustee Report**

Trustee Cavendish reported a favorable public response to the recent Housing Forum. The Council will decide at the May meeting when to move to a semi-monthly meeting schedule. Cavendish will serve as the primary contact for infrastructure matters and Hugh Cook for marina, parks and recreation. A Budget Committee will continue to meet quarterly. The Council is considering the purchase of a generator in response to ongoing power loss events.

c. **Tree Committee Report**

The Annual Arbor Day celebration was held on Friday, April 25 with a proclamation and poetry reading. Northport Public School kindergarten and first grade students helped plant a redbud on the northeast corner of the playground.

d. **Infrastructure Committee Report**

The committee did not meet in April. In the future Trustee Cavendish will incorporate infrastructure project updates into the Trustee Report.

8. Old Business

a. Master Plan Population Profile (Section3: pages 12 - 16)

The updated language is not available for review.

b. Master Plan Housing Characteristics (Section 4: pages 16 - 23

The updated language is not available for review. Chair Gale will continue to work with ZA Ottenwess to access files.

9. Discussion Items

a. Discussion of Proposed Rezoning: Flees Road Property

ZA Ottenwess clarified the confusion over the current zoning of the parcel. The Village document noting the property was in the R-2 District referred to the Future Land Use Map, not the Zoning Map. The property is zoned CN-1. The ZA needs a significant amount of additional information before the Planning Commission can schedule a public hearing. He will meet with Mr. Rhodes to discuss the sequence of steps in the rezoning process.

b. Discussion of Master Plan Community Facilities & Services (Section 5: pages 24 - 28)

Under “Schools” update enrollment and employment numbers, discuss schools of choice. Under “Sewer and Water” add GIS update. Under High-Speed Internet include mention of broadband project and additional providers. Under “Roads & Highways” add e-bike and changes to golf cart regulations. Under “Air Transportation” - Cherry Capital Airport stats need major update. Include a map to illustrate “Trails & Sidewalks” section. Under “Transit” rewrite section on BATA service to reflect current practice and add EV charging station.

c. Discussion of Master Plan Recreation (“Section 6: pages 29 - 30)

The Village Recreation Plan also needs to be updated to align with information in the Master Plan. Name Leelanau State Park in the introductory paragraph. Several additional recreational opportunities were identified: Leelanau Conservancy Natural Areas, Warm Pool, Dog Park, Pickleball Courts, NAHA, Farmers Markets. List NPAC separately from the school. Add Music in the Park, Dog Parade, Fly-in Pancake Breakfast, UnCaged to list of cultural assets.

10. New Business

a. Possible Change of Meeting Day

With the change in the Village Council meeting schedule to the first and third Thursdays of each month, it will be difficult for staff to prepare for a PC meeting on the third Wednesday of the month. After discussion, it was agreed to move the regular meetings of the Planning Commission to the second Wednesday of the month. The change will take place during the same month the Council adopts its new format. The meeting time will not change.

b. As Suggested by the Commissioners

As noted earlier, Commissioner McMillan would like to discuss PILOT. Commissioner Scott would like to establish a policy that would require land use and zoning applications to be submitted 30 days prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed. Commissioner Cavendish offered a suggestion that was prompted by the housing summit and some of the incomplete or inaccurate information circulating on social media. She would like to create a master database of publicly owned property in both Village and Township and evaluate each against standard criteria to determine suitability for attainable housing development. The Commission will request direction from the Village Council on 1. Whether to proceed with such an undertaking and 2. Who best to carry out the work - the Village PC, the Council or the joint Village Township Housing Task Force agreed to by both entities but not yet established. Commissioners would also like to review the Public Participation Plan approved last year.

11. Public Comment

M. Cermak read a letter that she and J. Ives wrote which was not included in the meeting packet. The letter and comments from D. Moore, D. Clark, V. Foley, and J. Swanson were in opposition to any development of the Flees Road parcel, primarily for ecological reasons. Foley and Clark were concerned that a precedent would be set. N.

Arbury expressed concern that the PC could not make a decision without more data and details about the proposed project.

12. Commissioner comment

H. Scott explained that each rezoning or variance request is evaluated on its own merit and does not establish precedent for future considerations.

L. Cavendish welcomed M. McMillan and J. Ottenwess. She also explained that a rezoning request can come from the Planning Commission or from a property owner. The PC is required to consider requests from property owners, following the process outlined in the Zoning Enabling Act.

B. Newell commented that the Village owns the 7th Street property while the Flees Road property is privately-owned. Different rules apply.

13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by H. Scott, seconded by B. Newell. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.