PLANNING COMMISSION (PC)
REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING
May 21, 2025
7:00 PM – 9:11 PM

MINUTES

1. Call to Order, Roll Call
Chair J. Gale called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
Commissioners present: L. Cavendish, J. Gale, M. McMillan, B. Newell, K. Wessell, and J. Woomer
Absent: H. Scott attended at 8:05 pm
Staff present: J. Ottenwess, Zoning Administrator
Public present: several via Zoom and in person

2. Additions or Corrections to Agenda

Agenda approved with the removal of item 6.d (Infrastructure Committee Report).

3. Approve April 30, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gale noted that she needed to amend the meeting minutes to include that Commissioner H. Scott had asked to discuss extending the review time on the next agenda.

M. McMillan moved, seconded by B. Newell, to approve the minutes as distributed. Motion carried 6–0.

4. Correspondence

Chair Gale shared a notice of intent from the Leelanau County Planning Commission regarding a general plan amendment. No formal action was taken.

5. Public Comment

No comments were received in person or via Zoom.

6. Reports

a. Zoning Administrator Report
Zoning Administrator Ottenwess reported that a special use permit for a short-term rental on West Third Street is scheduled for a public hearing on July 9. He clarified that new short-term rentals require a special use permit, but ownership transfers of existing rentals do not.

b. Trustee Report
Trustee Cavendish noted continued community interest in short-term rental enforcement and shared that the idea of a task force had been raised again but no formal progress made.

c. Tree Committee Report
The Arbor Day celebration was held successfully. The committee is preparing a one-page educational flyer highlighting the value of trees in Northport.

d. Infrastructure Committee Report
Removed from the agenda.

7. Old Business

None.

8. Discussion Items

a. Master Plan Population Profile (Section 3: pages 12–16)
Chair Gale presented revised sections. Discussion focused on updating data to reflect current trends, including an aging population and post-COVID impacts.

b. Master Plan Housing Characteristics (Section 4: pages 16–23)
Commissioners stressed the need for accurate housing data. The discussion included workforce housing shortages, housing turnover, and increased remote work demand.

c. Master Plan Community Facilities & Services (Section 5: pages 24–28)
Updates were suggested to sections on sewer and water, broadband access, air travel statistics, trails and sidewalks, and electric vehicle infrastructure.

d. Master Plan Recreation (Section 6: pages 29–30)
Additional assets discussed included Leelanau Conservancy lands, NAHA, Dog Park, the Warm Pool, and local events such as the Fly-in Pancake Breakfast and UnCaged.

e. Draft Public Properties Rubric
Trustee Cavendish presented a draft rubric for evaluating municipally owned parcels. Factors discussed included parcel size, zoning, market value, tree coverage (rated 0–10), topography, access, environmental constraints, deed restrictions, and proximity to community resources.

f. Public Participation Plan
Chair Gale led a discussion on updating the Public Participation Plan. Suggestions included adding an email newsletter and formalizing an annual review process.

g. Planning Commission Time for Plan Review
Commissioners agreed that the Zoning Administrator will draft a revision to the bylaws and permit language requiring materials for site plan review to be submitted 30 days in advance. The goal is to set a clear timeline and expectation for applicants.

9. New Business

None.

10. Public Comment

No comments were offered.

11. Commissioner Comment

Commissioners discussed the importance of maintaining up-to-date data in the master plan. Trustee Cavendish agreed to send the updated rubric to the Zoning Administrator and Barb Conley, Leelanau Township Supervisor. Chair Gale noted the need to align the Commission's calendar with the Council's schedule.

12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by H. Scott, seconded by B. Newell. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.