Village Of

PLANNING COMMISSION

REGULAR MEETING

DECEMBER 10, 2025

MINUTES

Northport

1. Call to Order, Roll Call

Chair J. Gale called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Commissioners present: J. Gale, J. Woomer, B. Newell, K. Wessell, and H. Scott
Absent: L. Cavendish, M. McMillan
Staff present: J. Ottenwess, Zoning Administrator
Public Present: Multiple (*via Zoom*)

2. Approval of Agenda

Agenda amended to move 7b Capital Improvement Plan ahead of 7a Master Plan, approved by consent

3. Approval of October 8, 2025 and November 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

J. Woomer requested a specific change to both meeting minutes to modify references to the minimum lot width in the R-2 S district. Discussion ensued about removing references to measurements and replace with a more general statement. Motion by H. Scott, seconded by B. Newell to approve minutes with revisions as discussed, passed unanimously.

4. Correspondence

- K. Wessell received a letter from Anne Harper expressing support for the recommendations submitted by the The Watershed Center and summarized the letter.
- Memo and letter correspondence received from The Watershed Center pertaining to shoreline district zoning amendments and the Master Plan included in Dropbox folder.

5. Public comment

- Anne Harper addressed the Commission and questioned whether the Village Council was taking into consideration environmental impacts associated with marina expansion. Ms. Harper also expressed support for The Watershed Center's correspondence.

6. Reports

a. Zoning Administrator Report

J. Ottenwess did not provide a verbal report and referenced his memo included with the packet. Discussion ensued about the Village Council's discussion related to marina expansion.

b. Trustee Report

None

c. Tree Committee Report

B. Newell provided an update to the board about the Tree Committee's collection barrels and efforts at pursuing grant funding.

d. Leelanau County General Plan

Chair Gale briefly presented information about this plan noting its strong environmental emphasis.

e. Zoning for Coastal Resiliency Workshop Summary

Chair Gale provided an update to the board regarding her and M. McMillan's attendance at this workshop including discussion of shoreline setbacks, seawalls, vegetative buffers, and potential ordinance refinements.

7. Discussion Items

b. Capital Improvement Plan

The Planning Commission discussed the draft Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) prepared by the Zoning Administrator/Village Manager, which was described as an intentionally abbreviated, early working draft intended to initiate discussion and establish a framework for future refinement. The discussion focused on the purpose of the CIP as a planning and prioritization tool rather than a simple list of projects, including the importance of distinguishing between near-term, feasible projects with identified funding sources and longer-term or more speculative projects to be scheduled further out. J. Ottenwess reviewed the anticipated timeline for Planning Commission review over the next several meetings, with the goal of forwarding the CIP to the Village Council in early 2026 for consideration as part of the FY 2026–27 budget process. Commissioners discussed the organization of projects within the draft, including grouping marina-related projects due to their significance as a Village asset and revenue source. By consensus, the Planning Commission directed staff to add an appendix to the CIP providing brief narrative descriptions and summaries of each project to improve clarity and context. No formal action was taken.

a. Master Plan

The Planning Commission discussed the Village Master Plan in the context of recent correspondence from the Watershed Center encouraging stronger incorporation of coastal resiliency and environmental considerations. Commissioners acknowledged the Watershed Center's recommendations and discussed the need for Master Plan language addressing shoreline and environmental issues to go beyond aesthetic considerations and reflect long-term environmental function and resiliency, including reference to state coastal resiliency guidance. Commissioners also noted copy editing issues, which Chair Gale suggested sending directly to her and L. Cavendish. Commissioners questioned certain statistics used in the document and Chair Gale explained that work was ongoing to address those, including with assistance from the Zoning Administrator. The discussion was informational and exploratory in nature. No formal action was taken.

c. Rezoning

R-2 S Shoreline Residential District – The Planning Commission discussed ongoing zoning amendment concepts. Discussion referenced correspondence from the Watershed Center and public input encouraging incorporation of coastal resiliency principles into both the Master Plan and zoning regulations. Commissioners noted that several recommendations aligned with issues identified during prior work sessions and during Planning Commissioner participation in the Zoning for Coastal Resilience workshop. The discussion addressed the purpose and scope of a shoreline overlay beyond aesthetic considerations, long-term environmental impacts associated with fluctuating lake levels, existing setback regulations along Northport Creek, and whether the shoreline overlay should extend to additional waterfront or creek-adjacent areas. Commissioners agreed by consensus to move forward with revisions to the draft Shoreline Form District to date and to address additional form-based regulations as outlined by the Zoning Administrator with specific modifications including to allow flat roofs with a reduced maximum height and a broader range of building materials. No formal action was taken.

D-1 Multi-Use District – The Planning Commission discussed proposed amendments to the D-1 Multi-Use district as outlined in the agenda summary memo prepared by the Zoning Administrator, including proposed zoning map changes and dimensional standards. Commissioners expressed general agreement that the D-1 map amendments, as depicted and described in the agenda materials, were appropriate to move forward independently rather than being delayed for inclusion with a broader package of zoning amendments, such as those related to the R-2S district. By consensus, the Planning Commission agreed to proceed with recommending the D-1 map amendments to the Village Council as soon as practicable. The Commission also discussed minimum lot area standards within the D-1 district and reached consensus to return to a minimum lot area of 0.5 acres. No formal motion was taken.

Transient Definition/Short-Term Rentals Text Amendment – The Planning Commission reviewed the proposed Transient Lodging amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, including definitions and updates to the use table addressing where campgrounds, RV parks, hotels, motels, and short-term rental units would be permitted. Commissioners noted that the draft reflected the direction provided at the prior meeting and expressed general satisfaction with the current iteration. By consensus, the Planning Commission indicated its support for moving forward with the draft as presented.

8. New Business

a. January Meeting Date

The Planning Commission discussed changing the meeting date to accommodate the Zoning Administrator's schedule and the public hearing(s) that is anticipated at that meeting. They agreed by consensus to hold the meeting on Wednesday, January 28, 2026.

9. Public Comment

None

10. **Board Member Comment**

None

11. **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the Commission the meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:04 pm.

Prepared by: Jered Ottenwess, Zoning Administrator