Village Of

# PLANNING COMMISSION

## REGULAR MEETING

## MARCH 11, 2026

## 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, B. Newell, L. Cavendish, and H. Scott
*Absent:* M. McMillan, K. Wessell, J. Woomer
*Staff present:* J. Ottenwess, Zoning Administrator
*Public Present:* R. Thibaut, C. Thibaut, C. Irvine, D. Irvine, L. Wilcox-Irvine, R. Overdier (via Zoom), T. Overdier, K. Holmstrom, D. Stephens, P. Morse, J. Moore, S. Madison (via Zoom), and other unnamed individuals including via Zoom

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Agenda approved by consent

**3. Public Hearing – Special Use Permit for Short-Term Rental at 375 W. Third Street**

- Resolution 2026-2

Chair Gale opened the public hearing at 6:01 PM. J. Ottenwess provided background information about the Special Use Permit application, referencing the previous approval of a Special Use Permit for the subject property in July 2025 and that the current proposal is a minor deviation in building height. Chair Gale solicited public comments. No public comment was received.

Chair Gale closed the public hearing at 6:05 PM.

Motion by H. Scott, seconded by B. Newell to approve Resolution 2026-2 as presented. Roll call vote was taken: Cavendish, Gale, Newell, and Scott voted in favor with none opposing or abstaining. Motion passed unanimously.

**4. Public Hearing – Zoning Map and Text Amendments**

- Resolution 2026-3

Chair Gale opened the public hearing at 6:07 PM and explained the purpose of the zoning amendments and emphasized that the amendments were not specific to any proposed development along Kitchen Road per se. Chair Gale solicited public comments.

Joanne Moore, 990 N. Kitchen Road, asked whether rezoning was motivated by a specific development proposal. Commission responded that changes stem from ongoing Master Plan and zoning map review efforts.

Paris Morse, 11011 E. Garthe Road, stated her support for downzoning but opposed R-4 classification. She further advocated for an R-1 zoning designation to preserve rural character

and provide transition to Township zoning and raised concerns regarding density, infrastructure, and long-term impacts.

Dylan Stephens, 104 E. 2nd Street, representing the Northport Boatyard, noted the presence of wetlands limiting development potential and raised concerns about impact of rezoning on existing harbor-related uses, ongoing sewer capacity study, and split zoning across parcels with the same ownership.

Ruth Overdier, 830 Kitchen Rd, stated her support for rezoning to R-1 and opposition to rezoning to R-1 due to the risk of future development inconsistent with community character. Ruth also expressed concerns about traffic safety on Kitchen Road and the impact of development.

Chair Gale closed the public hearing at 6:24 PM.

Motion by H. Scott, seconded by L. Cavendish to approve Resolution 2026-3 as presented. J. Ottenwess clarified the nature of the text and map amendments and that only the text amendments would be recommended for approval as part of the motion.

Due to confusion regarding the scope of the public hearing, additional public comment and questions were permitted regarding minimum lot size changes in D-1, the purpose of maintaining a commercial/industrial corridor, rationale behind proposed changes to specific parcels along Kitchen Road as opposed to others, and balancing flexibility for development with preservation of land use intent. L.Cavendish responded by explaining the need to restrict uses along the Mill Street corridor and the Planning Commission's intent to change the minimum lot size back to a limit that was previously in place before recent amendments. L. Cavendish also expressed her openness to considering the parcels that would be included in any amendments from D-1 to R-1.

Roll call vote was taken: Cavendish, Gale, Newell, and Scott voted in favor with none opposing or abstaining. Motion passed unanimously.

**5. Approval of February 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes**

Motion by L. Cavendish, second by B. Newell to approve minutes as presented, passed unanimously.

**6. Correspondence**

Chair Gale referenced correspondence received and available in the meeting packet materials, which pertained to the proposed zoning amendments and the Planning Commission addressed during the public hearing.

**7. Public comment**

None

**8. Reports**

**a. Zoning Administrator Report**

J. Ottenwess mentioned a housing workshop involving the Village that is planned for April 28, 2026, explained the agenda, and encouraged public participation.

**b. Trustee Report**

Trustee Cavendish reported on action taken at the January Village Council meeting. Cavendish also proposed reducing the number of Planning Commissioners from seven (7) to five (5), which is allowable under state law if the Village amends its ordinance, and cited the difficulty of finding willing and able volunteers to serve on the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission concurred with the proposal by consent.

**c. Tree Committee Report**

B. Newell provided an update to the Planning Commission about the Committee's recent activity.

**d. Leelanau County General Plan**

Chair Gale reported on recent updates to the Leelanau County General Plan.

**9. Discussion Items**

**a. Master Plan**

L. Cavendish explained ongoing work that she and Chair Gale have undertaken. H. Scott raised concerns about the pace of work on the Master Plan and questioned the Planning Commission's capacity to complete the Plan timely as well as the value of a legal review by a third-party/consultant. Discussion ensued about previous experience working with consultants and how a consultant could be involved in the process at a later time and incorporated within the Village budget. Consensus was to move forward with status quo, i.e. Planning Commission completing the plan on its own, and reconsider the issue in a couple months, when the cost could still be included in the next fiscal year budget.

**b. Capital Improvement Plan**

J. Ottenwess presented revisions he made to the draft CIP based on discussions from the February 11 meeting, including additional projects that were reviewed at that meeting. H. Scott suggested highlighting projects with firm estimates. Discussion ensued about refining project scope of work, including with respect to the marina boat washing station, water lines, and other similar projects. Ottenwess stated his intent to complete and provide a finished draft for the March meeting incorporating feedback from the discussion.

**c. R-2 S Shoreline Residential District**

J. Ottenwess presented illustrations depicting buildable width as it pertains to parcels along the shoreline and suggested it as the best way to regulate buildable area, limit lot splits, and retain flexibility for future development. Discussion ensued about the most appropriate buildable width and how it would impact current parcels and the potential for lots splits and future development, including the role of variances. L. Cavendish requested, and Planning Commissioners concurred, that Ottenwess prepare a revised

analysis of shoreline parcels depicting buildable width to consider at the next meeting, as a means of evaluating the potential of creating nonconforming parcels.

**d. Public Participation Plan**
Chair Gale explained the status of the Plan, which was originally adapted from an MEDC template, and requested a subcommittee to work on revisions. H. Scott volunteered and agreed to send revisions/comments to the Zoning Administrator.

**10. Public Comment**
None

11. **Board Member Comment**
K. Wessell reiterated her support for involving a consultant in completing the Master Plan.

12. **Adjournment**
There being no further business before the Commission the meeting was adjourned by the Chair at 8:01 pm.

*Prepared by: Jered Ottenwess, Zoning Administrator*