March 3, 2026

Dear Northport Planning Commission,

The amendments to the Zoning Ordinance currently before the Village of Northport Planning Commission appear on their face to harken improvements. Why shouldn't we allow more housing options, bringing more people in to improve services and tax base, improving affordability, and sharing the wealth that this area has to offer with everyone?

At the beginning of any process like this, the promise of improvement sounds very good. Many think growth is inevitable and beneficial, especially if "well managed." But you needn't look far to see that this sort of change is only the beginning. Once started, growth tends to accelerate, eventually swallowing up everything that made the region interesting to begin with.

In biology, growth accelerating out of control has a name: cancer. In my long life, I have seen quaint and charismatic communities grow into bland shells, and some that succumb to cancer and die.

I would hate to see that happen to Northport. I won't see it. But I do hope that my great-grandchildren will have a place to visit and enjoy that offers what Northport embodies now. Our village is distinctive and beautiful. Stars are exquisite in the darkness of the evening sky. Here one can still feel a fragile sense of peace.

Which is why I'm asking the Planning Commission to not approve these amendments. And to consider carefully, in a more holistic context, any future amendments. It appears that the Master Plan for the Village is not complete (according to the MASTER PLAN DROPBOX link on the Planning Commission page). Any changes to Zoning should wait at least until that document is finalized. I encourage Northport to see itself as a haven from the big box consumerism (in housing as in retail) of so many places today.

The proposals for the land under the proposed Zoning Ordinance changes seem like well-intended projects. Yet I'm worried that changes necessary for these projects will set an unwise precedent.

Please focus development on the town center. Ensure that any future changes will not cascade into ugly, uncontrolled development. Keep Northport from drifting into the impersonal irrelevance we see in many communities around the State of Michigan and the country.

Thank you for thoughtfully considering.

Sincerely,

Ruth Overdier

830 Kitchen Rd.

Northport, MI