January 29, 2026

To Jered Ottenwess and Village Council members:

I am writing regarding the 7th Street resolution 2026-2 which is up for a vote at the Village Council (VC) meeting. I find the resolution confusing and the vote premature. I apologize that my 'asks' in this letter are late in coming but hope you will consider what I have to say.

It is my understanding that this resolution is in response to a VC member who expressed a need for deliberation on all options for 7th Street, along with fully vetting the housing rubric before voting to spend money toward housing renderings for the 7th Street parcel. In the resolution it says the VC "passed a motion in 2024 to explore options one and two in the attached reports and which motion was never resolved and brought back to the VC for further deliberation". Reviewing the history of 7th Street, I am unaware that option 1, (to preserve the land in its current state), has ever being given proper due diligence by the VC.

Agreeing to spend almost $6000 on renderings for attainable housing on 7th Street but being unwilling draft renderings for other housing sites or re-naturalization of 7th Street into a park-like setting, demonstrates that a majority of VC members and our Village Manager, despite residents' opposition, have decided that 7th Street should become attainable housing. This apparent predetermined use for housing has bypassed thoughtful consideration and discussion for preservation or other housing solutions. Signing this resolution will not fulfill that obligation to explore, with further deliberation, option 1.

As you noted in the resolution, this parcel was split in 2025 which renders the supporting documentation and wording obsolete. The attached Planning Commission "7th Street Proposal Evaluation" drafts are from October of 2023, when the parcel was intact. Option 1 evaluation and map was based on 7th Street as a single parcel kept in a naturalized state. Splitting the parcel was part of proposal 2 where the map shows it split. Considering the split has already been made, what does "proposed use 1 and 2" mean now? Do you still plan to consider the other 5 "Possible Variations on Proposed use 2" found on page 3 which includes naturalization and beautification of the 1.2 acres? Or does a vote for option 2 mean attainable housing is the "final use for 7th Street? This is not clear. I commend the Planning Commission (PC) for their thorough work and analysis in the 2023 drafts attached, but several areas are now out of date and need updating if they are the basis for the resolution vote today.

In the drafts which include an assessment of the benefits/impacts on percentage of village residents, proposed use 1 (natural state) was indicated to be only benefiting "**some** village residents" but that proposed use 2, (housing), would benefit **all** Village residents and Leelanau Township. On page 3, "Proposed use 1", it says "an argument could be made for

preserving wetlands and maintaining green space positively impacts all residents". That is the argument many have made to this council and has merit. I agree, naturalization impacts all residents and the township.

I also agree with the PC draft that states proposal 2 has minimal alignment with the master plan goal of providing economic development. Taking valuable assets (that belong to all people of the Village i.e.1.2 acres of land) and using tax relief to support only some, (a builder and a few home buyers), only benefits some. Can you guarantee that attainable housing will help the Village economically or stabilize declining school enrollments, reasons given for how housing benefits all? From what I understand we are unable to guarantee the attainable houses would go to Village residents or local workforce. Determining which option provides benefit to a higher number of residents is purely theoretical and should not be a basis for deciding the future of 7th Street.

My second issue is with the appraisals presented and the monetary impact chart found under proposal 2-page 3. The potential monetary chart mentions sale of the property, which would bring in revenue, but not the monetary impact of donating land to a non-profit builder. The appraisals presented are no longer indicative of the value of the 1.2 acres, which might more realistically be valued between $500,000- $800,000. Making 6 lots from 1.2 acres changes the value significantly. This VC was unwilling to spend money on a new appraisal or seek an estimated value based on recent market sales. Inclusion of these appraisals can be seen as misleading. If the VC intends to donate this land (which I was told is the only way to make housing attainable), Village residents deserve to know the real value of 7th Street if marketed. When you say the people of the Village want affordable housing, do they know what they are giving up and what it will cost them? Be transparent and make it clear.

This resolution is proposed to address the unresolved motion from March of 2024 and to determine 7th street parcel's "final use". It is not clear how this resolution can do either. The motion to further deliberate from 2024 is not fulfilled by signing this resolution. The resolution language as written is open to interpretation due to the discrepancy with our current state. Do council members know what they are voting for? Is option one meant to keep the 1.2 acres in a natural state while option 2 is a vote for housing? This is unclear. VC members and residents deserve to understand what this vote really means for the future of 7th street. A vote should be tabled until further clarity and documentation attached align with our current state and the motion to further deliberate option one has been fulfilled.

Thank you, Vickie Slot