



Village of Northport

Village Council Work Session Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 5, 2026 | 2:00 P.M. | Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Meeting

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

President McCann called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

Roll Call: President McCann, Trustees Harper, Cavendish, Cook, Ager and Dean were present. Trustee Ruble attended via Zoom.

Absent: Trustee Harper

Staff present: Village Manager/Zoning Administrator Jered Ottenwess, Clerk Joni Scott
Treasurer Elizabeth Rutila,

2. Approval of Agenda

Trustee Cavendish requested the addition of Planning Commission member numbers discussion be added to the agenda.

The Council agreed by consensus to the agenda as amended.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Liaison Reports

A. Marina Report:

Trustee Cook had nothing to report.

B. Infrastructure Report:

Trustee Cavendish reported that all current projects are being scheduled.

C. NLTUA Report:

President McCann reported that the NLTUA held its bi-monthly meeting in late February and approved its FY 2026–2027 budget. The Authority also approved its service contract with the Village for the Superintendent, Clerk, and Deputy Treasurer positions. It was noted that the system analysis and capacity growth study, originally expected in February, is now anticipated in April after additional data collection. The completed study will first be presented to the NLTUA Board and then shared with the Village Council.

5. Discussion Items

A. 7th/High Street Parcel Concept

Council reviewed preliminary development concepts for the Seventh Street and High Street village-owned parcels. For Seventh Street, several scenarios were presented ranging from passive recreation on the 1.2-acre frontage to multiple cottage-style housing layouts with varying densities, including options with accessory dwelling units. Council discussion focused on attainable housing goals, site conditions such as groundwater, parking and access, preservation of

tree cover, and opportunities to integrate trails and accessible boardwalks connecting to the adjacent 4.7-acre park area. For the High Street site, concepts included two single-family homes, homes with ADUs, duplex development, and a small multifamily building. Council discussed compatibility with surrounding uses, shared driveway concepts, and potential zoning changes that could support additional “missing middle” housing options. No decisions were made. Council will review the concepts further and is expected to identify preferred scenarios at a future meeting for 3D renderings and additional feasibility analysis.

B. Water Rate Study Proposal

Council discussed the need to update the Village’s water rate study. It was noted that the Water Fund is currently subsidized by the General Fund and that long-term capital needs for the water system are increasing. Council discussed the importance of maintaining the system as a self-supporting enterprise fund and ensuring that future rates are sufficient to support operations and planned infrastructure improvements. A proposal from Dawn Lund of Utility Financial Solutions, in the amount of \$14,900, would update the financial projections and recommend a multi-year rate path using the 2024 cost-of-service study as a foundation. Council generally agreed that a professional update would provide a defensible basis for future rate decisions. No action was taken at this meeting; the proposal is expected to be brought forward for consideration at the next regular council meeting.

C. Short-Term Rental Ordinance Discussion

Council reviewed proposed amendments to the Short-Term Rental ordinance intended primarily to align definitions with the zoning ordinance and clarify administration and enforcement. Key updates include establishing an annual registration deadline of April 30 and authorizing an annual registration fee (to be set in the Village fee schedule) to help offset administrative costs. Council also discussed enforcement provisions for unregistered STR operations and clarified that STR registration does not replace zoning requirements, including obtaining a Special Use Permit where required. No changes were made to STR caps or overlay districts. The amendments are expected to be brought back to the Council for formal consideration at the next regular meeting.

D. Subdivision Ordinance 66B Repeal

The Village Manager explained that Ordinance 66B was adopted under an earlier version of the Michigan Land Division Act and is now outdated. Because the Village later adopted Ordinance 131, which governs land divisions under current law, Ordinance 66B is largely obsolete and may create confusion. Council agreed that formally repealing the ordinance would simplify the regulatory framework, and staff will bring forward a resolution at a future meeting to repeal it.

E. Planning Commission Membership Numbers

Council discussed reducing the Planning Commission from seven members to five due to ongoing difficulty filling vacancies and maintaining quorum. The Village Manager noted that state law allows commissions of five, seven, or nine members and that a change would require an ordinance amendment. Council expressed general support for the idea and agreed to consider an ordinance amendment at the next regular meeting.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Joanne Swanson – 10554 North Shore Drive:

Expressed concerns about transparency and timing regarding the Seventh Street concept plans, noting that the drawings appeared shortly before the meeting and that council was already discussing preferred options. She questioned whether the Village has fully resolved the legal authority to develop the property, including the status of the former reverter clause, and raised concerns about the potential density and its compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood.

Vicky Slot – 10160 North Shore Drive:

Shared concerns about the increased density being discussed for the Seventh Street site, potential impacts on neighborhood character, property values, and the natural environment. She questioned whether the Village should be involved in housing development and suggested the property could instead be sold or developed at lower density.

9. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Trustee Cavendish:

Clarified that Council members received the Seventh Street concept plans shortly before the meeting, at the same time they were posted in Dropbox. She noted that the Village attorney had previously reviewed the property title and reverter issue and concluded the Village could proceed as proposed. She also referenced the Village Master Plan and recent state planning requirements that encourage communities to address long-term housing needs.

Trustee Dean:

Stated that he had informally consulted with additional attorneys regarding the Seventh Street property and suggested the Village continue to review the legal questions carefully. He emphasized that Council is still gathering information and that no final decision will be made until legal, financial, and development feasibility issues are fully reviewed.

Trustee Cavendish / Village Manager Ottenwess:

Clarified that the front portion of the Seventh Street parcel was never formally designated as parkland, although it previously had a recreational-use deed restriction. Council later designated the rear 4.7 acres as parkland to make that status explicit.

Village Manager Ottenwess:

Noted that the work session was intended for open discussion and review of concepts and that no votes were taken. He emphasized that Council is taking time to study the proposals and gather public input before making any decisions.

President McCann:

Reminded residents about the upcoming Housing Summit on April 28 at the school, where housing concepts and renderings will be shared and the public will have an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

10. Adjournment

President McCann adjourned the meeting at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joni L. Scott, Village Clerk