NOT COMMITTEE APPROVED

ZONING COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING

DECEMBER 12, 2011
JASON RAFKO-CAMPGROUND REQUEST
TOWN OF DEWEY

Members Present: Phil Schneider, David Willingham, Tom Costello, and Karl Fisher. Kathy Mai was excused.
Staff Present: CeCe Tesky and Yvonne Johnson. Approximately 60 members of the public in attendance.

Chairman Willingham called the public hearing to order at 6:02 P.M. The purpose of the public hearing was a conditional use request to allow an 89 unit campground with a bar on the following described real estate:

A parcel in the NW ¼ - NW ¼, Section 29, T35N, R5W and lot 1 of CSM 489, lot 2 CSM 490 and lot 20 of CSM 785 all in Section 29, T35N, R5W.

Property owner: Jason Rafko
W7861 Shady Lane
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Tesky read the notice of public hearing which was posted per the requirements of a Class (2) notice. The town clerk, DNR, and owner were notified by Certified Mail and neighboring property owners within 500’ were notified by First Class Mail. Chairman Willingham explained the purpose of the hearing and the way the meeting would be run.

Tesky gave an overview of the shoreland zoning code that applies to this request. The Town of Dewey is not under county comprehensive zoning, so only the shoreland portion applies to this property.

Chairman Willingham asked for anyone present to speak for the request. Jason Rafko was present and asked to show a power point of his proposal. Rafko stated there is interest in a campground and people on the lake have expressed interest in having a place to go on the lake to buy a beer and a burger. Rafko said he enjoys improving properties and showed pictures of the property. He said he would develop the campground in phases starting with 16 sites. Eventually, there would be 84 sites, rather than the 89 sites originally requested.

Chairman Willingham asked for anyone present who wished to speak against the request. Bob Wiltrout who lives on Eagles Road spoke. Wiltrout stated he lives ½ mile from the proposed campground. He did a comparison between the impacts of a campground or the impact of 4 single family homes being developed on the same property. He referred to a map of the area – 5.69 acres with 400’ of shoreline. It is 450’ to the island and 1500’ from the osprey nest. The lots abut to the “take a kid fishing area.” There are private residences to the east and west of this property and the Rusk County current and future land use maps included in their comprehensive plan shows this area being residential.
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Currently and in the future. He said he would not have built there if there was commercial use. Comparisons of the 4 residences vs. proposed campground and were as follows: 12 people in homes vs. possibly 267 people in campground; 12 boat slips vs. 18 boat slips; 12 vehicles vs. 89 vehicles; 4 ATVs vs. 40 ATVs; and 8 boat trailers vs. 89 boat trailers. Wiltrout stated the campers would need to travel to the county park to launch boats. Where will the boats dock? This proposal would increase the high speed traffic in the bay. Wiltrout ended by stating the campground/bar request is incompatible with the area residential use.

Richard Moore spoke in favor. Moore stated he lives in Ladysmith and has property on Lake Flambeau where he spends weekends. Moore stated it would be nice to have a place on the lake to buy beer, pizza, or bait. He felt the campers were getting a bad rap. Moore stated that Tracey’s Campground hasn’t increased the boat traffic on the lake.

Richard Leonhard spoke in opposition. He submitted a letter which is included in the record. He also gathered signatures on a petition in opposition to the proposal. He submitted the signed petition for the record.

Malon Heath submitted a letter in favor. Letter included in record.

(Note: all letters submitted prior to the public hearing were read into the record and will be included in the record. The minutes will not repeat this statement after each letter listed.)

Judy Soyring who lives on Falcon Ave. was present and read a statement in opposition. Copies of the statement along with attachments regarding recorded covenants are in the record.

Jason Rafko submitted a petition to the committee that listed 169 signatures.

Christine Anderson spoke against the request. She stated she owns property in the area. The concerns which were brought up included increased traffic and noise, potential negative impacts on wildlife, property values declining, light pollution, numerous campfires and limited access to the public fishing area.

Travis Vollendorf submitted a letter in favor.

Bob Grunseth lives ½ mile south of the property and spoke against the request. He has lived there for 56 years. Grunseth noted the increase in boat traffic on the lake over the years. He stated he was not asked if he was in favor. He expressed concern over the noise that would accompany 89 campsites along with the lights, traffic and litter.

Carol and Kay Heath submitted a letter in favor.

Theres Cecere was present to speak against. Theres stated she would feel differently if the campground had been there prior to the homes being built, then the property owners would have had a choice to build near a campground. This area has an established residential use and the campground would decrease property values. The increase in boats, people, traffic and noise would all have a negative impact on resale values. The
housing market is already down and this development would not help. There is no buffer. Cecere questioned if the sites would be for trailers or tents and if the units would be left on the site year round. She also questioned if there needs to be road improvements made due to the increase in use, who would pay for it. There is a bird sanctuary nearby. She stated her family comes here to fish and hunt and was concerned that this may put restrictions on that use. She stated the campground is not compatible with the existing land use. She felt the petitioner should buy farmland in the future for a larger site. She expressed concern for the existing taxpayers and stated they purchased the property 23 years ago and there were covenants on the land to protect the residential use.

Gerald Schneider submitted a letter in favor.

Karen Wiltrout was present against the proposal and read her statement which is included in the record.

Rick Vollendorf submitted a letter in favor.

Oran Clay was present to speak against the campground. He explained that he lives on Leonhard Lane and bikes a lot. He is concerned about safety with the increase of traffic on the narrow road and said that having two campers meet would be nearly impossible. Oran said it is not reasonable to expect the existing people to make way for the new users. There are 4-wheelers who speed on the road now and the increase in people would only increase the problems.

Jeff Korish submitted a letter in favor.

A letter from Athea Fucik in opposition was read by her husband.

Tesky read the following letters submitted in favor:
Michael Frear
Wayne Stoll
Clint Page
Shelly Sorenson
Sophia DeLeon

Margaret Hastings submitted a letter against.

Tony Zeisler spoke in favor. He stated this would be a boom to the community and is interested in the Burger Bar. Zeisler suggested the county board and zoning committee could work on a land swap with Jason Rafko at Community Park and expand to the south. Zeisler said the township would get more tax base from 4 residences on the Rafko land than from the campground.

Jerome Johnson submitted a letter in opposition.

Julie Long submitted a letter in favor.
Tony Schotzko who lives ¼ mile from the site spoke against. He explained that he is a renter in the area and has lived there 6 years. He has 3 children under the age of 5. He
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wants to keep the area safe and feels fortunate to be in this neighborhood. Schotzko
would consider this area to build a permanent home, but would reconsider if this
campground is built.

Erica Bartles, Thomas Pepper and Owen Martin submitted letters in favor.

Kathy Vacho who is with the Rusk County Youth Council was present to speak against.
Her statement is included in the record.

Fred Doers, Eric Lundmark, Kayla Poppe and Laura Stunkel submitted letters in favor.

Darlene Sieg read a letter in opposition.

Committee recess from 7:54 P.M. to 8:06 P.M.

Gary Gaier submitted a letter against on behalf of the Lake Flambeau Association.
Robert Jaske submitted a letter against.

Deitra Nourse, Bruce Long, Larry Stunkel, Ryan Ellwanger, and Jeff Zahurones
submitted letter in favor.

Darrold Wisherd read a letter in opposition and stated that he was not contacted by Rafko
regarding the campground.

Terry Effertz said he is adamantly opposed to the campground. He stated when he built,
he was obligated to follow the DNR rules and only have a 30’ access point to the lake.
There is not enough room on this property to support the current proposal. Effertz stated
there would be an increase in boat accidents and the project would cause damage to many
and benefit few.

Pete Groothousen spoke against. He stated he was on the town board for 40+ years. The
town board passed a campground ordinance. Groothousen stated Carol Heath told the
town board that the lots he was developing would only be for single family homes. Most
of the tax base in the township comes from residential properties.

Jerilyn Leonhard spoke in opposition. She stated that this proposed site was her home at
one time. Leonhard also stated that she was not asked about the proposal by Rafko. She
expressed concern about children, wildlife and the fish being impacted. She is concerned
about the erosion on the hillside. She asked when do people stop being more important
than the all important dollar and urged the committee to deny the request.

Jay Gerber spoke in opposition. He stated that he lives right across the road from this
property and he feels obligated to speak against the proposal for his kids. Gerber has 3
children ages 6, 4 and 5 weeks. They spend time walking on the road. He said when the
built 8 years ago, it was a quiet residential area. Gerber told the committee he would
appreciate it if they would turn this down.

Tina Avery said this issue is all about family. Avery stated she was a business owner and
had many questions about the proposal. She questioned the size of the bar, number of
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seats, and if there was a business plan. She stated Rafko is missing the boat by trying to put this in a residential area.

Jason Rafko stated he plans 35 seats in the bar and would have plenty of parking. The size of the bar would be 27’ x 37’. Rafko would want the bar to be open for bar hours and would have a full liquor license.

Chard Gago asked what neighbors Rafko had spoke to. Gago felt this situation could have been avoided if Rafko had spoke with neighboring property owners.

Jason Rafko stated he would have the sites be seasonal and the units would be left on the property year-round. He would also plan some temporary sites.

Letters in opposition from the following people were read:
- Phil & Linda Strop
- Gary & Judy Gaier
- Jackie Pedersen
- Joseph Willger
- Don Bartig
- Ed Krenzelok
- Sandra Weiler
- Ken & Carol Bergsbaken
- Liane Haase
- Nancy Kraft
- Gregg Meyer
- Todd Roehl
- Katie Ruemmele
- Don Soyring
- Mike Weiler
- Cornell Minquey
- Lela Anderson
- Dave & Barb Hiserodt

There being no further comments or letters, Chairman Willingham closed the public hearing at 9:45 P.M. Willingham explained that it is customary for the committee to make a site visit. Written testimony can be submitted until the next meeting on January 9, 2012. The site visit will be at noon and the committee will meet at the courthouse at 2:00 P.M. The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 P.M.

Yvonne Johnson
Assistant Zoning Administrator