

**TOWN OF BASS LAKE  
SAWYER COUNTY  
PLANNING COMMITTEE & BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
Thursday, March 4, 2021**

**MINUTES**

Chairman Mark Olson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The meeting was held in person and virtually using GoToMeeting. Members Present: Chairman Mark Olson, Phil Nies, Dick Theis, Dan Tyrolt, Dave Aubart, Mark Laustrup, Bond Sutton, Tony Pfindt and Clerk Erica Warshawsky.

Clerk Warshawsky affirmed agenda was posted in compliance with open meetings law.

Motion by Laustrup, seconded by Nies to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Motion by Nies, seconded by Laustrup to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2020 regular meeting. Motion carried.

Olson presented correspondence. Olson reported that the following correspondence was received:

1. Sawyer County Zoning and Conservation approved Conditional Use Application #20-020 for Bradley and Patricia Herbert.
2. Sawyer County Zoning and Conservation approved Variance Application #20-003 for Nancy McCutcheon with the Town's conditions.
3. Sawyer County Zoning and Conservation approved Conditional Use Application # 20-024 for Daryl Mast.

Olson presented Special Event Application #21-001 for Scott and Laura Poppe. Olson explained that this is a unique situation. Olson reported that Sawyer County sent 2 letters; 1 letter was returned with no objection. The applicants were present virtually. Scott Poppe presented the application. Poppe explained that the purpose of the application is to hold 3 customer appreciation weekends with no more than 12 campsites on the following dates:

- June 11 – 13, 2021
- July 23 – 25, 2021
- September 10 – 12, 2021

Nies reported that this is the first of these applications that the Town has heard. Nies explained that the County is allowing multiple dates because that applicants are not making money off these events. Discussion followed. Nies asked the applicants if they would agree to the following:

- Maximum of 12 sites
- All lighting must be down lighting
- A manager/designee available 24 hours/day
- No fireworks

The applicants agreed to the conditions. The applicants will be the managers. Olson asked the applicants about quiet hours. Poppe replied that quiet hours will be 11:00 pm – 7:00 am. Motion by Nies, seconded by Tyrolt to approve the application with conditions. Motion carried.

Findings of Fact:

1. It would not create highway or traffic access problems.
2. I would not destroy prime agricultural land.

Olson presented the results from the Bass Lake Property Owners Survey. The survey was sent out with the tax bills. The cut off date was 10 days after the tax deadline. Olson reported that 619 surveys were returned. Olson suggested that if the Town wants to do this again, more detail should be included. There were many comments that people did not have enough information. Nies explained that Warshawsky created a spreadsheet and Nies tallied that results in batches of 50. Nies explained that the numbers will not add up because not everyone answered every question. Olson reviewed the results (see attached).

Edmond Packee stated that he likes the survey and he has concerns about green space, specifically who maintains it, at what cost, and what is the liability. Nies explained that a number of lots were acquired from the County when they cleaned the books. The Town has also acquired lots that were donated to the Town. Currently, the Town only accepts donations of land if it fits with what the Town currently has. The list from the County is reviewed when it is received to see if anything fits.

Olson commented that the Town received good information back from the surveys.

Nies presented the idea of creating a botanical garden in Henks park, which is 200 acres. This past fall Mike Heim was going to walk through and then COVID hit. Nies saw a program on PBS about a botanical garden in Alaska containing native plants. Nies spoke to Heim and asked him to go through the park with Highway Crew Chief, Truit Campbell and suggest plants native to Sawyer County and Northern Wisconsin. Heim told Nies that he would use his lab classes to review. Tyrolt recommended not bringing in plants and reestablish them. There are probably unique plants existing in the park already. Tyrolt suggested showcasing what is there. Discussion followed. Aubart said it is a great idea and is impressed with how many people visit Henks Park. Aubart suggested expanding parking. Nies replied that expanding parking is possible. Packee stated that he is bothered by the term "botanical garden". Tyrolt suggested "interpretive nature trail". Discussion followed.

Olson reported that more parking will be created at the little LCO boat landing. Campbell will install a "No Parking" sign and create more parking this spring. Olson explained that this project was held over from last year. Discussion followed. Nies reported that the parking will be blacktopped. He was hoping that this would have been completed last November.

Olson reported that beginning last fall, real estate agents began to advertise vacant lots for camping. There are currently 15 residential campsites and it looks like this is the wave of the future. A site at Treeland Resorts costs \$4,000.00 and they have 50 – 70 people on a waiting list. Olson explained that the other problem is a property on Park Lane advertised a vacant lot for rent. The property owner was addressed last year. The advertising stopped and then started up again this year.

Nies included a letter he sent to the Town Board in each Planning Committee member's packet (see attached). In the letter, Nies stated that the Town needs to decide what they want the Town to look like in the future. If they do not there is the very real possibility that there will be three quarter of a million-dollar homes next to campsites paying very little in taxes. Nies is urging the Board to address the \$50,000.00 camper on the \$50,000.00 truck on a vacant lot that does not leave. Olson explained that this situation came to light with the golf course application. Discussion followed. Olson reported that the County just approved a 200-site campground and there are rumors of more interest in putting a campground on the golf course. Discussion followed.

Nies is proposing that the Town Board switch from Option 3 to Option 1 in the Sawyer County Camping Ordinance by passing a resolution. Aubart stated that the Town Board did not ask the Planning Committee to consider this, they wanted that Planning Committee to research implementing a permit process. Aubart reminded the Planning Committee members that they serve at the pleasure of the Board. Discussion followed. Olson brought up garages with living quarters as an example. Olson explained that it is hard to regulate these types of things because of the time and manpower it takes to regulate and enforce. The Town currently has 15 camping properties and the Town and County have yet to address them. Nies spoke to the Town's assessor, Claude Ringlemon. These properties are assessed as the value of the land. If there is a pedestal, Ringlemon will

add \$500.00 to the tax bill which works out to a \$1.00 to the Town. State assessment cannot be changed. Nies stated that we have 15 properties that could be grandfathered (by fire number). Discussion followed. Nies stated that camping means a tent and a fire ring, not an RV. Sutton asked if the Town is going to dictate what people can and cannot do with their property. These people have the right to use their property as they see fit. Olson stated that property owners are already limited in what they can do. People are renting lots which is not allowed under County zoning, warned, and doing it again. Town Board Chairman Justin Hall reported that he gets complaints and then talks to the County. It takes everybody to enforce. Olson asked if the Town and County cannot manage 15, how can they manage 100? Hall suggested putting a fine in place. Olson explained that when fines are issued, it generally goes to court. Who is going to do that? Switching to Option 1 is a way to put an end to it and manage. Nies said it is one thing to enforce 15 and another to enforce another 15. What do we want the Town to look like in the future; residences, or campgrounds? Olson pointed out that the Town is laid out like a campground. Packee suggested creating 2 categories: campgrounds and family camping. Discussion followed. Tyrolt stated that the Town needs to be proactive or there is going to be a mess. What is being discussed is not camping, it is living. We do not want to go from one extreme to another. Camping a couple weeks vs 9 months instead of building a house is getting everything for nothing. We need to define camping and it needs to be limited to a traditional camping notion. The Town needs to address the 9 months out the year. Nies stated that the problem is in the way the County options were structured. Discussion followed. Motion by Nies, seconded by Laustrup to send a resolution to the Board recommending that the Board switch from Option 3 to Option 1 of the Sawyer County Camping Ordinance. Tyrolt stated that he is not in favor of Option 1 and would like to get the County to limit 9 months of camping per year. Nies stated that this is time sensitive. Tyrolt agreed and suggested pushing the County for another option. Nies and Olson agreed that it could take a year for the County to pass a fifth option. Nies suggested that the Town come up with their own option and take that to the County. Discussion followed. Tyrolt stated that we can come up with a better option for Bass Lake, but we need to stop what is going on now and be proactive. Olson said that we can put it on the agenda to write an option and go through the process with the County which takes about a year. Olson has been working with the County on campers with decks already and could work with Sawyer County Zoning. Discussion followed. Olson does not want to wait. Olson just did a google search and found 4 properties. Revised motion by Nies, seconded by Laustrup to send a resolution to the Board recommending Option 1 and come up with an option to present to the County. Discussion followed. Motion carried. Pfendt and Sutton opposed.

Olson reported that the Planning Committee has been asked to revisit room tax. Olson explained that when the Planning committee first looked at it, the two biggest resorts in the Town were against it and the Planning Committee recommended not doing it. At that time, the County was just setting up. The County has now identified properties and has done the leg work. The situation has changed on the ground and now is the time to look at it. The County has a full-time employee and works with a service to find rental properties. In December, Nies sent suggestions to the Board. Nies was initially against room tax, but now it could bring \$15,000.00 - \$20,000.00 to the Town. Nies reported that the Town of Hunter has offered to help Treasurer Kari Aderman set it up. Nies stated that it is time, the town has stretched the dollars with out raising taxes. Discussion followed.

Any other business - None

Motion by Laustrup, seconded by Tyrolt to adjourn at 8:28 pm. Motion carried.