

# Bayfield County Board hears Shadow Wood Landing Complaints

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Members of the Bayfield County Board considered a pair of controversial issues in closed session but took no action on either upon returning to open session.

The board discussed a legal claim that could be a precursor to a legal challenge on changes in zoning made on a 380-acre tract of land on which developers want to build a fly-in condominium in the Town of Russell. That claim, filed by a group of area residents calling itself the "Committee for Responsible Land Use" is an effort to halt the development, known as "Shadow Wood Landing," which would eventually include such amenities as a private airstrip, associated condominiums and a hotel complex. A Minneapolis-based group called CFS-LLC is proposing the project.

Among those opposing the project was Kristy Jensch who said efforts to provide notice to area residents about the zoning changes were "crude" and ineffective. There was no effort to notify neighbors," she said.

Jensch said the development flew in the face of the land use plan developed by the Town of Russell, which she called a consensus of the people to safeguard the character of the land.

"The project is in contradiction to the stated goals in the land use plan," she said.

Area resident Tom Galazen said he was interested in the protection of Pikes Creek and said he didn't think the County Board was aware of the level of opposition to the project. He warned that given the current economy, the Shadow Wood development could wind up as a "derelict project."

Because the comments were made during the public comment section of the meeting, no supervisors had questions or replies.

The other matter considered by the board in closed session was an issue which could also involve the county in litigation. It, too, concerns events in the town of Russell, specifically tax chargebacks made against the town by the county involving property that was assessed for taxes that is on the Red Cliff Indian Reservation and owned by Native Americans. A recent Supreme Court Case on an Indian reservation in Michigan determined that such properties, under certain conditions, were not taxable. Under the chargeback, Bayfield County is charging the Town for taxes on several properties that under the court ruling are not allowed to be taxed because of their Native American ownership, with the county maintaining that the properties were never taxable and should not have been on the Town's tax rolls. However, the Town maintains that the properties were taxable until their owners filed for the tax exemption, and under those circumstances the county chargeback is not valid.

There was no discussion of either matter when the board returned to open session.