

# Development crosses first hurdle

*Bayfield County board approves zoning change*

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WASHBURN — Despite opposition coming from over 20 speakers at Tuesday's Bayfield County Board session, board members voted 7-5 to approve a request for zoning changes on a 380-acre parcel of land in the Town of Russell that clears the way for developers to pursue efforts to build a private airstrip, associated condominiums and hotel complex.

The project, proposed by a Minneapolis-based group called CFS-LLC, is known as "Shadow Wood Landing" and must still obtain conditional use permits from the county before the project can become a reality.

The County boardroom was packed with area residents who spoke for over an hour in opposition to the project and its zoning changes. Tom Galazen of the Town of Bayfield said the proposed development could negatively impact potential wind energy development in hills adjacent to the proposed private airstrip, while area resident Russ Klinger asked the board to deny the rezone, saying he was angered by the proposal and by logging on the site leading to the development. "All this machination is going on to give the developers what they want," he said. "I have been pretty much ignored by the developers. Who is going to speak for the forest? When you clear out the amount of woods needed for the airstrip, it's disheartening," he said.

Resident Dave Martinson said that the development ignored the land use plan adopted by the Town of Russell.

"The Town Board deferred to Zoning, Zoning deferred to the developers and the developers deferred to no one. We are incidental to the process," he said.

Rick Dale of the Town of Bayfield minced no words in his opposition.

"Let's call a spade a spade. It's a stupid proposal," he said. Dale said the county board was obligated to make their decision in the interests of the citizens, and not merely to satisfy the town government, he said.

Our zoning ordinance represents a plan for orderly development," he said. "The county and the Zoning Committee should recognize the will of the people.

"He called the request "spot zoning" and asserted that it was destructive to the zoning ordinance as a whole."

To oppose this zoning change is not to be against development, (it is) merely requiring orderly development," he said.

Dale called the proposal "arrogant" and asserted that developers were expecting that they could manipulate the zoning process to suit themselves.

Mark Wendling, who said he lived about one-and-a-half miles from the project, objected to the project on the basis that a high-density project was "inconsistent with the character of the area, inconsistent with the residents' desire to keep the area rural in character, and inconsistent with the land use plan."

"Bayfield County has the duty to seek compliance with the land use plan, even if the town has failed," he said.

Tom Frizzell of the Town of Bayfield urged the County Board to table the matter so that the public and other communities such as the Town of Bayfield and the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa could more

closely examine it. He noted letters sent by the Town of Bayfield and the Bayfield Area Chamber of Commerce, both of which urged the board to table the matter for study.

Bayfield County resident Charly Ray also encouraged the board to turn down the zoning change and the entire project. He said the development would put the county "up for sale to the highest bidder."

He noted that he and his wife were recently turned down for a zoning variance that would have allowed him to add a couple of rooms to his home on a substandard lot.

"It's strange that a developer can get any zoning change they want," he said.

The sole voice in favor of the project in the entire comment period was that of Bayfield area resident Frank Graves. He asserted that there were at least as many people in favor of the project as those who opposed it. He called the development a "major job creator" both during construction and when the development becomes operational."

It will bring in tourists; we need to revitalize tourism as our main source of income," he said.

Graves called charges that the air strip would cause significant noise pollution "hokum" and insisted that the project was good not only for the Town of Russell but for the area and the entire county.

Board member Dave Good, who also serves as secretary for the towns of Russell and Bayfield, said during the board discussion leading up to the vote that he was also concerned about keeping the rural character of the area, but observed that because of public land, 60 percent of the area's land was already removed from the possibility of development."

I think that does a pretty good job of protecting rural character," he said.

He said the project was largely residential in nature."

It may not be the kind of residential development you would like to see, but it is residential," he said.

He said that the plan's emphasis on clustering and green easements meant that the land was far more "green" than a conventional subdivision.

County Zoning and Planning Director Karl Kastrosky said in addition to the zoning changes, developers would need several conditional use permits, with wetland mitigations and environmental assessments for each part of the project.

The decision came on a roll call vote. Voting for the zoning change, which has already received approval from the Town of Russell and the Bayfield County Zoning Committee, were board members William Kacvinsky, Shawn Miller, Kenneth "Bucky" Jardine, James Beeksma, David Good, Brett Rondeau and Wayne Williams. Voting against the measure were Thomas Gordon, Marco Bichanich, John Blahnik, James Crandall and Harold Maki.