

# What next for Shadow Wood?

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The current acrimony among certain Bayfield County citizens, certain elected local officials, and speculative land developers over the merits and detractors of a proposed "Shadow Wood Landing" private airstrip, condominium, and hotel project for the rural Bayfield area, represents the very kind of conflict that the community would hope to avoid by the responsible application of our county's zoning laws and comprehensive plans.

Those laws and plans exist to guide county decisions as they regard conflicting, often incompatible, land use proposals. Zoning and comprehensive planning is intended to protect public resources and quality of life, as well as protect individual citizen property rights and interests, while providing for appropriately sited, well-planned land use. Regarding the Shadow Wood proposal, despite considerable expressed and demonstrated citizen opposition, the present Bayfield County Board apparently decided that the people complaining were the problem, and (in a split decision) they gave the developers the zoning change they wanted.

The Committee for Responsible Land Use (CRFLU), a neighborhood group that formed in opposition, sued. In his recent decision regarding the matter, Judge John Anderson made it clear to the county board that citizens who believe they will be adversely affected by the zoning change do have standing with the courts and a right to demand that their elected officials abide by the law, its intents, and its processes. He also indicated that although he would rule narrowly, addressing in this instance only the issue of "navigable water" and a need to apply "shoreline zoning ordinances," this should not be interpreted to mean that other complaints brought by the plaintiffs did not have merit. He then remanded the matter back to the county board.

A business owner in Bayfield who supports the project angrily accosted me, saying that "his tax dollars were required to defend the board's decision!" I reminded him that I am a businessman and a taxpayer, too.

It may very well be that a gated "air park" development in the area will bring more people through the door of his main street business in Bayfield, but at the cost of degrading my long-standing farm business and residence if it is built in "my back yard." I also told him that my decision to stand with my neighbors in their just cause means that I get to pay for a part of the legal costs on both sides of the dispute.

Can we hope that the Bayfield County Board will now step back from their earlier decision to "spot zone" this project for a Minneapolis developer? What will be the role of the DNR going forward? At the very least, the process should be slowed down to allow further public comment and input. In my opinion, a final decision on this matter should be tabled until a new Bayfield County Board is seated following the upcoming election. If you are a Bayfield County citizen and you agree with me, I encourage you to express your concern with your county board supervisor — or board candidate.

Rick Dale

Bayfield