

APPROVED
Centerville Township Planning Commission
Special Meeting
Centerville Township Hall
August 29, 2022

Call to Order: Tim Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Attendance: Present: Tim Johnson, Jamie Damm, Joe Mosher, Lindy Kellogg. Absent: Dan Hubbell. Staff Present: Recording Secretary Dana Boomer, Zoning Administrator Tim Cypher

Public Comment: None

Agenda: The PC reviewed the agenda. **Motion to approve agenda as presented by Mosher, second by Kellogg. All in favor, motion carried.**

Conflict of Interest: None

Revise/Approve Minutes:

The PC reviewed the draft minutes of the August 1, 2022 regular meeting. **Motion to approve the August 1, 2022 regular meeting minutes as presented by Damm, second by Kellogg. All in favor, motion carried.**

Report from ZBA Representative: Damm and Cypher reported that there were no meetings and nothing in the pipeline.

Report from Zoning Administrator: Cypher had previously distributed his reports for July 2022. Cypher provided an update on ongoing zoning enforcement. The PC briefly discussed.

Public Hearing: Leelanau Pines Campground Site Plan

Process Description – Johnson summarized the process for the public hearing tonight. There will be three minutes allowed per person for public comment.

Applicant to Present the Site Plan – Jason Vander Kodde with Fishbeck Engineering, Architects, Scientists, Constructors summarized the proposal for the expansion of the Leelanau Pines Campground. They are asking for additional sites, the renovation of some buildings on site, and the addition of several new buildings and recreation space. The application is not requesting additional marina slips. There are currently 82 permitted slips, and those will continue to be used. They will be requesting permits to rebuild the current boat launch, add additional parking, and rebuild the marina store. They are looking to continue the current special use of the property and expand on that use while adding buildings considered customarily incidental to this use. Vander Kodde reviewed the applicable Zoning Ordinance and Master Plan sections – the applicant believes that they meet all applicable sections of these documents.

PC Questions/Discussions with Applicant – Johnson stated that the campground is not currently acting under a reviewed site plan, because it was developed prior to the Zoning Ordinance. He asked Vander Kodde to summarize the maps and charts presented by Northgate for the public – Vander Kodde did so.

Mosher asked the applicant to summarize the phased development with regard to the marina. Vander Kodde stated that the expansion application for the marina has been pulled. An application will be submitted for the current 82 slips because the geometry will be reconfigured. Mosher asked about the planned pools. There would be three bodies of water – an infinity pool near the lake, a small swimming pool, and an 8” deep splash pad with water features. Damm asked about the boat launch and available fuel. The applicant replied that there is currently *not* boat fuel for sale, ~~and that will not change~~ but *boat fuel sales are proposed*. Damm asked about the open-air water-front pavilions. The applicant replied that those would be used for picnics, crafts for children, and other activities, not for sales. Damm asked about the proposed employee housing. The applicant stated that this was a new addition, located along the road into the park, that would house 16 seasonal staff members. Damm asked about there only being one dumpster area shown on the plan. The applicant stated that trash is collected from campsites by maintenance workers and transported to an enclosed trash collection area near the maintenance building – individual campers will not be bringing their trash to the central area.

Public Comment

Wayne Swallow – South Lakeshore Drive – He sent in written comments, and summarized those. The Master Plan is the guiding document of the township, and the application does not comply with that document. Section 8.4 of that document states that the Plan does not anticipate expansion of the campground uses. Other sections of the Master Plan state that the township must focus on the preservation of the rural and scenic character of the township. These Master Plan sections must be integrated into the Findings of Fact, and the township must protect the rural and scenic character of the township.

John Popa – Bingham Township – He congratulated Northgate on the thoroughness of their application. He states that commercial marinas are not permitted in the Commercial/Resort Zoning District, and the application should not be approved with any reference to marina. He would also be interested in knowing if the present hoists and moorings are rented to people from outside the campground – if so, this would be an ordinance violation. The application currently states that the docking plans are “conceptual” – those plans should be finalized before the application is approved.

David Dumolen – South Beach Front – He read the vision statement from the Master Plan, and summarized the land use goals. He feels that the application is not compatible with the vision statement, the land use goals, or the goal of public safety in the township.

Neil Dziedzic - The yellow highlighted items in the staff report are of significant importance and concern to him. He is concerned with the environmental impacts, as well as the impact on traffic and public safety. He believes a natural resource/environmental impact analysis should be conducted, a site performance analysis, and a community service analysis. Without these

analysis reports, it is impossible to know what the effects will be. There are no hours of operation in the application. This will have an adverse effect on traffic and the environment, and there are major concerns with invasive species. This application is not a benefit to the township.

Don Baty – He sent in written comments, and summarized those. He purchased property on Lake Leelanau over 20 years ago, because it was a quiet lake with no large parks or campgrounds. The township needs to step back and look at the magnitude of the application, which would result in one of the largest campgrounds in the region. Supersized campgrounds are not why people came to Centerville Township. The atmosphere outside of other large campgrounds has very high traffic and a lot of commercial activity – it is the antithesis of Leelanau County. He believes in business, but he also believes in the character of the county and the preservation of natural resources. Adding 172 sites with 3 people each and a 75% occupancy rate that adds 387 people to the county during the summer month, not counting the extra traffic.

Ann Marie Raffthol - Elmwood Township – They can already hear music from across the lake – they can't imagine the noise that would come from the expanded campground. She has lived on the lake for 74 years, and has seen a lot of changes, but she never thought she would see an RV park that needed a water park on the lake. She agrees with everything else that has been said tonight.

Anita Risbridger – Sandbar Drive – The amount of traffic this will drive to the lake will harm endangered species, and she does not see the need for additional boat traffic on the lake.

Dar Doorlag – South Lakeshore Drive – She has a large farm with a large frontage on Lake Leelanau. She hosts the workers fighting invasive species including Eurasian Milfoil, and knows how hard they work. Centerville Township is a small, rural township with a small population, and this campground will essentially be a small city added to the middle of the township. The additions will tax utilities and public safety features, increase traffic, majorly increase the population of the township. She also has concerns regarding the current sewer system and lagoon, as well as the run-off from the campground to the lake. She is very concerned about invasive species, and the plan for making sure that boats are washed before going into the lake. The walking trails will invade precious wetlands. She is opposed to many portions of the plan.

Nancy Popa – She is a board member of the LLLA, and is a representative of the almost 500 households of the association. This proposed expansion is of great concern to the LLLA and its members. They are concerned about increased boat traffic affecting safety and the environment, the effect of the expansion on invasive species, increased development on the shoreline and its ecosystem, the runoff from the campgrounds, impacts to soil nutrients from the lagoon, and the impacts to the wetland, which contains endangered species. They ask for a lake carrying capacity study to be conducted. They request a condition that any boats that enter the water be cleaned with a high pressure washing system staffed by trained personnel. They ask that setbacks from the shore be protected, the shoreline be restored to its natural state, including the removal of the sea wall. They ask that the Master Plan be respected.

Brian Price – He was the Executive Director of the Leelanau Conservancy, and his family cottage is just north of the campground. He is a lake biologist for the Lake Leelanau Lake

Association. The sewer treatment and lagoon system is current adequate, but the proposal for a system expansion has not been shown to the public. The applicants must be able to show that upgrades to the system will not result in additional nutrients reaching the lake. The wetlands are a sensitive aquatic environment, and any degradation of that wetland should not be allowed. The application currently shows the development of current open space into buildings and other impervious spaces, and runoff has not been substantially addressed. Stormwater running over these spaces will run straight into the wetlands and lake; instead, it needs to be removed and treated. A theme park should not allowed unless the lake shall not be harmed.

Ed Dechow – Lake Leelanau Drive on the other side of the lake. His property has been in his family for 122 years, and he grew up on the lake, with his family running a resort. The lake is not what it used to be. Invasive species have come into the lake. Boat washing prior to entering the lake is very important. Boat traffic has expanded, as has the Leelanau RV campground.

Dr. Christopher Grobbel – Northman Trail, Lake Leelanau – He owns an environmental consulting firm in Lake Leelanau, and is the Zoning Administrator and Planner for 15 local communities. When this kind of development is brought to a community, the public hearing and township is where bad development gets turned away. It is very important that development is done correctly. An environmental assessment is critically important. The community has large concerns with regard to invasive species, trails in the wetlands, impervious surfaces. Conifer swamp has been lost in large amounts throughout the county, and is just now starting to be protected. This development is too dense, does not protect water quality, and does not comply with the Master Plan. This development is not the type of development that should be in a township with 1500 people.

Sarah Bordeaux – Sunrise Lane – This development is bad for the township and county. The new construction rivals that of a new city, and will negatively impact the environment, increase road traffic, and damage Lake Leelanau. The lake is already struggling to support the current traffic load, and is currently already dangerous in crowded areas during peak traffic times. Increasing the number of boats on the lake will only make things worse, and will hamper the effects to combat invasive species. She requests denying the proposal for expansion.

Ed Martin – Sunrise Lane – He agrees with everything else that has been said. The Road Commission should be present tonight, to discuss the impact on traffic in this area. The Planning Commission is appointed by elected officials, and Mr. Martin stated that the community is stating this application should be turned down.

John Stoller – He is here on behalf of the Glazier Beach Association. He thanked everyone for speaking tonight, and agrees with what has been said tonight. He does not think this application should be approved. The trailer parking lot seems to be quite close to the road and could be an eyesore. If this is approved, it needs to be reviewed with an eye towards aesthetics and character.

Charlene Verschaeve – Solon Township – She is concerned about the water level in various places in the campground, whether various perk and e-coli tests have been or will be conducted, and the environmental effects of the campground. In Solon Township there was recently a referendum of saving the farmland, which was supported by over 70%. Since COVID, everyone

wants to move here, and the traffic has been horrible. The county needs to find out what sort of environmental effects have been incurred due to the increased traffic already, before additional development is approved. The lake, and the wildlife, need to be protected.

Wayne Selanski – Lakeshore Drive – He agrees with everything that has been said. The boat launch is important, because it controls how many boats go in and out of the lake.

Kris Ward – seasonal at Leelanau Pines – She has been camping there for 30 years, seasonal since 2005; this is their heaven from home and God’s country. They love it because of the pines and nature and woods. It is shocking to see the need for pools and buildings. Campsites will be replaced with buildings and parking lots, which will block views. The lake is the reason they are there – they don’t need pools and buildings. The existing trails through the pines are beautiful; they do not want to touch the waterfront. The current boat launch needs to be repaired as it is in disarray. She agrees with everything that has been said tonight. She can’t imagine having the existing trees removed. With this expansion, Leelanau Pines would not be Leelanau Pines anymore.

Kathy Lavay – She has been at Leelanau Pines for 3 years as a seasonal resident. She wonders why they are putting the store and pools between the sites and the lake. The residents come there for the lake, they don’t need pools. She doesn’t understand how all of the new sites when the existing ones aren’t even full. The store/office was already renovated and is fine. The restaurants in Cedar are already packed – you wouldn’t be able to get into existing businesses if this expansion was improved.

John Hatton – He is a seasonal camper at Leelanau Pines, and has been for 8 years, but has been camping there for 35 years. He is in Centerville Township from May to October, just like any other resident. They come here to avoid what is being proposed. If he wanted to be in a park like the one proposed, he could go anywhere. They chose to come to Leelanau County because 45 years ago they were introduced to the area and fell in love with it. The proposal is something that can be found anywhere, but they choose to come here because of the lifestyle it represents. This proposal is not needed here.

David Weeks – He farms 40 areas on Schomberg Road. They love the summer people, but also love the year-round residents. Everyone is at the meeting because they value the character of the township. The proposed site plan is antithesis to the character of the township and its planning documents. It would be a disaster for the water and the air. They are raising their children and grandchildren in Leelanau County because of the character, and asks the Planning Commission to turn down the proposal. This proposal will result in money leaving the township, the county, and the state. For the economic health of the county and the residents, he requests that this plan be turned down.

Chuck Haag – Solon Township – They are just south of the park. They have seen a lot of changes. He does not believe this will increase property values. The impact on the nearby homes, in noise, traffic, and light pollution, has already been seen, and it would only be worse with this expansion. The traffic will substantially increase, and damage the road. This has the potential to overload utilities – overloaded electrical service has already been seen and will only be worse.

Fire, police, and medical services will be affected, not just in the township but at Munson Medical Center.

Paul Hamlin – He is a resident of the county. He is stunned by how unanimous the comments are against the campground. He was surprised when he started running some of the numbers that the campground would produce, compared to other villages in the townships. There would be more RV sites than home sites in Leland or Northport, or homes in Suttons Bay. There will be more people in the camp than in any of the local villages. This campground has the potential to completely change the nature of the county. He requested that the township turn down the application.

Warren Mlazy - Beach Front - He brought up what the area would look like on holiday weekends with this proposal. It's already crowded. If he wanted a large campground, he would have stayed in Ohio, where he couldn't traverse the streets

Nancy Beights - This is one of the few places where dark skies are still found. If this proposal is allowed, the pools will be lit, the campsites will be lit. She asked for this to be considered.

Clarity Eberwin – Lakeshore – She agrees with everything that has been said tonight. The township should not rely on other agencies to deny permits – it is in the hands of the township to approve or deny this. If this application is approved, extensive conditions need to be set. The sewage alone is concerning. When the developer says something is not being done “at this time”, the township should be incredibly wary. She requested that this application not be approved.

Sue Waller Bejaoui – Kasson Township – Her family moved to Leelanau County in 1948 and has land on South Lake Leelanau. This applicant owns parks all over the US, including Jellystone and Yogi Bear Parks. They have an average rating and some negative ratings at those parks. She read a review from a previous employee that stated that money is the bottom line for the company. The township needs to pay very close attention to every detail of this proposal.

Dr. Melissa McCarthy - This proposal is insanity. The environmental impact, the pollution, just from the camp fires, is all concerning. She grew up here and has been a life-long camper here as a seasonal camper. This is their seasonal home and they respect it. The traffic increase has been exponential already, and this would just make it worse. The reason that the existing people are here is because it is calm, quiet, and peaceful, and people respect the water and the land. The magnitude of this proposal is amazing, and would be a complete disaster for the township. She has never had to lock her car door. The population in the camp ground is already increasing, and they have already experienced having to lock their doors and move possessions. The sheer population increase will result in more crime.

Al Garvin – He was born in this area over 85 years ago. His concern is pollution. Every person is pollution. He already has to pick up bags of trash along his road – he picked up one bag just this morning. The traffic has seen a huge increase, both with vehicles and bicycles.

Rory Eberson – She asked if the added campsites would be able to bring a boat to use for the day, that are taken in and out every day. That, alone, would have a major effect on the lake.

Linus Laskey – They own the property immediately north of the campground. What assurances do neighbors have with regard to their properties not being trespassed on. They have had a good relationship with the existing campground and respecting property boundaries. They can already smell camp smoke, sometimes quite strongly. His property is the point immediately north of the campground on the lake, and they are already seeing campground population overflow into the area in front of their property on the lake. What assurances do the neighbors have that their property and rights will be respected by this large influx of people, both physically and in the form of sound and boat traffic. Non-locals do not understand the geography of the lake and don't always respect neighboring docks.

Tanya Rodin -The current operational time is May 1 to October 15. She hopes this is set in stone.

Public comment finished.

Johnson stated that a number of letters had been submitted, all in opposition to the project. Johnson and Cypher read a letter from concerned campers at Leelanau Pines and summarized those letters that had been submitted by persons who had not spoken at the meeting. Concerns were largely the same as those stated in person at the meeting. Copies of all letters will be retained in the file.

There was additional public comment:

Cary Weed – They own land that has conservation easements on the Rice Creek watershed, and the point of that is to preserve the water quality of the watershed and Lake Leelanau. This proposal puts a substantial number of RV sites in the watershed, and that is a concern.

Ann Gaul – In 1991, Traverse City was fairly small. She is a seasonal camper at Leelanau Pines, and she is concerned about the infrastructure. She comes here to get away from Traverse City. This is going to make Centerville Township look like Traverse City, and she requests that the proposal be denied.

Applicant's Response to Public Comment – At this time they are uncertain which comments to respond to, and asked for direction from the Planning Commission.

Close Public Hearing – The public hearing was closed at 8:37 pm.

Zoning/Planning Issues:

Leelanau Pines Campground Site Plan Review – Johnson summarized the process for a site plan review and the possible outcomes. Any decision must be supported by documentation and findings of fact.

The PC briefly discussed and determined that they were not prepared to discuss the findings of fact tonight. The PC then discussed whether a special meeting should be held on the topic or whether further discussion should be held until the next regular meeting in October. The PC

decided to hold a special meeting on Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 6:30 pm. The venue is undetermined at this time. The PC will look for a larger venue, or, if nothing is available, use the town hall again.

The PC briefly discussed the timeline for consideration of the application. The ZO states that the application must be “acted upon” within 90 days, which would be mid-October. The ZO does not define “act upon”. **Mosher moved to approve the ZA to work with legal counsel to determine a definition of “act upon” with respect to the applicant’s proposal. Kellogg seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

Damm asked whether the requested traffic study would be conducted during summer traffic levels. The PC briefly discussed formulas used for traffic studies. The applicant stated they are in contact with the Road Commission regarding the requested traffic study. The applicant asked when the PC would like the traffic study conducted. The PC advised that they would like to make sure the study accounts for the higher summer traffic volumes.

The applicant requested a list of questions that the PC would like to see discussed. **Damm moved to authorize the ZA to prepare a list of comments that need to be addressed by the applicants. Mosher seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

Proposed Section 9.6 ZO Amendment – The PC briefly discussed the proposed amendment, as finalized at the last meeting and attached to those minutes. **Kellogg moved to send the proposed amendment to the Township Board with recommendation for approval. Damm seconded. All in favor, motion carried.**

Public Comment – Wayne Swallow asked if a decision would be made at the next meeting. Johnson replied that he would be very surprised if a decision was made there. Swallow asked about the list of questions that would be provided from Cypher to Northgate – will that be made public. Johnson stated that it would be.

A member of the public asked how many members of the PC have been to Leelanau Pines for a site visit. Three of the four present have been. The fourth will be visiting. Another member of the public asked if the PC members have seen the property from the water. Three of the four have.

A resident living near Cedar asked about ordinances relating to light pollution and whether that would be considered. There is a portion of the ordinance relating to light pollution, especially with regard to development. In addition, the PC could make conditions regarding light pollution. The resident requested that conditions regarding light pollution be added to any approval that is made.

John Popa – With respect to the venue, the Leland High School may be an opportunity and has been used for large meetings in the past. The county building is also sometimes available. He believes that what is currently being done constitutes “acting upon” the request. He would encourage the PC members to include questions of their own on the list of questions to the applicants.

It was asked what the next steps in the process would be if the PC approved or denied the permit. Johnson covered the need for documentation and the process for appeal by an aggrieved party to the Zoning Board of Appeals and from there to a court appeal. The process for future meetings, the list of questions that will be sent to the applicants, and public comment was discussed.

Next Meeting Date: A special meeting has been set for Wednesday, September 21 at 6:30 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2022.

Adjournment: Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 PM, Damm seconded. All in favor, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Boomer
Recording Secretary