A couple who live six weeks in the summer in a recreational vehicle on 46 acres in the Town of Belgium have three years to either build a home on the property or connect a holding tank they use for the RV to a shed on the property.

That decision was made by the Town Board Monday upon the recommendation from the Plan Commission.

John and Karen Majerus, who own a home in Saukville that is on the market, travel around the country in their RV. They spend several weeks each summer on their property at 1772 Jay Rd. to visit family and take care of business. The land has been in Mr. Majerus' family for many years.

In 2009, the couple obtained a permit from Ozaukee County to install a holding tank on the property for the RV, something that is not allowed in the town. Former town chairman Francis Kleckner approved the application, thinking it was for a storage shed on the property. A restroom is allowed in an accessory farm building.

Initially, the couple was told to remove the holding tank and discontinue living in the RV, but the Town Board decided to work with them to resolve the issue. It was decided to issue a conditional-use permit to allow the holding tank.

By then, the Majeruses had traveled to warmer climates and thought the issue wasresolved until they got another letter from Town of Belgium Zoning Administrator Charles Parks.

Parks notified the couple a conditional-use permit could not be issued by state law because living in an RV is not a use listed in the town's zoning code. The zoning code and master plan would have to be changed or an exception made for the couple, he stated.

At the July 20 Plan Commission meeting, Ozaukee County Sanitation and Zoning Coordinator Edward Pfister recommended the permanent sanitary permit be rescinded and the Majeruses be issued a temporary permit.

After considerable discussion, the commission decided that three years was sufficient time for the Majeruses to decide what to do.

"We would like, at some point, for this to go away and they not live in the RV," Parks said.

Town Chairman Tom Winker noted, "By the letter of the law, he could put a shower and toilet in the shed, then he can have a holding tank. The problem is having the RV there. People drive by and say, 'Oh, you allowed them to live in an RV.'

"People live here for the small-town freedoms. On the other hand, it's very difficult at a meeting

when someone comes in and says, ‘You allowed that use for that person. What about me?’”

Parks said no one has a problem with someone who is visiting living in their RV or youth groups pitching tents for a weekend outing, but the town doesn’t want permanent camping.

Pfister said the town has the right to rescind the holding tank permit and he discussed the various options with the Majeruses.

“If he connects the holding tank to the shed, at least he will get some value from it,” Pfister said. “If he sold the property for a hobby farm, the shed would have a bathroom.”

The Plan Commission also recommended amending the zoning code to allow temporary sanitary permits for up to three years for people who are building homes or need temporary housing for some other reason. The Town Board on Monday dealt only with the Majerus situation.