

Neighbors' party concerns resurface

Written by CAROL POMEDAY
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Residents ask town officials to take steps to prevent repeat of noise problems at Jay Road dairy farm

Neighbors of a Town of Belgium dairy farmer, who in 2006 and 2007 held all-night rave parties on his farm, told town officials that they fear he may be doing it again.

They said loud music from an all-night party at Dennis Dahm's dairy farm, 2046 Jay Rd., kept them awake Saturday, April 27. The residents asked officials to take action to prevent a repeat of his previous parties.

Undersheriff Jim Johnson of the Ozaukee County Sheriff's Department said Tuesday a deputy went to Dahm's farm after receiving two complaints around 7:30 p.m. that night.

"The owner said he was having a large gathering for a friend who recently died to celebrate his life," Johnson said.

The deputy told Dahm to turn down the music because there were complaints about the noise.

"The owner told the DJ to shut down the music, and the music was turned down while the deputy was there," Johnson said.

However, at 11 p.m. the department received another complaint.

"We went there, heard the music and issued a citation for disorderly conduct at 11:30 p.m.," Johnson said.

At 7:45 a.m. Sunday, April 28, the department received another complaint from a resident who said loud music, drumming and yelling continued all night.

"We went to (Dahm's) residence, but the music was already shut down," Johnson said.

"There was no indication it was a rave party. It sounds like it was a large party and the music went on too long and was too loud. It's not anything out of the ordinary that we don't get elsewhere, and the warm season is just beginning."

However, Dahm's reputation for large all-night techno-music gatherings make his neighbors nervous.

Dennis Dimmer, who lives on Highway K, said after the music stopped Sunday morning, he heard what sounded like gun shots and feared there could be a tragedy.

He said a nearby dairy farmer lost 1,000 pounds in milk the next day because his cows were so spooked.

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Zoning Administrator Charles Parks said if the event was publicized on the Internet and Dahm made money from the venture, there should be an electronic trail that would help the town prove Dahm violated the zoning ordinance for the agricultural district, which now carries a \$10,000 per day fine.

The daily fine was raised from \$200 to \$10,000 in September 2007 following a three-day bash at Dahm's farm on Labor Day weekend that year.

That event was billed on the promoter's website as "The Midwest's Largest Electronic Camp Out" with 10 music stages.

During the event, Dahm and Milwaukee promoter Christopher Grant of Outlawed Productions were arrested — Grant was arrested twice — and issued disorderly conduct citations.

When complaints continued, a dozen Ozaukee and Sheboygan county deputies shut down the music at 8 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 2. The estimated 1,000 partygoers were allowed to camp out overnight rather than drive under the influence of drugs or alcohol, sheriff's officials said at the time.

Dahm pleaded no contest to one disorderly conduct charge and paid a \$186 fine.

Worried that Dahm would hold a Halloween bash in 2007 similar to one in 2006 that was so loud Town Supr. Bill Janeshek said he heard the music four miles away, the town sought a permanent injunction to prevent Dahm from holding such events as part of a lawsuit filed Oct. 26, 2007.

The town contended Dahm and two promoters violated the town's zoning ordinance, which then carried a \$200 per day fine, and the county's nuisance ordinance, which had a \$10,000 daily fine. The town also sought court costs and attorney's fees.

Dahm claimed the parties were not commercial ventures because there was no admission fee. Partygoers paid \$30 for a CD, which included admission to the "free" Labor Day event.

It took almost two years for the lawsuit to be resolved. On March 16, 2009, Judge Joseph McCormack dismissed the lawsuit.

Resident Jim Manders said the town should enforce its zoning ordinance.

"It's your ordinance. Are you doing to enforce it?" he asked. "Maybe if he has to pay \$10,000, he'll think twice about this."

Town Chairman Tom Winker said Town Attorney Michael Herbrand and Parks will meet with Johnson to determine what steps the town should take to prevent future parties.

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