Written by Carol Pomeday
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Move would allow use at Harrington Beach Park

The Town of Belgium is expected to approve an ordinance that will allow small electric vehicles to be operated in Harrington Beach State Park when it meets Monday, March 1.

The Town Board is also expected to consider changing the speed limit from 55 mph to 35 mph on Sauk Trail Road between Highway D and Cedar Beach Road.

The one-mile stretch of gravel road runs through the park, separating the upper portion with a new campground from the lower park with one mile of Lake Michigan shoreline, wooded trails and Quarry Lake. The state wants to acquire the road, but the town has refused to relinquish control of it.

“I think we should post it 35 mph and take all the other signs down,” said Charles Parks, zoning administrator.

“With the added pedestrian traffic from the campground, I think we should be proactive and lower it. What’s the disadvantage? I can’t think of any. Dust is always a problem there. Then we can get rid of all the no-parking signs and no-turn signs that have no ordinances to back them up.”

This is the second time, the Town Board has considered an electric vehicle ordinance that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources says is needed before such vehicles can be operated by DNR personnel or anyone else in state parks.

An attorney for the Wisconsin Towns Association said an ordinance is not needed if the vehicle is only operated in the park, but park manager Andrew Krueger said he was told he can’t get a small electric truck for use primarily in the campground until the town adopts the ordinance. The DNR contends the roads in the park are town roads.

The popular vehicles can only be operated on roads with speed limits of 35 mph or lower. The ordinance could be written to allow the vehicles to cross roads with high speeder limits but not travel on them.

However, Parks said it would be better to lower the limit so the vehicle could be

driven on it.

The Plan Commission last week recommended the board approve the electric vehicle ordinance and discussed the lower speed limit. Because it was not on the agenda, the commission did not make a formal recommendation, but most, if not all, members appeared to favor the lower speed limit.