

New home won't replace stone farmstead

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Town Plan Commission looks beyond restriction to preserve historic house

The way the economy has stymied new housing in the Town of Saukville, you would think officials would welcome any enhancement to the local tax base.

However, the Plan Commission was especially pleased to approve the site plan for a new home last week because it also calls for preserving a little local history.

The commission unanimously approved plans submitted by Jim and Karen Lillie to build a 3,180-square-foot home on an existing barn foundation at 3903 Birchwood Rd.

The house and a 1,300-square-foot garage are expected to add \$400,000 to the town's tax base.

The Lillies also sought permission from the town to retain what remains of a stone house on the property that is believed to date back to 1862.

The building, which stands right along Birchwood Road, was the Grotelueschen homestead.

Town Zoning Administrator Wally Grotelueschen's father was reportedly born in the building.

The couple said water pipes burst in the stone house several years ago and caused significant damage.

"It is in pretty rough shape. Pretty much all that is left are the four-inch stone walls," Jim Lillie told the commission.

"All we are trying to do at this time is not tear the building down."

The couple said they want to keep the building on their property, because of its historic value. They may possibly restore it in the future for use as a storage building.

In discussing their preservation plan, the couple noted the decorative brickwork cornice on the building, something frequently used on buildings erected in the area around the time of the Civil War.

"Anytime you can save an old building like this that is part of our history, we are for it," Town Chairman Barb Jobs said.

Still, the Lillies were tentative about the preservation plan, because the town ordinances do not allow more than one residence on a lot.

To get around that restriction, they originally asked for a variance that would allow the retention of the homestead.

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Instead of granting a variance, the commission made a condition of their site plan approval that the stone house not be used as a dwelling.

Jobs noted the Lillies brought their plans to the town despite the fact that the site for Ozaukee County's proposed gravel pit is virtually across

the street from the building site.

Despite town protests, a recently adopted county ordinance gives it control of use of that land.

The Plan Commission approval of the Lillies' plan is contingent on wetland review by the county.

The commission also approved the site plan for a 1,320-square-foot barn at 2699 Hwy. I. The 20-acre property is owned by James and Laurie Nielsen.

Image Information: THE TOWN OF SAUKVILLE Plan Commission allowed this stone farmhouse, which dates to 1862, to remain intact when it approved plans for a new home on Birchwood Road. Photo by Mark Jaeger