

No fast track for plat reviews by village

Written by MARK JAEGER

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Town of Saukville officials frustrated by length of time it takes for approval of border land divisions

Extraterritorial plat reviews of land divisions are intended to give village officials a heads-up on pending township plans that could affect future growth.

The reviews, which extend 1.5 miles from a village's boundary, are made to determine if a proposal will have an impact on municipal amenities such as roads and sewer service.

In the case of the Town of Saukville, the reviews can also add a significant layer of bureaucratic complication — and delay — to the approval process.

Consider two land divisions that gained conditional approval from the Town of Saukville Plan Commission in spring.

One request seeks to divide an 18.3-acre property on Highway I at Hillcrest Road into three parcels. The property is owned by Daniel Paape.

A second request, forwarded by Robert Worth and Joel Britz, sought retroactive approval for the division of 51.4 acres into two parcels and two outlots on Highway O.

The commission learned about the unauthorized land division in March, and asked that the owners go through the proper approval process.

After gaining tentative support from the town, the land divisions were forwarded to the Village of Saukville's Plan Commission.

However, a lack of pressing matters meant the village's planning body had no meetings since April.

When the village's planning body finally met in August, commission members were told the village staff had no objections to the town land divisions.

The certified survey maps for the two land divisions were matter-of-factly recommended by the commission.

Those actions still await final action by the Village Board, which cancelled its second meeting in August. The land divisions will be presented to trustees at the Sept. 3 board meeting.

Hoping to avoid any additional delays, the Town Board granted tentative approval of the land divisions at its meeting last week. Those approvals were made conditional on gaining final endorsements from the Village Board.

Town Chairman Barb Jobs said the town landowners seeking the land divisions have been

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surprisingly patient with the protracted process, but she said that doesn't mean the delays are justified.

"Before the county's comprehensive land-use plan was adopted, I could see that extraterritorial plat reviews made sense," Jobs said.

"Now that the county's land-use plan is in place, and the maps are available to everyone, I don't think reviews by outside communities are really needed. If everyone follows their plans, we know where the village is planning to expand and extend its sewer service area."

Thanks to the availability of the county land-use plan, Jobs said the town can advise landowners if a proposed land division conflicts with comprehensive planning, such as creating large lots in an area where the village envisions a subdivision.

"We would tell the landowner up front that those plans would never get approved by the village," she said.

Jobs noted that the township faces outside plat reviews in large swaths of land that border the villages of Saukville, Newburg and Fredonia.

"As it stands, there really isn't much of our town that isn't covered by extraterritorial review," Jobs said.