

Stymied land split advances

Written by Mark Jaeger

Wednesday, 23 February 2011 16:46

Town now receptive to creating two parcels from St. Finbar's farmstead

It was more than two years ago when Tony and Bonnie Schaefer told the Town of Saukville Plan Commission about their plan to divide the 42-acre property they own at 4760 St. Finbar's Rd.

Their intent was to create a five-acre parcel surrounding a vacated clapboard farmhouse, which Schaefer said his brother wants to restore.

Town officials were told the building is part of the Shields farmstead dating to the 1890s.

The couple said they would eventually like to build a home on the remaining 37-acre parcel, which includes the existing barn. The balance of the land would continue to be leased to an area farmer.

Those plans were thwarted when town officials worried that the land division would be seen as spot zoning.

The Schaefer project was pushed further back on the shelf when the town adopted its part of the county's comprehensive zoning plan that eliminated all five-acre parcels.

A change in administration at Town Hall and revisions to the town's zoning ordinance gave the Schaefer's new hope.

Last month, the Town Board adopted changes to its agricultural zoning ordinance championed by Town Chairman Barb Jobs. The change allows five-acre lots in four agricultural zoning districts.

Until that action, the minimum size for agricultural lots was 35 acres.

Earlier this month, the Schaefer's returned to the Plan Commission with the same proposal they introduced two years ago. This time, they won the unanimous recommendation of the planning body.

The only conditions placed on the couple was that they remove an existing garage and shed that would encroach on the new lot lines.

The Town Board was poised to approve the land division last week, but postponed a final vote until the Schaefer's produced signed copies of their survey map.

A vote is expected at the March 15 board meeting.

Approval of the land division is all but certain because two members of the three-person board

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already backed the proposal as members of the Plan Commission.

“It was terrible what this couple had to go through,” Jobs said this week.

“They became the poster children of the problems caused by the way the comprehensive plan was written.”