

Subdivision expansion moves along

Written by Mark Jaeger

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Eliminating single lot satisfies most town officials

What difference can a single residential lot make?

It may make all the difference when it comes to the proposed expansion of the Knollwood Village subdivision in the Town of Saukville.

Landowners Al and Rita Hospel, who created the original 75-acre, 15-lot subdivision in 1979, have long wanted to expand the development onto 30 adjacent acres.

In recent years, that expansion ran into an obstacle with the town's requirement of minimum lot sizes of 35 acres.

When the town amended its zoning code in January to allow five-acre lots, the door for the expansion was open.

Hospel met with town staff members, proposing a division of the 30 acres into four residential lots.

At Tuesday's Plan Commission meeting, that preliminary plan was amended to five lots of approximately six acres each.

That subtle change didn't sit well with Town Chairman Barb Jobs.

"I have some concerns," Jobs said. "We are not here to promote subdivisions. As soon as you have five parcels, you cross the line and the requirements of the subdivision ordinance kicks in."

She said staff members "made it quite clear" their preference was to limit the expansion to four lots.

Jobs said she also did not want to see lots larger than 10 acres that could eventually be divided into multiple lots of five acres.

Citing a desire to move the project along for development this spring, Hospel agreed to redraw the proposed lot lines to create only four parcels.

The commission then invited him to return next month for a formal review, but with a warning from Jobs.

"If the commission is still unsure about this next month, we won't be forwarding it to the Town Board. There are no guarantees," she said.

Although the simple land division does not require rezoning, and thus no public hearing is needed, neighbor Kate Redmond asked that the commission keep the desire of residents in mind when reviewing the proposal.

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Redmond said she is especially concerned about the disregard for the preservation of natural features and the town's apparent willingness to promote five-acre residential lots.

"We are at a point where our more populous neighbors to the south are envious of us. We still have the chance to do things right," she said.

In response to similar concerns raised by commission member Tom Uttech, Hospel said the earlier phase of the development was done with great sensitivity to natural features.

"There are more trees in the subdivision than in the open land we are looking to develop. We must have moved 100 big trees in the subdivision," Hospel said.

A formal presentation will be made at the commission's April 11 meeting.