

Town still fine-tuning comprehensive plan

Written by Mark Jaeger

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Modifying land-use document will require additional public input

Town of Saukville officials are being deliberate in the revisions they would like to see made to their 2035 comprehensive plan.

The plan, which was adopted earlier in the year as part of Ozaukee County's effort to comply with the state's Smart Growth requirements, was the topic of criticism even before Barb Jobs was elected town chairman in April.

Since taking office, Jobs has worked with Supr. Kate Smallish in identifying areas of that plan she would like to see revised.

Five substantial changes are proposed for the plan, although several of those issues are referred to in multiple elements of the document.

Among the changes town officials have said they want incorporated into the plan is the elimination of a 500-foot development buffer zone around "naturally sensitive" land features, such as woods.

Officials have also said they want to drop the designation "countryside estate residential" from the comprehensive plan map, replacing it with "rural neighborhood residential" use.

Refinement of the town's agricultural zoning is also being sought, clarifying what qualifies for farmland protection. As proposed, references to 35-acre minimums would be dropped.

Town officials have said references to undefined spot zoning and closed subdivisions should be eliminated, as well.

Jobs and Smallish gave Town Clerk Chris Lear their compiled notes in hopes of bringing the push for corrections to a head.

Lear told the Town Board at its last meeting that he was first daunted by recording the nuances of the land-use debate, but found the review process was easier than he expected it would be.

The fruit of that labor was a two-page summary of the changes advocated at board and Plan Commission meetings dating back to this summer.

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“It took me four hours to pull this together, identifying what we want to add and what needs to be taken out,” Lear said.

Although the comprehensive plan includes provisions for amendments, he said the process is not simple.

Once the town decides what changes it wants to incorporate, a public hearing will be required along with the publication of the altered text and map.

“When you start working on a document that is this thorough, you want to get it right the first time,” Lear said.

Jobs said the town will need technical assistance to make sure the proposed language changes are incorporated into new maps developed for the plan.

“The map will be something where we will need to get help from the county or SEWRPC (Southeastern Regional Planning Commission), but at least we are moving forward. More than 95% of the plan stays exactly as it is,” she said.