

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TWO HARBORS IS A NICE PLACE TO VISIT...BUT DON'T EXPECT TO LIVE HERE

Dear Editor,

I've been aware that there is a housing shortage in the Two Harbors area for quite some time. I worked for Lake County for 23 years...14 years in Corrections and 9 in Social Services. There were limited opportunities for affordable housing during those years. I currently serve on the board of directors for North Shore Horizons and am aware that the problem is has gotten worse rather than improved. Recently, my adult son and his toddler relocated to Two Harbors because my son wanted to raise his son in a safer place. For us the reality of the housing situation is painfully clear... it is becoming a crisis. There are literally no available rentals and very little to buy.

I have learned that there are currently 60+ vacation rental homes in Two Harbors. This figure is three times the normal number for other cities...larger cities, such as Duluth. The homes that should be housing families are being used as vacation spots for tourists. While this may be a boon for the economy in some ways, this could be devastating to the community in the long term. What will happen when there are too few students for the schools? What will happen when there are no young people to work the service industries? If there is no place for families to live, families will move away. This will also affect the tourism in our community, but in a negative way.

I am also curious about whether these homeowners are paying non-homestead property taxes? Are they all registering their VRBOs per city requirement?

My opinion is that the city must put a stop to this now, before any more homes are allowed to become vacation rentals. They can put a cap on the number of VRBOs allowed. They can turn their focus to helping agencies like HRA and AEOA secure affordable housing options for families and support the growth of our permanent population rather than our tourist population. Silver Bay does not allow folks to purchase homes for the purpose of turning them into VRBOs because they are experiencing a housing shortage and they choose to serve their residents and promote growth.

I believe the people of Two Harbors should be concerned, if not angered by what is happening with local housing. I would appreciate feedback on the issue.

Thank you, Toni Wangen

Greetings:

I am putting some information out regarding the Lake County School Referendum and urge you to vote "YES". Question 1 is revenue neutral and addresses accessibility, security, health and safety issues as well as better technology and improved classroom space at William Kelley and Minnehaha schools. Students will be the major beneficiaries if the referendum is approved. Question 2 focuses on refurbishing and improving athletic fields. Approving that question will result in a very modest increase in property taxes on most properties.

I encourage you to become informed regarding the referendum and vote "YES". Following are several links that take you to pertinent information: Informational site for the upcoming school referendum: www.anchorourfuture.org/, Fast Facts Flyer, the Absentee Ballot Application, and a Tax Calculator, which is pertinent only to Question 2, can be found on the website.

For those of you in the William Kelley School service area, there are several information tours available: 6 PM on 10/13 and 10/27. Meet in the school library. Come and get your questions answered. You may also contact the district office for information if you cannot make a tour or for tour information at other schools.

I am a retiree who has spent a fair amount of time in William Kelley School over the past ten years and know first hand that major improvements are needed. Our schools are keystone institutions in our communities and Lake County. They require investment if we are to maintain their viability and contribute to overall educational, economic and social health of the area. Vote "YES" and encourage your friends and neighbors to vote "YES" as well.

Morris Manning, Silver Bay

Dear Editor,

I am the proud parent of a Two Harbors graduate and have spent the past eight months in meetings and committees discussing the educational and facility needs of the Lake Superior School District. Having heard from teachers, parents, administrators, community members and other stakeholders, it's clear that while Two Harbors has a fairly new and modern high school, both the Minnehaha Elementary in Two Harbors and the William Kelly in Silver Bay are in critical need of substantial repair and upgrades. A walk through the Minnehaha alone should leave you rushing to vote Yes for the Referendum going before the voters this fall. We can no longer keep sending our students and teachers into facilities that should have been repaired and upgraded years ago. Studies show and it makes sense that the condition of school facilities impacts student achievement.

The District is not asking for a new state-of-the-art facility. They are simply asking the community to support our students and teachers in providing them with a safe, clean and modern learning environment by making repairs and upgrades to existing buildings (with the exception of a new and sorely needed bus garage). Residents of Lake County are in a unique position - by voting YES for Option 1 you can support our students and teachers and bring their learning environments into the 21st century AND your taxes going towards the school district will not change. By voting for Option 2 we get the critical upgrades and repairs of Option 1 with the addition of turf fields and other athletic upgrades for Two harbors and William Kelly - Option 2 will only raise your taxes about \$3.00 a month - that's a lot of bang for the buck if you ask me.

It's true that if the referendum does not pass, your school-related taxes will go down because the current levy paying for the Highschool will be complete. However, make no mistake, the current trajectory for both the Minnehaha and the William Kelly are not sustainable - it seems to me that we can pay now or we can pay later but the cost to our students, teachers and pocketbooks will only get bigger. You don't have to wait until November 2nd to vote. Early voting starts September 17th. You can vote early in person or by mail. Go to AnchorOurFuture.org to learn the details of the referendum and how to vote. Please vote yes for our students and teachers.

Mark Gordon, Two Harbors

9/21/21

Dear Editor,

The time has come to weigh in on Lutsen Mountain Ski Resort's proposed expansion onto adjacent public land.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement was released on September 9th, and is accompanied by a 45 day public comment period. For anyone who does not know, this is a *proposed expansion onto public land*. It includes all of the rest of both sides of Moose Mountain (of which Lutsen Mountain currently owns the northeastern 1/3), as well as some acreage adjacent to Lutsen Mountain's property on Eagle Mountain. It is a huge plan, designed to double their acreage and skier capacity over the next 20 years. Nothing about current alpine ski industry trends indicates that there will be an increased customer base to support such growth.

As part of the last public comment period, we explained to the Forest Service that Moose Mountain has *the most ideal* terrain in all of Minnesota for backcountry skiing. We will be continuing to clarify our position and to advocate for the development of an alternative plan which would leave the front side of Moose untouched, allowing for it's continued use by backcountry skiers, hikers, hunters and tribal members.

Contrary to the narrative that Lutsen Mountain has been presenting, they do *not* need access to our public land to survive as a business. (As any local skier will tell you, there

Sept. 13, 2021

Nathan Stadler

Undersheriff, Lake County Sheriff's Office

Dear Editor:

As kids go back to school, pedestrians and bicyclists on our roadways have increased. We have seen many close calls with distracted drivers recently and want to take this opportunity to remind everyone on the roads to stay alert.

Approximately 225 pedestrians are killed or seriously injured on Minnesota roadways annually (Toward Zero Deaths). We all can work together to reduce pedestrian and cyclist fatalities.

Driving smart means:

- Stopping at every crosswalk and intersection for pedestrians trying to cross.
- Parking the phone and putting the distractions away.
- Bicyclists are supposed to ride on the road, going in the same direction as traffic - be patient and give them space (at least 3 feet).
- Look both directions for pedestrians or cyclists before making a turn where people might be walking.
- Drive sober.

Walking smart means:

- Only crossing streets at marked crosswalks or intersections and obeying traffic signals.
- Make eye contact with drivers and ensure they see you and will stop.
- Clearly show your intentions to cross.
- Watch for turning and passing vehicles.
- Stay off your phone.
- Use sidewalks where provided.

Cycling smart means:

- Following the law - obey all traffic signs and signals. Ride in the same direction as traffic.
- Ride predictable - maintain a straight course and avoid weaving between parked cars.
- Communicate your intent - look, yield to traffic and signal before turning or changing lanes.
- See and be seen - wear bright colors, reflective gear and use head and taillights.
- Protect yourself - wear a helmet.
- Stick to roads and trails - sidewalk riding puts you at risk for crashes at driveways and intersections. Always yield to pedestrians.
- Avoid distracted bicycling - put away mobile devices and headphones.

By following a few simple rules of the road, we can get everyone home safely at the end of the day.

are plenty of opportunities for improving/ updating their current operations: high-speed on bridge, rope tows on bridge return trail, brush out the current unused tree skiing acreage, terrain park with rope tow...?) While ski resorts out west tend to operate on public lands, we are in a different situation here, where vertical feet and skiable pitch are a scarce coveted resource. In a time when backcountry sports in general, and backcountry skiing specifically, are growing at a steady pace, we should be thinking about how to preserve this terrain to attract a new and diverse demographic of visitors to our area. This is not an "either/or" situation, rather an opportunity to enrich the offerings that our area has, both for our local residents and our steeply growing stream of visitors.

I urge residents of Cook and Lake County to look closely at this proposal, and give your opinion to the Forest Service. The full proposal and instructions on how to submit comments are available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=52440>, or by contacting the Project Leader, Michael Jimenez, at 218-626-4383 or by email at michael.jimenez@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

Elli King

Chairperson of Superior Highland Backcountry and Co-owner of Lutsen Recreation, Inc.