



**December 20, 2023**

Morton Township Property Owners:

The Tri-Lakes Association, founded in 1978, is focused on supporting the interests of the community of lake owners and lake users by assisting, monitoring, protecting, and preserving the quality of Lake Mecosta, Blue Lake, Round Lake and their connecting waterways, wetlands, surrounding watershed, and wildlife and ecosystems.

We believe every property owner has a specific answer to the question “Why am I here?” For “Truck-Slammers” this means each Friday night is a rush to pack the car and head to the lake. For “Year-Rounders” each weekday is a blessing for the serenity of the surroundings. We are all fascinated by our area wildlife, especially the Loons, Eagles, Mergansers, Trumpeter swans, Canadian Geese and Deer.

In case you have not heard, there is a proposal to develop an RV Park at the corner of St. Ives Drive and 105<sup>th</sup> - across from the Lake Mecosta public access. The proposed location consists of 5 parcels of land, totaling 45 acres. Four parcels are currently zoned Agricultural, one parcel zoned Residential. The RV Park would offer sites for lease to people with motor homes, campers, 5th-wheels, tents, travel trailers, etc. The Consultants offering this proposal are asking for a density of 12-15 sites/acre, an increase from the 3 sites/acre in the Township Zoning ordinance for campgrounds. Even setting aside part of that land for amenities like a pool and clubhouse, and areas for a septic system, roads, parking and storage, a conservative guess (and it is a guess until a site plan is submitted) would assume the location could have at least 300 sites!

We can't stop development – St. Ives and Tullymore didn't exist 30 years ago. New homeowners have replaced or rebuilt old cottages and built new homes and cottages. Each new build is constructed within the Township building ordinances and County Health Department standards. These developments have enhanced our area and are assets to our community.

However, our community is facing a new development, those behind it asking for exemptions to our Township ordinances and requesting preliminary approvals prior to submitting an application or site plan.

The request by Freshwater Hospitality Consulting Inc. for a variance in number of sites for a campground in order to build an RV Park on the corner of 105<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Lake Drive is something that is of great concern. The effect of such a development on the entire Tri-Lakes area is huge! It will bring overcrowding on our lakes, overcrowding at the public access and boat ramp, and a large increase in traffic (vehicular, pedestrian, ATV, golf carts, bicycles, etc.). Other concerns are water pollution, increased lighting issues, increased noise levels and a major strain on our limited volunteer public resources. The location of this proposed development is only 800 yards from the Tri-Lakes Public Access site, and within the aquifer

that feeds our lakes and provides our drinking water. Providing how the sewage is handled, potential contamination of the aquifer from this type of development could have major impacts on our lakes!

Another major concern from an economic standpoint is the impact on property values of existing Morton Township residents. The news of the development has current residents concerned about the decline of their property values. Current residents may consider selling their property to avoid the influx of seasonal residents who are not subject to and exempt from contributing to the Township tax base.

The Tri-Lakes Association is not opposed to progress. On the contrary, it can be beneficial for us as a community when it is aligned with the Township Goals and Master Plan. Ideally, any development in the community would be consistent with zoning of adjacent areas, would characterize a rural and agricultural lifestyle, and would incorporate citizens who become tax-paying members of our community and who have a vested interest in protecting the natural resources found here.

Currently, we see little to no benefit from the proposed development to the residents of Morton Township, especially the residents of the area immediately adjacent to the proposed development.

We hope that you will join us in close monitoring of this proposal. You can do that by:

- Keep yourself updated on all the happenings regarding this proposal. The Tri-Lakes website has a separate page for all things related to this proposal. Visit [www.thetrilakes.org](http://www.thetrilakes.org). We will provide links to official Township documents as well.
- If you are not already a member, please join the Tri-Lakes Association. The cost is nominal. You can do that from this TLA Website. As a member, you will receive communications via email as things unfold. You do not have to own property on the Tri-Lakes to join our Association!
- Express your concern to the Morton Township Board and Planning Commission via email or formal letter. Please do not do this just once, but keep doing so while this proposal works through the process.
- Update your neighbors. We think the timing of this proposal is strategic in that many of the property owners are no longer in the area or coming to their properties in the winter.

We urge you to reject this proposal and instead prioritize the protection of the Tri Lakes and its surrounding environment.

Thank you,

The TLA Board of Directors

12-23-2023