

Notes from the Morton Township P&Z Meeting tonight, regarding the pre-application requests from the potential applicant for an RV Park at Lake Dr. and 105th.

From Dave Rhinehart:

The commissioners had a fairly brief discussion regarding the two principal requests from last week's special meeting.

The first was to approve a variance from 3 sites per acre in the current ordinance, to 12-15 per acre. One commissioner had done some research, and stated School Sec Lk Campground is around 5 sites per acre, and Dunes Harbor, with 160 sites, is close to 3 sites per acre. My personal opinion is that they are likely comparing apples to oranges, that this developer has a very different vision than those two older, rustic parks. It's like comparing hotel room sizes between a Super 8 and a Homewood Suites.

The other previous request was for a recommendation from the commission on whether they felt the zoning variance or PUD/SLU was the more appropriate pathway for their proposal.

The commissioners stated that the most appropriate zoning would be 'campground'. (I found that confusing, as there is no zoning category of 'campground' that I can find. *Editors Note: Township Zoning Ordinance Section 5.13 addresses Campgrounds*).

The commission also stated it was not up to them to determine which is the best way to go [re-zoning or planned unit development/special use permit], that's up to the applicant. In my personal review of the request, the developer was not trying to 'game' the system, or stack the deck, they just didn't want to waste the commission's time on a proposal that would be better suited for another permitting process.

The commission then had a brief discussion on the applicant's statement that a Class B site plan would cost \$250k. One member stated that one could be developed for around \$50k. A member stated that the commission should strive to continue to enforce the Class B plan requirement and 3/acre density to be consistent with how they have treated previous requests. [Edit: my recollection of the developer's request last week was a request not to be required to submit a full site plan {of whatever class} with the application. But to submit it in pieces as needed, i.e. don't require plumbing plans before building locations had been approved, which may change with commission input.] Commission stated that in order to waive the density ordinance, it would require re-writing the ordinance, conducting the required public outreach and other parts and would take at least five months. A member also stated that in the future Master Plan, it was his understanding that the parcels in question would be zoned Residential. How that might impact a proposed RV park prior to that Plan is unclear.

Public comment followed. It was consistent in themes and perspective with last week's comments. I have to say, compared to public comments in other nearby townships, while the comments and sentiment were 100% against, each speaker was respectful of the commission, of each other including the developer, and of the process. It was a very passionate yet polite crowd, and quite impressive.

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Personal opinion only: None of us really know what we are arguing against, or potentially for, because there has not been a proposal submitted. For all we know, the developer could have already decided to prohibit boat trailers in the RV Park, as he could do that if he chose. That would certainly change the potential Tri-Lakes impacts! It will be interesting to watch this process evolve...