

PROPOSAL FOR AN RV PARK IN MORTON TOWNSHIP

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this section of the Tri-Lakes Association (TLA) website is meant to be your one-stop-shop on all information and activities related to information compiled by the TLA Board of Directors on the proposed RV Park at the corner of St. Ives Drive/Lake Drive and 105th. For the reasons listed below under Areas of Impact, the TLA Board has a number of concerns regarding an RV park located only 800 yards from the Tri-Lakes boat launch. And, as we hear from our TLA Members, others around the Tri-Lakes and the surrounding community - as heard through social media and the Township Planning Commission meetings - we believe that we share the general sentiment of the community.

MISSION STATEMENT/PURPOSE

We feel that the TLA mission and the Township Master Plan goal are very much aligned:

The Tri-Lakes Association

mission is: "To assist in preservation of the quality of the water of the lakes, their connecting waterways, wetlands and surrounding watershed and ecosystems"

One of Morton Township's goals, as

written in the Master Plan is: "The primary objectives are that new development in Morton Township will be designed to preserve natural features, rural residential atmosphere, and similar elements intended to maintain our rural and residential structure."

(<https://mortontownship.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Master-Plan-updated-as-of-April-16-2019.pdf>)

RV PARK CONCEPT

The 'idea' of the RV Park - as gleaned from the presentation by Freshwater Hospitality Consultants, LLC at the October 11, 2023 planning meeting ([RV Park Presentation](#)) - envisions an RV Park at the corner of St. Ives Drive/Lake Drive and 105th Ave. The site consists of a total of 45 acres, currently zoned agricultural or residential. The park would offer sites for lease (or sale - it is unclear) to people with motor homes, campers, 5th-wheels, tents, travel trailers, etc. The Consultants are asking for a density of 12-15 sites per acre, an increase from the 3 sites/acre in the Township Zoning ordinance for campgrounds (<https://mortontownship.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ZONING-ORDINANCE-Jan-10-2023-combined.pdf>). Even setting aside part of that land for amenities like the pool, clubhouse and such, and an area for a septic system, a conservative guess (and it is a guess until a site plan is submitted) would assume the location could have at least 300 sites.

It is our belief that adding that sort of density to that location for the proposed use is not consistent with the Morton Township Master Plan or the Tri-Lakes Association Mission. Here are a number of reasons why:

AREAS OF IMPACT

- Ecological Issues:
 - Air pollution from fuel emissions
 - Noise pollution (generators, outdoor sports courts/pools, increased traffic)
 - Light pollution (flood lights for internal roads, facilities)
 - Detrimental effect on wildlife/wildlife habitat
- Traffic Issues:
 - Increased Boat Traffic on the Tri-Lakes –
 - Volume of boat traffic more than the calculated carrying capacity of the lakes
 - Further risk of introduction of invasive species
 - Reduction of water quality/clarity/transparency with suspension of bottom sediments
 - Shoreline erosion
 - Destruction of fish spawning areas
 - Overflow at public boat launch with illegal parking within the launch area and on Lake Drive
 - Increased frequency of violation of Lake rules and DNR rules
 - Increased safety concerns with congested boat traffic
 - Increased vehicle traffic on our narrow county roads, including 40+ foot motor homes with tow vehicles
 - Increased need for maintenance of local roads (i.e., tax dollars) due to increased volume of traffic
 - Increased golf cart/ATV/UTV traffic throughout the narrow roads and private developments (including Canadian Lakes, Sunset Shores)
 - Increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic, especially on 105th Ave. and Buchanan Road
- Public Safety Issues:
 - Increased demand on emergency services, much of which are volunteer staffed
 - Effect on response time for health and safety emergencies
 - Pedestrians, bicycles, golf carts, ATV and UTV traffic (from RV Park) on narrow local roads that don't have adequate shoulder area or bike lanes
 - Overcrowding of local parking areas and business establishments
- Potential adverse effects to the local aquifer:

- Need for septic system or other method to handle solid waste and waste water from each of the camp sites and common buildings (clubhouse, pool, etc.)
 - Number of wells necessary to provide adequate water for drinking, irrigation, pools, etc.
 - Potential for draw-down of aquifer due to large demand for water
 - Impervious structures, roads and concrete pads that will impact run-off, potentially contaminate nearby wetlands and lakes, effect groundwater recharge and pollute the aquifer as nutrients, sediment, oils and gas from roads, lawns, construction sites and storm sewers enter the groundwater
- Economic Issues:
 - Property values of existing Morton Township residents - likely to decline due to development
 - Potential of continued development "creep" into nearby residential areas as homeowners sell their property to move away from the immediate area
 - Increased pricing at local establishments during the summer months to capture the transient dollar, to the detriment of year-round residents
 - Existing taxpayers are forced to pay for increased public services and infrastructure maintenance while temporary occupants of the development pay nothing

SUMMARY

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.

ACTION

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

- Keep yourself updated on all the happenings regarding this proposal. You can do that here on this site. We will provide links to official Township documents as well.
- If you are not already a member, please join the Tri-Lakes Association. You can do that from this TLA Website. As a member, you will receive communications via email as things unfold.
- Express your concern to the Morton Township Board and Planning Commission via email or formal letter. Please do not do this once, but keep doing so as 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 away for the winter or are not coming to their properties as much during the winter months.