

**Town of La Pointe Zoning  
Town Plan Commission Public Hearing Minutes  
March 15, 2011**

**Town Plan Commission (TPC) Members Present:** Charles Brummer, Vice-Chair, Larry Whalen, Greg Thury, Ron Madich, Carey Baxter (5).

**Town Plan Commission Members Absent:** S. Soucek, Chair Pallas (in audience) (2).

**Public Present:** Tim Eldred, Keith Sowl, John Griffin, Paul Brummer, Joe McCarthy, Beth Fischlowitz, Michael Starck, Dave Hackett, Charlie Meech, Ted Pallas, Birdie Pallas, Jim Peters, Kate Bortell, Beth Alsgaard, Linda Fuller, Ed Muzik, Lois Carlson, Greg Nelson, Ham Ross, Richard Hardie, Nick Nelson, Mary Ross, Evan Erickson, Gene Nelson. Sign up sheet attached to these minutes (24).

**Town Staff Members Present:** Jennifer Croonborg-Murphy, ZA, Margaretta Kusch, ZCA (2).

**I. Call to Order/Roll Call**

Acting Chair C. Brummer called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM at the Town Hall. Roll call reflected members present or absent as recorded above.

**II. Conditional Use Permit application submitted by the town of La Pointe for expansion and improvements to the Big Bay Town Park Campground located at LP #014-00072-0000. Legal description: Government lot 4 Vol 202 P 116 Sec 12 – T50N – R3W 64.77 Acres, 2305 Town Park Circle (Big Bay Road).**

The Zoning Administrator reports that the Public Hearing was properly posted and mailings were sent out to adjoining property owners on February 25<sup>th</sup>. The notice was faxed to the *Ashland Daily Press* on February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 7<sup>th</sup>.

K. Sowl states that John Griffin of Chequamegon Bay Engineering was the one who drew up the plans and turns the floor to him.

J. Griffin states that the project began from looking at installing new flush toilets at Big Bay Town Park (BBTP) and ended up looking at the larger picture. The proposal has gone through several iterations as issues such as health code, wetlands, culverts and bridges, septic systems, erosion, and the impact & location of RV sites (among others) have come up. He presents maps of the proposal for public viewing.

C. Brummer opens the floor and asks that people please state their names when speaking.

K. Sowl reads from the letter he has submitted (attached to these minutes and part of the record). He feels that the required Conditional Use Permit for the BBTP expansion shouldn't need to include all specific details (such as exactly where a building would be placed) so as to avoid an ongoing Conditional Use Permit Public Hearing process. He also states that the proposed RV camp (to be located on the inland side of Big Bay Road) was thought of to help offset the costs of the park improvements. He also states that a reservation system, and perhaps an entrance fee, is needed. He feels that the town should sell BBTP to the State Park.

C. Brummer asks if the pit toilets would remain in place. K. Sowl answers yes. The proposal would add new flush toilets in addition to the pit toilets, not in place of them.

T. Eldred reads from the letter he has submitted (attached to these minutes and part of the record). He feels that the Town Plan Commission should recommend that the Town Board reject the application as the Conditional Use Permit “does not adequately address the Standards for Approval set forth in Zoning Ordinance Section 7.1(c).” He feels that the proposal would change the established character of the neighborhood around BBTP, promote overcrowding, create a demand for additional services, and is incompatible with the Comprehensive Plan.

He further states that the application should be rejected because residents/the public weren’t given the opportunity to review and participate in the planning process and that Public Hearings don’t allow for adequate citizen input because of their structure.

T. Pallas speaks as a member of the public, not a Town Plan Commission member. He reads aloud his and Birdie Pallas’ letter they have submitted (attached to these minutes and part of the record). They are opposed to the proposed RV park, which would border their property. He states that they took the close proximity of the park into consideration when they bought their property, and had an RV park been adjacent, they wouldn’t have purchased their property. They feel that the RV park could potentially create the problems of trespassing, noise from generators, exhaust fumes, fire dangers, and excessive noise, and would lower the sale value of their property.

He states in the letter: “I would like to borrow a question by a current Town Board member made in 1990 when the Music Camp proposed a Conditional Use Permit next to her property. She stated, “would anyone on the Town Board like this next to your planned retirement home?””

J. McCarthy reads from the letter he has submitted (attached to these minutes and part of the record), and states that he doesn’t think the proposal is a good idea: if there is money that needs to be spent, there are more constructive and deserving needs elsewhere. He feels that the BBTP “RV expansion is a done deal except for the formalities, such as this Public Hearing,” and doesn’t feel that the majority of residents agree with the expansion. He feels that the town is putting the cart before the horse with the proposal, and questions what the total cost of this project will be versus the profits. Although he agrees with the improvement of the sanitary system and roadways in the current park, he thinks that the proposal will create nuisances to neighboring property owners, impact wetlands, create a public safety hazard with people crossing County Road H, etc.

B. Alsgaard feels that a reservation system and improvements made to the lake side of BBTP are necessary. She further states that, as tourism and construction are the two sources of revenue to La Pointe, an RV camp would be beneficial, but should be in a different location than the one proposed in the Conditional Use Permit application.

L. Carlson reads from the letter she has submitted (attached to these minutes and part of the record). She feels that a reservation system would best manage visitor congestion, create a positive camping experience for visitors, and provide an economic benefit to the town. She further states that she is in favor of the RV park proposal as it would be “advantageous to our business community” and would assist in covering the park’s expenses.

P. Brummer reads from the letter he has submitted (attached to these minutes and part of the record). He feels that some of the proposed improvements would be beneficial, but is opposed to others. The construction of flush toilets, a picnic shelter, and increased park employee attention/time would be beneficial, but he is opposed to the construction of shower facilities, a staff office building and the RV park. He further states that installing a septic system makes sense, but not one that crosses the County road. He suggests that if the system can’t be installed on the lake side of the park, perhaps there “should be holding tanks installed with low-flow lavatory faucets and water-saving toilets instead.”

D. Hackett states that he lives on Benjamin Blvd, near the BBTP, and has already had to file noise complaints in the summer and has seen trespassers cutting through his property on his wildlife camera. He questions how much these types of issues would increase were this proposal to go through, and asks if there would be more police patrols at the park. He states that the process already seems somewhat far along, and asks what the cost of the project would be. K. Sowl answers that it would be about two million dollars. D. Hackett asks if that includes a management budget and K. Sowl responds that he budgeted fifty thousand dollars, as an estimate, but that there would also have to be additional costs added with the disposal of solid waste. He further states that last year (2010) thirty-seven thousand dollars were spent on the parks (Joni's Beach and BBTP).

T. Pallas asks where the dump station for the development would be, and states that he's adding smell to his list of concerns.

C. Meech asks how many toilets are currently at the park and how many would be added. J. Griffin responds that there are currently two pit toilets (3 stalls for women and two for men) that are pumped two or three times a year. Two flush stalls for women and one for men would be added. C. Meech next asks how many campsites there are currently. The answer is forty-two (four of which are RV sites).

Commissioner Thury reads aloud a letter submitted by Aimee Baxter (attached to these minutes and a permanent part of the record). She is concerned that the proposal would cause the beach, lagoon, and park to become overcrowded by too many RV sites, and would like to see a start with ten sites first. She "strongly feels that a traffic light goes against the established character of the island, never mind the area."

N. Nelson states that he agrees that "if you build it, they will come" (referring to the expansion of BBTP), but feels that the economic gains would be offset by the character change. He feels the BBTP is crowded enough already, and asks at what point is enough enough? He is in favor of the proposed changes on the lake side, but is not in favor of the RV park on the inland side of the road. He's not against the creation of RV sites but feels that the scope of this proposal is too much.

L. Whalen speaks as a member of the public, not a Town Plan Commission member, and states that he doesn't feel that the project has been reviewed by the public sufficiently.

B. Alsgaard points out that the CAPP committee has been discussing BBTP at meetings even before this proposal.

L. Fuller states that she appreciates the proposal and its thoughtfulness. She feels that a reservation system is necessary and is in favor of the proposed showers and flush toilets. However, she states concerns: the environmental impact on the wetlands and other ecological areas of the park with regard to the scope of this project; and the safety of people crossing Big Bay Road, as well as drivers on the road.

T. Eldred asks what the process is now with the Conditional Use Permit application. C. Brummer answers that there will be another Public Hearing in mid-April, after which the Town Plan Commission will have thirty days to give their recommendation to the Town Board. Next, the Town Board will have thirty days to decide on the matter. After the decision is made, it is appealable to Circuit Court.

K. Sowl reiterates that he feels this Conditional Use Permit should not need to be specific in construction detail, so the town doesn't find itself in a continual Application for Amendment-Public Hearing-board meeting cycle as the project progresses.

T. Eldred responds to K. Sowl that that would override the official process for Conditional Use Permits.

P. Brummer states that it should be up to the submitter of a permit to get all the details together before submitting a Conditional Use Permit application.

Greg Nelson states that there shouldn't be a constant amendment process. Only if the *use* is amended should the process have to start again. He further states that the Town was on a timeline for a grant application, which is why it seems as if the cart is before the horse with the procedure.

M. Starck suggests that the next Public Hearing could be scheduled for the summer, when all the summer residents are back on the island.

J. Croonborg-Murphy responds that the Public Hearing has to be scheduled within 30 days of the application being found complete unless the applicant waives the timeline.

Greg Nelson also responds that the scheduling of this Conditional Use Permit has been effected by the grant application the Town had been writing.

K. Sowl states that if the Town scheduled everything around the summer residents no one would be able to work in the summer.

J. Croonborg-Murphy also responds that when big meetings/Public Hearings have been scheduled in the summer in the past, islanders have been unable to attend because everyone is working.

### **III. Adjournment**

G. Thury moves to adjourn. C. Baxter seconds. All in favor, 5 aye. Motion Carries. Meeting ends at 6:25 pm.

**Town Plan Commission minutes are respectfully submitted by Margareta Kusch, ZCA on Monday, March 21, 2011.**

**Town Plan Commission minutes approved as amended by Margareta Kusch, ZCA on Wednesday, April 06, 2011.**