

Waterfront development draws concerns

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CHARLEVOIX — Neighbors are concerned about a waterfront development in Hayes Township that incorporates a boathouse and a private marina into a residential property off of Anglers Cove.

Several attended a township meeting on the evening of Monday, Sept. 13, to express their misgivings about the scope of the project.

Hayes resident Debbie Narten said, "I am opposed to this. When do we stop these projects? You are setting a precedent for future developments in other townships along the lake. Someone else is going to come in with a zillion dollars and want another project like this. So for our future, how do we stop this?"

In November 2019 an application for a zoning permit to allow construction of a private basin and boathouse at the Law Property, 10034 Anglers Cove, Charlevoix, MI was received by Hayes Township officials and reviewed by the Zoning Administrator at the time, Larry Sullivan. Sullivan reported that applicable permits had been granted for the project by the Army Corps of Engineers and the EGLE department of the state. He determined that the project met the requirements for granting a permit with the exception of a review of a shoreland landscaping plan, as the project planned to involve modifications to the shoreland protections strip — a required 50-foot strip of land from the shoreline.

Drost Landscape — a Charlevoix company — worked as the designer and builder of this project and providing the township with drawings — including the dredged out basin area big enough for several boats including a 50-foot yacht — an inventory of the existing plants on the property

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A waterfront home under construction on Lake Charlevoix. ANNIE DOYLE/PETOSKEY-NEWS REVIEW

Concerns

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and list of the proposed changes to the shore. According to the report, the subcommittee and the zoning administrator met with the owner Bob Drost at the property site to review the proposed plan. According to the township's zoning ordinance, a member from the Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council was supposed to be involved in this process but they were excluded.

Watershed Council representatives attended the meeting on Monday and attested to not having been involved in the process and to also opposing the project.

However, Sullivan's report did say that Drost reportedly sought input from the watershed council and that the subcommittee had worked to meet the intent of the ordinance.

At that time, Sullivan recommended approval of the proposed site plan for the project with the requirement that a performance bond equal to the project cost be obtained in the event that circumstances arise in which the project might be delayed or left incomplete.

Township Supervisor Ron Van Zee said the township is trying to keep up with modern development demands and still keep in line with the intent of the ordinance.

Van Zee described the numerous public meetings held to construct the current zoning ordinance language that allows leeway for a development of this nature.

"Think back just fifteen or twenty years ago when there were all little cabins along the lake-shore. All that has changed, our ordinance was so out of date. There was no way that we could enforce what we had. There was no way that the township had the financial ability to enforce the ordinance the way it was written.

"We now have a little give and take in our ordinance. It is amazing that if we are willing to give a little bit, the property owners are too," said Van Zee.

"When did we stop caring about the lake? I find it hard to believe that you can sit here, knowing what these plans are and think that this is ok," said Narten. "We look to you as board members not just for decisions for today but for the future."

Supervisor Van Zee said, "Do I like these projects? No, I don't like them. But I know that it is really really tough to stop this type of development when we have such little resources."

Neighbors LuAnne Kozma and Ellis Boal - whose family has owned a cottage on the lake since 1912 - are actively trying to stop the project. They complain that the township has intentionally held back information to the public and made access difficult.

Kozma wrote recently in a letter to township officials, "As both township supervisor and the township zoning administrator for Hayes Township, making the decision on the boathouse permit, you need to come clean and tell Hayes township residents what decisions you have made and be specific."

Kozma has also pointed out that the permit issued for the boathouse has expired and needs to be renewed.