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12-unit Osprey Lake development OK'd by committee

[Will LaBreche](#) / Web Editor/Staff Writer/Photographer
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A compromise was reached late Friday as to the fate of the "green" planned unit development (PUD) slated to be constructed on Osprey Lake, despite many letters of objection and concerns voiced by lake residents at the Sawyer County Zoning Committee meeting.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe, attorneys for the developer and legal representation retained by the residents of Osprey Lake met beginning at 8:30 a.m. Friday to hash out a deal that was suitable for all parties. This group finally arrived at an agreeable option, changing the original plan dramatically.

The most substantial change is that the development will be reduced to 12 units from a proposed 19, which will also include increased setbacks from the lakeshore. The plan drafted by developer David Swan for property owner Ted Thompson originally restricted tree cutting to anything under six inches in diameter — the new plan would allow purchasers to only trim small brush or anything measuring under four inches in diameter.

"There will be two (septic) systems each placed at least 400-feet from the ordinary high water mark. There will be a 30-foot view corridor permitted, however (there will be no removal) of vegetation over four inches," Swan pointed out. "Then after 35 feet, the view corridor widens out to a 60-foot width and outside those view corridors there is no live vegetation removal at all." Any tree-cutting activities will be closely monitored by LCO, according to Swan.

"There are going to be walking paths, the grounds are going to be maintained. All dwellings must have a rain garden. No vehicle washing, no fertilization, the dwellings are between 1,200 and 3,400 square feet above grade. There will be four bedrooms per cabin. And exteriors must be earth-tone in nature," Swan listed, continuing on with a list of further conditions that will be placed on the development.

All purchasers will be part of a condominium association and must agree to all the terms and conditions prior to purchasing.

"I have the delegated authority as secretary (and) treasurer of the tribe (and) I'm here today to convey the support for this project," said LCO Tribal Governing Board member Brian Bisonette. "We worked hard with ... the developer and we've been trying to come up with a happy medium for everybody involved here with the number-one priority of keeping Osprey Lake as pristine as possible. The main complaint from everybody is basically the density of this lake. I think with the current zoning the way it is now versus what's proposed, there isn't a significant difference."

The DNR was represented at the meeting by Dave Kafura, water management and regulations specialist, who said, "essentially we had concerns (about) the proposal and we were against it before. Those issues have been addressed through this compromise. At this point, the DNR will support the proposal."

Kafura added that the density allowed on the project "under a non-variance compared to what they're asking for are ultimately the same."

After back-and-forth discussion and a couple frustrated head nods in the audience, the zoning committee voted to approve the project. The development will now come before the full county board at their January meeting, giving the public one last opportunity to comment on the project before it can be given the green light.

In other business:

• The Zoning Committee approved a residential rezone for property abutting the Lac Courte Oreilles boat landing off Highway K for Steven Sletner for a private residence. Sletner stated that the majority of the parcel is in fact wetlands, but that he will be building on higher elevation on the parcel.

• The committee approved an industrial rezone request by Bob Thompson and Sons, Inc. for the location and operation of a wood pellet manufacturing plant to be built by Great Lakes Renewable Energy. The full story on this rezone can be found elsewhere in this issue.

Comments: will.labreche@mx3.com

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