

Becker County Planning Commission
January 31st, 2024

Members Present: Chairman David Blomseth, Jeff Moritz, Tom Disse, Kohl Skalin, County Commissioner Erica Jepson, Harvey Aho, Nick Bowers, Steve Lindow, Kim Mattson, Commissioner John Okeson, Craig Hall, Mary Seaberg, Tommy Ailie, and Zoning Director Kyle Vareberg. **Members Absent:** None

Chairman David Blomseth called the Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Introductions were given. Becker County Zoning Technician Nicole Bradbury recorded the minutes.

Harvey Aho made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 20th, 2023, meeting. Skalin second. All members in favor. Motion carried.

Chairman David Blomseth explained the protocol for the meeting and stated that the recommendations of the Planning Commission will be forwarded to the County Board of Commissioners for final action.

Blomseth stated that they were going to adjust the order of the applicants as there were many there to speak for applicant one (Mahube/Crotts).

New Business:

- 2. APPLICANT: Thomas J Wettels** 28662 Co Hwy 37 Ponsford, MN 56575 **Project Location:** 28662 Co Hwy 37 Ponsford, MN 56575 **LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION:** Tax ID Number: **25.0119.000** Section 35 Township 141 Range 038; 35-141-38 PT SW1/4 NW1/4: COMM W QTR COR SEC 35. W 891.91' TO POB; N 1232.95', ELY 448.66', S 1181.64', W 463.15' TO POB. **APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Request a Conditional Use Permit to operate a firearms business.

Thomas Wettels presented the application and stated that he wanted to operate a firearms sale and gunsmithing business.

Aho asked if the sales would be in-house, online, or both.

Wettels said both as well as gun shows.

Aho asked if he has a gun range there.

Wettels said just for personal use. He stated that he is the President of the Osage Sportsman's Club, so they do most of their shooting there.

Lindow asked if there would be a gun range there with any shooting.

Wettels said just for him personally.

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49 As there was no one to speak for or against the application testimony closed.

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51 There was no written correspondence received in regard to this application.

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53 Skalin said it was a good location, and it won't impact anyone.

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55 Ailie agreed and commented that there is good distance between this location and anyone else.

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58 **MOTION: Seaberg motioned to approve the application as presented. Ailie second.**
59 **Roll Call; All in favor. Motion carried.**
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64 **3. APPLICANT: Verizon on Becker County Land** 915 Lake Ave Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
65 **Project Location:** TBD E Bad Medicine Lake Rd Ponsford, MN 56575 **LEGAL LAND**
66 **DESCRIPTION:** Tax ID Number: **12.7024.001** Section 03 Township 142 Range 037; 3-
67 142-37 PT SW1/4 NW1/4: COMM W QTR COR SEC 3, E 216.88 TO POB; E 340', N
68 555.11', W 340', S 555.85' TO POB. **APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF**
69 **PROJECT:** Request a Conditional Use Permit to construct a two hundred and fifty (250)
70 foot self-support cellular tower.
71

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73 Alex Trueman with Verizon presented the application and stated they wanted to amend the
74 request from being a two hundred and fifty (250) foot self-support cellular tower to be a three
75 hundred (300) foot tower in order to provide the largest amount of coverage possible. He stated
76 the coverage in that area is terrible and with the increase in work and school from home it has
77 put a lot of pressure on the demand for network. He also stated that the majority of emergency
78 calls come from cell phones, and they have received complaints from people in that area not
79 being able to call for help. He said emergency service response is a huge factor in this request.

80
81 Seaberg asked about the Conditional Use Permit for a tower that was obtained for that area years
82 ago.
83

84 Trueman said he doesn't know all the details as to what happened but explained that request
85 came through a partnership with another company, where this is coming directly from Verizon.
86 He also explained complications with fiber optics and setbacks back then and how things have
87 changed since that time.
88

89 Lindow asked what the communications reach will be.

90
91 Trueman said it will be a massive increase.

92
93 Lindow asked if he thought it would be around five (5) miles.
94

95 Trueman said it would be several miles.
96
97 Lindow mentioned that a lot of people hunt to the North of the road and asked if the coverage
98 will extend through the woods.
99
100 Trueman said yes.
101
102 Danny Smith asked where on State Highway 113 this is located.
103
104 Skalin said East Bad Medicine Lake Road.
105
106 Leslie Fleischman spoke and said she agrees with this request. She stated there have been several
107 emergencies over the years and no cell signal. She shared about two (2) incidents, one involving
108 a fire and another a medical emergency where she had to drive to Holmer Road to get a signal
109 and call for help.
110
111 As there was no one else to speak for or against the application, testimony closed.
112
113 There was one letter received in regard to this application and is entered below:



Jon L. Wanzek

January 22, 2024

County of Becker
c/o Planning and Zoning Commission
915 Lake Ave
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

RE: Request to Reject the Permit for Installation of a Verizon Cellular Tower near Bad Medicine Lake, Minnesota

Dear Members of the Becker County Planning and Zoning Commission,

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen and an ardent advocate for the preservation of our state's natural beauty and environmental integrity. Bad Medicine Lake, a gem in the heart of Minnesota, is renowned for its pristine and unspoiled beauty, drawing admirers from far and wide. It is with a sense of urgency that I request the rejection of the proposed permit for the installation of a Verizon cellular tower in the vicinity of this magnificent lake. The following points encapsulate the core of our community's concerns:

- Preservation of Natural Beauty: Bad Medicine Lake stands as a testament to Minnesota's commitment to natural preservation. The construction of a cellular tower near the lake would severely disrupt the visual aesthetics that define this beloved landscape.
- Protection Against Light Pollution: The introduction of a cellular tower risks contributing to light pollution, detracting from the area's dark skies, which are not only a key aspect of its allure but also vital for nocturnal wildlife. Also, it is a visual light trespass issue on this pristine lake.
- Wildlife and Ecosystem Preservation: The area around Bad Medicine Lake is home to a diverse array of wildlife. The construction and operation of a cellular tower could pose significant risks to these species, disrupting their natural habitats and migration patterns.
- Impact on Property Values: The installation of a cellular tower could potentially depreciate the property values around the lake. This area is cherished for its scenic unspoiled vistas, and any alteration could negatively impact the appeal of living near this beautiful lake.

505 Broadway N, Unit 305
Fargo, ND 58102
USA

+1 (701) 238-1835
jon@wanzek.us

25 Floral Street, Apt. 301
Covent Garden
London WC2E 9DS, UK



Jon L. Wanzek

In light of these considerations, I urge the Becker County Planning and Zoning Commission to deny the permit for the Verizon cellular tower near Bad Medicine Lake. It is imperative that we prioritize the preservation of our state's natural treasures over technological expansion, especially when alternative solutions are viable.

I propose that Verizon be encouraged to consider alternative locations for the tower installation. Areas further removed from the lake, deeper in the woods, or in less visually sensitive locales could serve as suitable alternatives, ensuring both technological advancement and the preservation of our natural heritage. There are many sites nearby that would not impact so many valuable lake homes.

I trust that the Commission will give due consideration to these concerns and make a decision that aligns with our community's values and commitment to environmental stewardship. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jon L. Wanzek
701-238-1835

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Skalin said he has a cabin in the dead zone. He said last year a hunter got shot and emergency services had a hard time finding him because they couldn't triangulate a signal. He commented that if an all-terrain vehicle breaks down, people cannot call for help. He said this does a service to the whole area.

Hall agreed.

127 Seaberg said for the request a few years ago emergency response time was a big issue.
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132 **MOTION: Hall motioned to approve the application with the amended height of**
133 **three hundred (300) feet. Aho second.**
134

135 Vareberg asked that they include the findings below and stated that in terms of a public water
136 setback the ordinance states that no tower facility shall be established within a half-mile of a
137 public water. While this is outside of the shoreland area there is a public body of water within a
138 half-mile of it. He said it is allowed if there is a finding created and would just say that the
139 finding is that Verizon is not capable of providing this enhancement in this dead-zone area while
140 meeting that half-mile setback from any public water.
141

FINDINGS, REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

1. By Application completed January 31st, 2024 (the “Application”), Verizon has requested a Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) to allow for construction and operation of a cellular tower, on approximately 4.34 acres of land (located generally in the SW ¼ of the NW ¼ in Section 03, Township 142, Range 037 in Becker County.
2. Chapter 8, Section 11 of the County Zoning Ordinance identifies the decisional criteria that apply to CUP requests. Subpart F of this Section indicates:

No conditional use shall be recommended by the County Planning Commission or granted by the Board of County Commissioners unless the Commission or the Board shall find that all of the following criteria are met:

1. **Affect on surrounding property.** That the conditional use will not harm the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish or impair property values within the immediate vicinity.
2. **Affect on orderly, consistent development.** That establishing the conditional use will not impede the normal, orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property for uses predominant in the area.
3. **Adequate facilities.** That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.
4. **Adequate parking.** That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide sufficient off-street parking and loading spaces to serve the proposed use.
5. **Not a nuisance.** That adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise and vibration, so none of these will constitute a nuisance, and to control lighted signs and other lights so that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result.
6. **Additional criteria for shoreland areas.** In Shoreland areas, it shall be found that adequate measures have been or will be taken to assure that:
 - a. **Pollution.** Soil erosion or other possible pollution of public waters will be prevented, both during and after construction;

- b. **View from public waters.** That the visibility of structures and other facilities as viewed from public waters will be limited;
 - c. **Adequate utilities.** That the site is adequate for water supply and on-site sewage treatment; and
 - d. **Watercraft.** That the types, uses, and number of watercrafts that the project will generate can be safely accommodated.
- 3. The Application came before the Planning Commission at its meeting on January 31st, 2024. The Commission conducted the public hearing required by law and took testimony from the applicant and interested parties. The Commission also received written documentation and written testimony.
- 4. Based on review of the documentation submitted and the testimony provided, the Commission recommends to the County Board that it **approve** the CUP request for the following reasons:

- 1. **Affect on surrounding property.** That the conditional use will not harm the use and enjoyment of other property in the immediate vicinity for the purposes already permitted, nor substantially diminish or impair property values within the immediate vicinity.

Immediate is defined as near, closest or adjacent. All adjacent land is vacant and either State or County owned having no active permitted use in play. There is extensive setbacks between the tower, occupied land and shoreland areas. Written testimony received stated property values could be negatively impacted. However, no evidence was submitted supporting the statement.

- 2. **Affect on orderly, consistent development.** That establishing the conditional use will not impede the normal, orderly development and improvement of surrounding vacant property for uses predominant in the area.

Although, no evidence exists indicating a negative effect on development by a tower, the surrounding vacant land is owned by either Becker County or the State of Minnesota with no anticipated development plans in the future. However, cellular service has become a necessity and the Commission finds if the adjacent land were to be developed the application would only enhance the use if any were to be established.

3. **Adequate facilities.** That adequate utilities, access roads, drainage and other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

Existing access to the parcel exists and a access road to the tower site will be established. Utilities required such as power and fiber utilities will be established at the time of construction within public right of way.

4. **Adequate parking.** That adequate measures have been or will be taken to provide sufficient off-street parking and loading spaces to serve the proposed use.

Parking will only be necessary during construction and maintenance of the tower, however there is adequate area on the parcel to accommodate parking when needed.

5. **Not a nuisance.** That adequate measures have been or will be taken to prevent or control offensive odor, fumes, dust, noise and vibration, so none of these will constitute a nuisance, and to control lighted signs and other lights so that no disturbance to neighboring properties will result.

No offensive odors, fumes, dust, noise, or vibrations are known at this time to be produced by this application. All lighting produced by the application will be in compliance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

6. **Additional criteria for shoreland areas.** In Shoreland areas, it shall be found that adequate measures have been or will be taken to assure that:

N/A

- a. **Pollution.** Soil erosion or other possible pollution of public waters will be prevented, both during and after construction;

- b. **View from public waters.** That the visibility of structures and other facilities as viewed from public waters will be limited;

- c. **Adequate utilities.** That the site is adequate for water supply and on-site sewage treatment; and

d. **Watercraft.** That the types, uses, and number of watercrafts that the project will generate can be safely accommodated.

Hall and Aho accepted the findings to be included with the motion and second. Roll Call; All in favor. Motion carried.

1. APPLICANT: MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership on behalf of Bernard D Crotts 44570 School House Rd Osage, MN 56570 **Project Location:** 23662 Bernies Rd Osage, MN 56570 **LEGAL LAND DESCRIPTION:** Tax ID Number: **28.0176.000** Section 27 Township 140 Range 038; 27-140-38 NW1/4 NE1/4 LESS E 25 AC (28-176-1, 28-176-4). **APPLICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** Request a Conditional Use Permit for a non-shoreland multi-unit development consisting of eight (8) units.

Liz Kuoppala with MAHUBE presented the application. She stated that before the meeting they were made aware of an MPCA violation at the property but asked that everyone present still be able to give testimony, and then they would table to get more information on the violation.

Blomseth said she is able to table at any time.

Kuoppala and Dan Josephson shared the history of MAHUBE's work with veterans and how this project came to be.

There was discussion on the screening process, staffing, and transportation.

Many neighbors spoke and shared concerns about the road in the winter as it is the last to get plowed, concerns with hunters and PTSD, the affect on wildlife, concerns with the property owner's understanding of this project, the amount of law enforcement calls to that property, the distance from emergency services, transportation outside of normal operating hours, and access to the property.

Many letters were received before the meeting. Those were not read again but are entered below along with letters that were read during the meeting.



Regarding: Bernie's Place, Timy Home Veterans' Village

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Brady Oberg Legacy Foundation, I am writing to express our support for Bernie's Place, the innovative veteran's village that holds great promise for our esteemed servicemen and servicewomen.

At the heart of our mission is the commitment to creating environments where veterans not only receive the support, they need but also find a community where they belong. Bernie's Place aligns seamlessly with this vision, providing a unique space where veterans can connect with like-minded individuals who share their experiences and understand the challenges they may face.

The concept of Bernie's Place is a testament to the belief that the camaraderie among veterans is a powerful force for healing and support. Being surrounded by others who have walked a similar path creates a sense of understanding, empathy, and belonging – crucial elements in the journey towards reintegration and well-being.

We are particularly impressed by the approach Bernie's Place takes in addressing the needs of veterans. Providing a space where they can not only reside and get transportation but also build meaningful connections is a vital step in fostering a sense of purpose and community.

As the Brady Oberg Legacy Foundation, we stand behind initiatives that contribute to the well-being of our veterans, and Bernie's Place exemplifies a commendable effort in this regard. We believe that by supporting this veteran's village, we are contributing to the realization of our shared mission – to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of those who have served our nation.

If there are opportunities for collaboration, partnership, or any way in which the Brady Oberg Legacy Foundation can further support Bernie's Place, please do not hesitate to reach out. We are excited about the potential of this project and look forward to witnessing the positive transformation it will bring to the lives of our veterans.

Thank you for your dedication to this cause, and we wish Bernie's Place every success in providing a supportive and enriching community for our veterans.

Sincerely,

Tracy Dunham
Executive Director
Brady Oberg Legacy Foundation

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Anishinaabe Endaad
3529 Zenith Ave. N
Minneapolis, MN 55422



Becker County Planning and Zoning
915 Lake Ave
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

RE: Letter of Support for Bernie's Place Veterans Village

To Whom It May Concern:

Anishinaabe Endaad is a culturally specific permanent supportive housing program that seeks to promote healing and long-term life changes in Native people by focusing on recovery, community, and culture on White Earth Reservation.

We see every day the impact of creating community for our clients to support each other as they partner with professional service providers and cultural events. Bernie's Place will help fill a huge gap in the area by providing temporary housing to veterans who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability. We take our clients into nature as part of their healing process and have seen people thrive by reconnecting with themselves in the natural environment. Additionally, Bernie's Place, by focusing on veterans, will create an opportunity for interested organizations and volunteers to engage meaningfully with clients to help build their social capital as they get back on their feet.

We encourage your support of this vital community resource and look forward to partnering in its ongoing success.

Sincerely,

Adam Fairbanks (Jan 11, 2024 15:59 CST)

Adam Fairbanks

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Essentia Health

January 17, 2024

Becker County Planning and Zoning
915 Lake Ave
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

RE: Tiny Home Village Project

Dear Friends,

Housing is a recognized social determinant of health that directly impacts the health and lives of individuals and families in our communities. Many rural areas struggle to provide adequate and affordable housing for residents and the availability of jobs, challenges with transportation, and barriers related to accessing healthcare and other services impacts rural residents' health and well-being. Certain populations, such as veterans, may also experience additional challenges related to the social determinants of health due to the unique social, emotional, and physical health needs of these populations.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Rural Health estimates that almost a quarter of all veterans reside in rural communities (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, [Rural Veteran Health Care Challenges](#), 2023). Essentia Health is a non-profit, integrated health system caring for patients in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. As a leader in rural healthcare, Essentia Health helps to build healthy communities by working collaboratively with patients, providers, and community stakeholders.

At Essentia Health, we are called to make a healthy difference in people's lives. To fulfill that mission, we seek opportunities to both enhance the care we provide and improve health within our communities. Essentia Health is proud to support MAHUBE-OTWA's Tiny Home Village and efforts that prioritize the health and well-being of homeless veterans in Becker County, Minnesota. Please join us in supporting MAHUBE-OTWA and making a healthy difference in the lives of veterans.

Sincerely,

Tanner Goodrich
Senior Vice President, Operations
Essentia Health St. Mary's - Detroit Lakes

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To Meagan Hernandez (mhernandez@mahube.org)

Dear Meagan: Our Bible and Brew group, a bunch of retired guys from Park Rapids, who study religion and philosophy, recently became interested in finding out more about homelessness in our area. We have set up informational meetings about this at Calvary Church. The assistant veterans service officer of Hubbard County said he has been contacted by 4 homeless veterans within the last 2 months about this issue and he suspects there are more in the area.

We support Bernie's Place and setting up tiny homes for veterans. The rural area between Detroit Lakes and Park Rapids, in the Smoky Hills, would be a great setting for this project. We encourage Becker County Planning and Zoning to approve this for MAHUBE-OTWA.

Sincerely,

Maureen Gayle
Tony Stief
Michael R. Arnold
Stuart Larsen
Bruce M. Johnson
William L. Meggers
Byron Krapp
Bill Steers

The Detroit Lakes League of Women Voters supports Bernie's Place and housing for veterans. We urge the Becker County Planning and Zoning Commission to rezone this property so that facilities can be built for veterans in need. The plight of homeless veterans is a national and local concern. Supportive services are necessary to help veterans be successful. These people have sacrificed for our country and deserve support and secure shelter. Please prioritize the well-being of the veterans in our community by rezoning this property.

Respectfully,

Carol Nustad, Vice President, on behalf of the Detroit Lakes League of Women Voters.

[Just in case it needs to be said, the thoughts and views expressed here are mine alone and do not reflect the position of the DoD, US Army, the 82nd Airborne Division, the United States, or anyone else.]

To Whom it May Concern,

I recently learned that a veterans' village has been proposed for a rural area of Minnesota, near Park Rapids and Detroit Lakes. As a combat veteran from Minnesota, I wanted to share my thoughts on the plan. I understand the proposed village may foster fear among the community citizens who work hard every day to provide a clean, safe area for their families to live. Minnesota has a strong history of service to freedom, from impressive service during the Civil War to sustained combat operations during the Global War on Terror. Veterans struggling with a return to civilian life are not in search of hand-outs, but rather a guiding hand to get back on the path to a normal, civilian life. A small, quiet setting in the woods with space to visit with a counselor or a therapist is, for countless vets, the thing that dreams are made of.

Those of us who have enjoyed life in rural Minnesota have enjoyed the comfort of small-town familiarity. We can leave our cars running when we run into the gas station, and the front door is never locked. Anything that threatens that way of life is suspect, and rightly so. Nobody wants to turn rural Minnesota into downtown Seattle, Portland, or New York City, with the problems of rampant drug abuse, robbery, and vagrancy. Veterans searching for the chance to take a rest from the thoughts and memories they bring home from overseas don't want to turn the woods of Minnesota into a crime infested San Francisco street, either.

Minnesotans have long been volunteering their lives for American ideals and freedom around the world. 12 Infantry Regiments fought alongside the other Union States in the Civil War, joined by four Minnesota Artillery Batteries and several cavalry units. Since then, Minnesota has distinguished itself in every major conflict our nation has fought. Today, the 34th Infantry Division, headquartered in Minnesota, regularly deploys to unstable regions around the globe, sending Minnesotans to maintain peace and establish liberty for others.

Veterans do not leave the service and return home hoping to be spoon fed for the rest of their life. The very traits required to serve and receive an honorable discharge mean that veterans, by their nature, want to earn for themselves and provide for their families and communities. Often though, the sudden transition from service to civilian life is complicated by trying to sort through those things witnessed and experienced overseas while simultaneously searching for civilian employment, switching the children's schools, finding the family a new place to live, and so on. For many vets, the solitude of the wilderness allows for space to face those memories. The late Gary Beikirch, for example, who served as a special forces medic in Vietnam, found that it was better to live in a cave in the forest than to face people in town and at college. Gary's service in Vietnam earned him the Medal of Honor, and is detailed in several documentaries and this YouTube video: [Gary Beikirch, Medal of Honor, Vietnam](#)

[War \(youtube.com\)](#). Unfortunately for Gary, and for 22 veterans every day who choose suicide as their exit strategy, there are not many resources like the one proposed.

A small, quiet setting, where a veteran can take a walk in the woods with a trauma counselor, can meet in a meeting room with a job coach, and can restart civilian life, is a dream come true for so many veterans. Veterans want to return to civilian life as contributing members of their community, but sometimes need a guiding hand to help them along in the transition. With so many veterans coming to serve from Minnesota, it makes sense that a place such as this veterans' village would be a great resource. The fears expressed by some are not necessarily undue, but it is important to recognize that the proposed veterans' village serves to prevent those fears from becoming reality. It just might be your own relative veteran's life you save, by recommending this village to them in their time of difficulty. Let's do what we can to bring more veterans back into society as healthy, contributing citizens, and bring our suicide rate from 22 per day down to zero.

Sincerely,
Eric Randall

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Subject:

[EXTERNAL]Janis Weets has shared a file with you and are opposed to this project. We have the adjoining property and would like to be placed on the agenda for January 31st at 6pm. Sincerely, Tom and Janis Weets

Section 1. C327.302

Sacred Communities AND
micro-Unit Dwellings.

(f) Sacred community means:
a residential settlement established
on or contiguous to the grounds
of a religious institution's primary
worship location organization
meaning under chapter 315

HF 1872 - clearly states
on sacred / religious Lands
Bernard Crotts property clearly
does not fall into this category.

The conditional land permit
for MAHUBE should be denied.

Attachments : HF1872

Section 327.30

(e) "Micro unit" means a mobile residential dwelling providing permanent housing within a sacred community that meets the requirements of subdivision 4.

(f) "Religious institution" means a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious organization organized under chapter 315.

(g) "Sacred community" means a residential settlement established on or contiguous to the grounds of a religious institution's primary worship location primarily for the purpose of providing permanent housing for chronically homeless persons, extremely low-income persons, and designated volunteers that meets the requirements of subdivision 3.

Subd. 2. Dwelling in micro units in sacred communities authorized. Religious institutions are authorized to provide permanent housing to people who are chronically homeless, extremely

**Sec. 57. [327.30] SACRED
COMMUNITIES AND MICRO-UNIT
DWELLINGS.**

Subdivision 1. Definitions.

(a) For the purposes of this section,
the following terms have the
meanings given.

(b) "Chronically homeless"
means an individual who:

(1) is homeless and lives or
resides in a place not meant for
human habitation, a safe haven, or
in an emergency shelter;

(2) has been homeless and
living or residing in a place not
meant for human habitation, a safe
haven, or in an emergency shelter
continuously for at least one year or
on at least four separate occasions
in the last three years; and

(3) has an adult head of
household, or a minor head-of-
household if no adult is present in
the household, with a diagnosable
substance use disorder, serious
mental illness, developmental
disability, post-traumatic stress

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HF 1872 ...

revisor.mn.gov

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Minnesota Legislature

☰

Menu



Office of the
Revisor of
Statutes

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Revisor Menu

HF 1872

Status in the **House** for the 93rd Legi

Current bill text: As Introduced

Add HF 1872 to MyBills

Version List

Long Description

Companion: SF247

Companion Text

Senate Search

Further Committee

Description

Micro-unit dwellings authorized on religious properties.

204

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This Document can be made available
in alternative formats upon request

State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THIRD SESSION
H. F. No. 1872

02/16/2023 Authored by Hollins, Neu Brindley, Elkins, Hassan, Daniels and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Labor and Industry Finance and Policy

- A bill for an act
- relating to manufactured homes; authorizing micro-unit dwellings on religious properties; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 327.
- BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:
- Section 1. **[327.30] SACRED COMMUNITIES AND MICRO-UNIT DWELLINGS.**
- Subdivision 1. Definitions.** (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given.
- (b) "Chronically homeless" has the meaning given in United States Code, title 42, section 11360, as amended through May 20, 2009.
- (c) "Designated volunteers" means persons who have not experienced homelessness and have been approved by the religious institution to live in a sacred community as their sole form of housing.
- (d) "Extremely low income" means an income that is equal to or less than 30 percent of the area median income, adjusted for family size, as estimated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- (e) "Micro unit" means a mobile residential dwelling providing permanent housing within a sacred community that meets the requirements of subdivision 4.
- (f) "Sacred community" means a residential settlement established on or contiguous to the grounds of a religious institution's primary worship location primarily for the purpose of providing permanent housing for chronically homeless persons, extremely low-income persons, and designated volunteers that meets the requirements of subdivision 3.

Current Version - as introduced

A bill for an act
relating to manufactured homes; authorizing micro-unit dwellings on religious
properties; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 327.
BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. [327.30] SACRED COMMUNITIES AND MICRO UNIT DWELLINGS.

Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the meanings given.

(b) "Chronically homeless" has the meaning given in United States Code, title 42, section

11360, as amended through May 20, 2009.

(c) "Designated volunteers" means persons who have not experienced homelessness and have been approved by the religious institution to live in a sacred community as their sole form of housing.

(d) "Extremely low income" means an income that is equal to or less than 30 percent of the area median income, adjusted for family size, as estimated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(e) "Micro unit" means a mobile residential dwelling providing permanent housing within a sacred community that meets the requirements of subdivision 4.

(f) "Sacred community" means a residential settlement established on or contiguous to the grounds of a religious institution's primary worship location primarily for the purpose of providing permanent housing for chronically homeless persons, extremely low-income persons, and designated volunteers that meets the requirements of subdivision 3.

Subd. 2. Dwelling in micro units in sacred communities authorized. Religious institutions are authorized to provide permanent housing to people who are chronically homeless, extremely low-income, or designated volunteers, in sacred communities composed of micro units.

Subd. 3. Sacred community requirements. (a) A sacred community must provide residents of micro units access to water and electric utilities either by connecting the micro units to the utilities that are serving the principal building on the lot or by other comparable means, or by providing the residents access to permanent common kitchen facilities and common facilities for toilet, bathing, and laundry with the number and type of fixtures required for an R-2 boarding house under Minnesota Rules, part 1305.2902. Any units that are plumbed shall not be included in determining the minimum number of fixtures required for the common facilities.

(b) A sacred community under this section must:

(1) be appropriately insured;

(2) have between one-third and 40 percent of the micro units occupied by designated volunteers; and

(3) provide the municipality with a written plan approved by the religious institution's governing board that outlines:

(i) disposal of water and sewage from micro units if not plumbed;

(ii) septic tank drainage if plumbed units are not hooked up to the primary worship location's system;

(iii) adequate parking, lighting, and access to units by emergency vehicles;

(iv) protocols for security and addressing conduct within the settlement; and

(v) safety protocols for severe weather.

(c) A sacred community is subject to municipal approval and regulation as a permitted use, conditional use, or planned unit development, as determined by the municipality. If so approved, additional permitting is not required for individual micro units.

(d) Sacred communities are subject to the laws governing landlords and tenants under chapter 504B.

Subd. 4. Micro unit requirements. (a) In order to be eligible to be placed within a sacred community, a micro unit must be built to the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Code 119.5, which includes standards for heating, electrical systems, and fire and life safety. A micro unit must also meet the following technical requirements:

(1) be no more than 400 gross square feet;

(2) be built on a permanent chassis and anchored to pin foundations with engineered

This Document can be made available
in alternative formats upon request

State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 1872

02/16/2023 Authored by Hollins, Nen Brindley, Elkins, Hassan, Daniels and others
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Labor and Industry Finance and Policy

- 1.1 A bill for an act
- 1.2 relating to manufactured homes; authorizing micro-unit dwellings on religious
- 1.3 properties; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 327.
- 1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:
- 1.5 Section 1. [327.30] SACRED COMMUNITIES AND MICRO-UNIT DWELLINGS.
- 1.6 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have
- 1.7 the meanings given.
- 1.8 (b) "Chronically homeless" has the meaning given in United States Code, title 42, section
- 1.9 11360, as amended through May 20, 2009.
- 1.10 (c) "Designated volunteers" means persons who have not experienced homelessness and
- 1.11 have been approved by the religious institution to live in a sacred community as their sole
- 1.12 form of housing.
- 1.13 (d) "Extremely low income" means an income that is equal to or less than 30 percent of
- 1.14 the area median income, adjusted for family size, as estimated by the Department of Housing
- 1.15 and Urban Development.
- 1.16 (e) "Micro unit" means a mobile residential dwelling providing permanent housing
- 1.17 within a sacred community that meets the requirements of subdivision 4.
- 1.18 (f) "Sacred community" means a residential settlement established on or contiguous to
- 1.19 the grounds of a religious institution's primary worship location primarily for the purpose
- 1.20 of providing permanent housing for chronically homeless persons, extremely low-income
- 1.21 persons, and designated volunteers that meets the requirements of subdivision 3.

2.1 Subd. 2. Dwelling in micro units in sacred communities authorized. Religious
2.2 institutions are authorized to provide permanent housing to people who are chronically
2.3 homeless, extremely low-income, or designated volunteers, in sacred communities composed
2.4 of micro units.

2.5 Subd. 3. Sacred community requirements. (a) A sacred community must provide
2.6 residents of micro units access to water and electric utilities either by connecting the micro
2.7 units to the utilities that are serving the principal building on the lot or by other comparable
2.8 means, or by providing the residents access to permanent common kitchen facilities and
2.9 common facilities for toilet, bathing, and laundry with the number and type of fixtures
2.10 required for an R-2 boarding house under Minnesota Rules, part 1305.2902. Any units that
2.11 are plumbed shall not be included in determining the minimum number of fixtures required
2.12 for the common facilities.

2.13 (b) A sacred community under this section must:

2.14 (1) be appropriately insured;

2.15 (2) have between one-third and 40 percent of the micro units occupied by designated
2.16 volunteers; and

2.17 (3) provide the municipality with a written plan approved by the religious institution's
2.18 governing board that outlines:

2.19 (i) disposal of water and sewage from micro units if not plumbed;

2.20 (ii) septic tank drainage if plumbed units are not hooked up to the primary worship
2.21 location's system;

2.22 (iii) adequate parking, lighting, and access to units by emergency vehicles;

2.23 (iv) protocols for security and addressing conduct within the settlement; and

2.24 (v) safety protocols for severe weather.

2.25 (c) A sacred community is subject to municipal approval and regulation as a permitted
2.26 use, conditional use, or planned unit development, as determined by the municipality. If so
2.27 approved, additional permitting is not required for individual micro units.

2.28 (d) Sacred communities are subject to the laws governing landlords and tenants under
2.29 chapter 504B.

2.30 Subd. 4. Micro unit requirements. (a) In order to be eligible to be placed within a
2.31 sacred community, a micro unit must be built to the requirements of the American National
2.32 Standards Institute (ANSI) Code 119.5, which includes standards for heating, electrical

- 3.1 systems, and fire and life safety. A micro unit must also meet the following technical
3.2 requirements:
- 3.3 (1) be no more than 400 gross square feet;
- 3.4 (2) be built on a permanent chassis and anchored to pin foundations with engineered
3.5 fasteners;
- 3.6 (3) have exterior materials that are compatible in composition, appearance, and durability
3.7 to the exterior materials used in standard residential construction;
- 3.8 (4) have a minimum insulation rating of R-20 in walls, R-30 in floors, and R-38 in
3.9 ceilings, as well as residential grade insulated doors and windows;
- 3.10 (5) have a dry, compostable, or plumbed toilet or other system meeting the requirements
3.11 of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Chapter 7080;
- 3.12 (6) have either an electrical system that meets NFPA 70 NEC, section 551 or 552 as
3.13 applicable or a low voltage electrical system that meets ANSI/RVIA Low Voltage Standard,
3.14 current edition;
- 3.15 (7) have minimum wall framing with two inch by four inch wood or metal studs with
3.16 framing of 16 inches to 24 inches on center, or the equivalent in structural insulated panels,
3.17 with a floor load of 40 pounds per square foot and a roof live load of 42 pounds per square
3.18 foot; and
- 3.19 (8) have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors installed.
- 3.20 (b) All micro units, including their anchoring, must be inspected and certified for
3.21 compliance with these requirements by a licensed Minnesota professional engineer or
3.22 qualified third-party inspector for ANSI compliance accredited pursuant to either the
3.23 American Society for Testing and Materials Appendix E541 or ISO/IEC 17020.
- 3.24 (c) Micro units that connect to utilities such as water, sewer, gas, or electric, must obtain
3.25 any permits or inspections required by the municipality or utility company for that connection.
- 3.26 (d) Micro units must comply with municipal setback requirements established by
3.27 ordinance for manufactured homes. If a municipality does not have such an ordinance, micro
3.28 units must be set back on all sides by at least ten feet.



Becker County Planning & Zoning
915 Lake Ave.
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

January 22, 2024

Dear Board Member's,

Our mission at the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV) is to end veteran homelessness in the state of Minnesota. MACV's goal is supporting veterans in their time of need with a range of services, to include housing, employment support, if needed, legal services. For over 16 years, we have collaborated with MAHUBE-OTWA, and we endorse the proposal for Bernie's Place, the Tiny Home Veterans' Village presented by MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership. MACV assists housing veterans with unique challenges through our housing programs. Our primary focus is to connect with veterans residing in Minnesota at any point along their journey towards achieving housing stability. We have observed numerous factors leading to veterans experiencing homelessness, and our experience underscores the crucial impact of offering housing stability and support as these veterans strive to reconstruct their lives.

Veterans in the rural areas of Minnesota encounter substantial challenges in achieving stability. Affordable housing is frequently hard to come by, and many veterans face difficulties in securing employment with a livable wage. Public transportation is often non-existent in these regions, and services tailored to veterans are scarce. Another notable challenge in rural regions is the absence of emergency shelters in remote areas. Our emergency housing program coordinates with strategic partners such as shelters, other outreach teams, area hotels, and other veterans' organizations to secure basic resources for veterans who have the most acute challenges to finding housing stability. MACV continues to provide long-term solutions in the pursuit of ending Veteran homelessness.

We are excited about the rural tiny home project designed to support veterans in rural areas, and we are committed to our partnership to help ensure its future success.

Sincerely,

Kevin Beichler
Northern Regional Director
MN Assistance Council for Veterans

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As disabled veterans who have lived in the Osage hills for nearly 4 decades in a small home we built ourselves, we can attest how living with gardens and the forest around us has calmed our souls. Knowing Bernie rather well for these past decades we appreciate the grand gesture he's made with the gift of this land.

Tiny homes will allow whoever lives in them on that land to directly connect with nature.

We fully support this project.

(The Fargo VAMC is one of the best in the nation)

Bruce Brummitt
Cheryl Valois

24747 Guyles Road
Ponsford, MN 56575

218-255-4804

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Tuesday, January 30th, 2024

To Whom it may concern,

As a church in the great Detroit Lakes area, our community is daily made aware of the needs for housing and lodging that many in our greater community have. As a church, we contribute financially to the work that First Lutheran - DL is doing to address the problem of homelessness.

As a church, we support all of the work they do to alleviate poverty and homelessness, whether that work be financially, in providing basic essentials for life and living, transporting those without proper transportation, and seeking out housing solutions in the area.

In addition, as a community in rural Audubon, we offer a 'Little Free Food Pantry' outside of our church, providing essentials for those that can reach our church. We see a lot of crossover from those First Lutheran sees and those that our Little Free pantry sees, implying that the problem of affordable housing, food, and life essentials is not specific to Detroit Lakes but is a problem for all of the surrounding towns.

We concur with First Lutheran's assessment that the problem is beyond the scope of FLC or the surrounding area churches to solve. Becker County needs a larger-scale address, infrastructural investment, and institutional focus. **The project of Bernie's Place, the Tiny Homes Veterans Village seems to be just such an investment and focus.** I and the congregation of St. Peter's Lutheran Church would find such a local project hopeful and helpful.

We would celebrate this investment, as it is the duty of our government according to our biblical tradition (cf. Psalm 72:4; Isaiah 10:1-2; Romans 13:6; etc.)

It is with sincere joy and hope that I support the efforts of Bernie's Place and its pursuits to support our troops and combat veteran homelessness in our county.

Peace,

The Reverend Matthew Engum

Pastor, St. Peter's Lutheran Church | Audubon, MN

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BECKER COUNTY

Veterans Service Office

915 Lake Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
Phone: 218-846-7312 • Fax: 218-846-7325
matt.erickson@co.becker.mn.us

January 16, 2024

Becker County Planning and Zoning Commission
915 Lake Ave
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

Planning and Zoning Commission,

As you know, my staff and I work with Veterans on a daily basis, primarily helping them navigate their eligibility for the various benefits through state and Federal programs. However, at times we assist them with their emerging needs, including financial assistance, health concerns, and homelessness. Since we started keeping track of individual issues for our Veterans (June 2023) we have had 55 individual consultations and contacts with Veterans about housing issues and homelessness, which is the 8th most common of the 24 separate types of issues we track. This appears to objectively demonstrate the need for attention to the homelessness issue within Becker County, and the larger region of western and northwestern Minnesota where shelters are largely non-existent.

The proposed tiny homes being offered as temporary housing through MAHUBE-OTWA (tentatively called Bernie's Place), would provide short-term housing stability so that our Veterans can go through the longer process of intake and case management through partner agencies to a) determine available resources and assistance, b) determine what if any barriers need to be overcome, and c) allow them to simultaneously address other issues, including financial, legal, and health issues.

Thank you for your consideration to this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Erickson".

Matt Erickson
Becker County Veterans Service Officer

My preference would be to mail all the members of the planning and zoning commission; you do not include their email addresses on your website.

This input from a born and raised Becker County resident and taxpayer:

To Kyke Vareberg and members of the planning and zoning commission:

Please support the request from Mahube-OTWA Community Action partnership on behalf of Bernard D. Crotts for their conditional use permit on legal land description: Tax ID number 28.0176.000 Sec 27 Twp140 Range 038.

The proposed 8 unit multi development is a much needed housing arrangement for a specific population now greatly underserved in our county. If this proposal was more widely publicized I believe you would have a great positive response from county residents.

Thanks for your support.

I would appreciate confirmation that this input is received by the entire planning commission.

Laurie Lynch Fong
Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
and certified Public Health Nurse, Retired
218-850-2582

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Dear Nicole and board of decisionmakers

My husband Steve and I have owned a resort west of Detroit Lakes for the past 25 years. Many of our guests return year after year to the same cabin and in the same week. They report they like the safe feeling, serene and quiet setting.

After reviewing the project setting and plan for Muhube-OTWA involvement, I am thrilled to endorse this project. What a meaningful way to support the needs of those who have served our country. Should the opportunity for homeless people to reside here who have needs and perhaps are not veterans, let it be God's will there is space for these people too.

The plan to have the project in a rural setting seems ideal. This will provide a chance to bond with nature, feel safe, and have the peace and quiet rural communities offer.

Blessings
Cheryl & Steve Hedlund, owners
End of the Road Resort, Lake Park MN

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I am writing to you about my brother Bernard Crotts property that he has at 44570 schoolhouse Rd, Osage, MN 56570

Please let me start with ,Our Grandparents Renio and Esther Bakkenta who bought 80 acres for \$ 200. Plus dollars back in the day. Our grandparents were 100% Finnish. They worked the land,

They built a little cabin on The property until they could build a family home, a barn and a sauna.

Our grandparents , our mother Ellen Bakkenta (Crotts)Makinen and Father Dwight Crotts made this our home ,farmed and took care of the land.

Our mother sold 40 acres. And the remaining 40 acres was left as the family farm.

In the 70's our mother sold the family farm for \$1.00 to my brother Bernard so he could have a new house built buy HUD housing, since there was never any running water in the old house. The property had to be in his name.

Our Grandmother and mother always paid the taxes until our mothers death.

Bernard never took care of the farm,burnt the swamp and let the fire get away and burnt the barn down and previously the sauna, wood shed. He let the garage come down also.

There is nothing left, Only the house that was built in the 70's. He never built or developed the land.

He has torn down and destroyed what was built over the years of our grandparents and parents.

The problems our brother Bernard has let happen on this property over the last few years, with the sheriff's coming out to deal with Bernard daughter and friend, has been disgraceful.

It took the family to push Bernard to get a restraining order on his daughter and her friend, to get the unwanted activities going on in that house out.

Bernard does not know how to deal or to solve the problem with drugs and mental health. He just turned a blind eye to what was going on.

He allowed, the unwanted and activities on the property instead of solving the problem.

This took months to get cleaned up by the family.

The surrounding properties was built and developed by our generations of family's

In this area. Many of our cousins still have, that our family's grandparents and great grandparents built and developed.

Please do not let this happen in this community of familys.

It is not close to town, meaning additional resources to get help.

Road development in and out of the property.

Since it would involve our cousins property and neighbors

Additional taxes to the neighbors in the county.

Wet land study for the surrounding property.

DNR did have rights to get across main part of the property to get to the north to the state land.

Losing homestead rights.

With talking with my brother he is hard of hearing, has poor eye sight , he is agreeing to what ever is said, because off not hearing it right or understanding the outcome.

I just dont want someone or whoever to take advantage of my brother.

Please I ask you to reconsider of not allowing this development to happen or to go through in building and developing these tiny homes.

Thank you for your time.

Attached is a picture of the farm before the new house was built.



Bernard Crotts sister
Debbie Ingram
3604855173

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Becker County Planning and Zoning Commission:

We believe in housing opportunities for veterans because there is a great need for housing in this county. We are members of Detroit Lakes Congregational Church, which is also supporting this initiative.

Please consider the necessary rezoning to allow this project to move forward.

Gini and Gary Kleingartner
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

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I support the Bernie's Place Tiny Homes project for homeless veterans. The Detroit Lakes area is in desperate need of affordable housing. This project would make it possible for veterans to have a home of their own in the midst of a rural Minnesota grassland. Tiny homes supply private living quarters at ground level. A common building will have showers, computer access and private meeting space as well as a game room. This arrangement would facilitate social interactions which are so important to everyone. Also I understand that Mahube will use their vehicles to transport these veterans to medical appointments while counselors and other mental health professionals will come onsite to meet with their clients.

The planning of this project and its funding sources seems sound and timely. I think this project should have the support of the Becker County Planning Board. Please approve the conditional use permit.

LaRae McGillivray

January 26, 2024

Attn: Planning and Zoning Department

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my strong opposition the proposed rezoning of 44570 School House Road Osage, MN 56570, tax ID 28.0176.000 Section 27 Township 140 Range 038, 27-140-38 NW ¼ NE ¼ Less E 25 AC (28-176-1, 28-176-4); Shell Lake Township. While the local community may be unable to prevent development, nearly all residents in the area are completely opposed to the addition of non-shoreland multi-unit development that will cause traffic and safety problems, destroy local wildlife habitat, and potentially lower the property values of the existing community by the use of the buildings to re-home people who are currently deemed homeless. It is my understanding Bernard Crofts is seeking this development to use for homeless shelters/residences in order to avoid paying overdue taxes by donating land for this purpose.

Property values are likely to go down in the area if multi-family/multi-unit developments are built. Multi family dwellings are inconsistent with the housing developed in the area. This development would bring in low income/homeless residents which could lead to increased crime rates and other negative social effects. It could also cause an unnecessary burden to our law enforcement with increased need to monitor/police this area due to vagrancy.

Wildlife has been observed in the area, and any development will destroy their habitat. Any planned development of the property should consider the continuing impact to local wildlife habitat.

I urge you to disapprove the proposed rezoning, and from recent discussions with neighbors, I know my opinions are shared by many who have not managed to attend meetings or write letters and emails.

Thank you for your continued service and support of our communities.



Daneele Shipman
2024.01.26 09:32:00 -06'00'

Daneele Shipman
44453 Schoolhouse Road
Osage, MN 56570
218-234-7520
daneeleshipman@gmail.com

Dear Ms Bradbury:

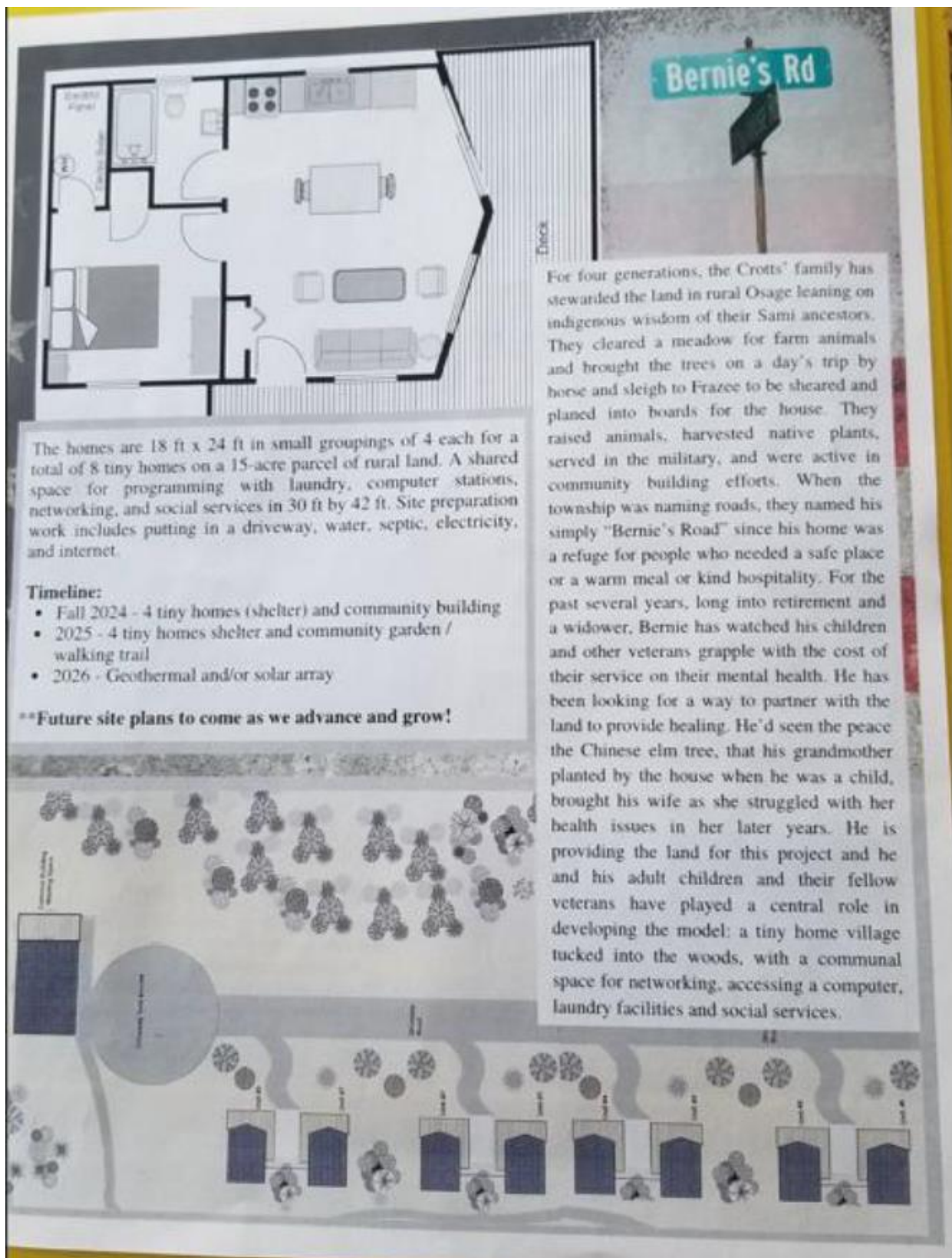
It is an exciting opportunity afforded by the gift of land to Mahube Otwa to build appropriate housing for homeless veterans in our area. I strongly support this effort if appropriate supportive services and transportation are available on site.

Sincerely,
Sharon Sinclair

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From: Janis Weets <jlweets2022@outlook.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2024 8:40 AM
To: Nicole Bradbury; Tom Weets
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: FW: Bernie Crotts mtg on 1/31 concerning property lines as pictured in agenda packet and showing our survey pins, and proper placement of our fenceline and All the trees Are on our property .

236



BERNIE'S PLACE, TINY HOME VETERANS' VILLAGE

Bernie's Place is a proposed tiny home village consisting of eight tiny homes and a shared community space. Each tiny home is equipped with a bedroom, bathroom and shower, kitchen with sink/fridge/oven, a seating area inside and a deck outside. The common area has laundry facilities, an office for service providers to meet confidentially with residents, a computer station, space for resident meetings or socializing, along with a pool table and ping-pong table. Outside are walking trails and a community garden. The space is tucked into the woods in the Osage hills approximately 20 miles from Park Rapids and 20 miles from Detroit Lakes.

MAHUBE-OTWA will provide transportation to appointments and services as needed. The unique features include: safe and dignified shelter, a strong partner with the natural environment as a trauma-informed approach, and private space for individuals or couples to focus on themselves first. **Veterans will be given priority**, but will be open to other homeless adults, if space is available.



How to Get Involved:

- Consider donating - no minimum requirement
- Subscribe to an email list for updates by emailing BerniesPlaces@mahube.org
- Share your ideas by emailing BerniesPlaces@mahube.org or calling Liz at (218) 530-1691

GET IN TOUCH WITH US NOW



**MAHUBE-OTWA COMMUNITY
ACTION PARTNERSHIP, INC.**

Serving Mahnomen • Hubbard • Becker • Otter Tail • Wadena Counties

☎ (218) 847-1385

📍 1125 West River Road
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501

🌐 www.mahube.org











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iMessage
Today 10:50 AM

Greetings to whom this may concern, I am in complete support of Bernie, getting his permit in helping disabled and homeless American vets. I believe this to be a wonderful thing and I applaud Bernie for doing this. Best regards, James Earl Clements.

Thank you! I will submit this to Planning & Zoning.
- Liz Kuoppala

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Hello -

I am a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and I live in Detroit Lakes at 1059 Minnesota Avenue. I'm writing in support of Bernie's Place, Tiny Homes Veterans Village - the tiny homes proposed by Mahube-Otwa for homeless veterans! Current surveys indicate that there are between 75 and 100 homeless vets in this county. I am thrilled if we can get these homes built and help address this issue!

The Reverend Dr. Ruth E. Hetland

Interim Pastor at First Lutheran Church - Mahnomen, Minnesota Creator & Owner of ConseCrate Subscription Box, LLC
<https://consecratebox.com/> <https://consecratebox.etsy.com> <https://consecrate.cratejoy.com/>

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To Nicole Bradbury,

I am writing to you to share my thoughts and concerns regarding the request for a Conditional Use Permit to build 8 units by MAHUBE OTWA Action Partnership located in Shell Lake Township. The purpose of the project is to serve the homeless people, primarily veterans, within Becker County.

As a Registered Nurse, I know the need to care for the most vulnerable populations within our community. Homelessness is one of the greatest vulnerabilities a person could face, taking away a person's sense of security or hope. Greater than that, is their inability to care for themselves properly when they lack a home to be able to do so in. This can leave managing illnesses, chronic conditions, and mental health issues completely untreated for the homeless population.

Veterans will be given priority through this project. Many veterans struggle with PTSD and may find themselves triggered by the hunting that many of our local township residents partake in on their land. Again, their mental health struggles require access to healthcare resources.

While I recognize the need for a long-term place for people to have shelter and live, without having to continuously find a place to stay, I strongly discourage the pursuit of this project. As a resident of Shell Lake Township, I understand the isolation and limited resources that comes with choosing to live 20 miles from a nearby town with all the resources a person needs. The nearest grocery store is in Osage with prices higher than the nearest Walmart or grocery store in Park Rapids or Detroit Lakes. The nearest hospital is 18 miles away in Park Rapids. Employment opportunities are 10 miles away.

I am sharing an experience we witnessed where we learned the difficulty to receive timely emergency response when residing 20 miles from Essentia hospital in Detroit Lakes and 18 miles from Essentia hospital in Park Rapids. A few years ago, we had a major accident occur at the end of our driveway and we witnessed the emergency vehicles responding. They were following GPS which had them take a longer route, which my husband and I noticed by them driving the opposite direction instead of the shorter route. This adds additional time to an emergency response.

There may be times where there is no regular transportation available to the people residing at these units who will be depending on the MAHUBE OTWA Action Partnership for transportation to appointments and jobs. I currently homeschool, but my eldest child rode the Frazee school bus last year. The gravel road conditions were terrible for part of the winter that the bus driver had myself and another neighbor meet her at the townhall before and after school so she would not risk sliding in the ditch.

Unfortunately, the homeless population often deal with mental health and co-morbidities that can make needing emergency services available a true need they have. Taking into consideration the longer response time, the distance

from a nearby hospital, and the gravel road conditions in the winter, I advocate for the homeless population needing a more permanent residence closer to the resources they need.

The old Ace building is currently empty within Detroit Lakes. I propose the MAHUBE OTWA Action Partnership pursue building a more permanent residence for the homeless population at that facility. Of course, there would be the need to rebuild or remodel, but that is already needed where they are now requesting this permit in Shell Lake Township.

The old Ace location is nearby many job opportunities, within walking distance, which would create a sense of independence for the homeless when weather allows in the summertime. The MAHUBE program wouldn't be allocating tons of funds just to the transportation that is needed for the homeless to access their needs. They would be close to the hospital so they can receive the care they need to manage their health and wellness. The Becker County Sheriff's department would be able to better respond to situations.

I appreciate you reviewing my concerns and hope you are able to make the best decision to serve the homeless while carefully considering the safety needs of the residents of Shell Lake Township.

Thank you,
Mariah Briard

Hello this email is in regards to the proposed shelter in the shell lake town ship. I want to start by saying the idea itself is much need and would serve the community well. However the area in which the shelter is proposed lacks the infrastructure to support such a facility. This includes but not limited to increasing road traffic on a township road, sewer and water to support 8 residential properties including a common building. The staff of first responders required to safely handle any issues that might arise. The area is rural by nature a facility of this sort is better suited in an area near a supporting town. This would reduce costs associated with as simple of a subject as transportation to and from town. This facility will affect neighboring property's as this is listed as residential in type but ultimately commercial in nature especially with plans listed for future growth. It would devalue surrounding properties as they would become less desirable with a commercial like property in the area.

Concerned Becker County resident

Good Morning,

I am emailing regarding the multi-unit development consisting of 8 units near shell lake.

I am all about helping out the Veterans, however, please see my concerns below on why I believe this is not a very good idea.

This location is pretty much in the middle of nothing. How will the vet's get services out there. There is no public transportation, can't just walk to grocery stores or pharmacy's, what about leisure activities? Library, cinemas. Emergencies! It will take a lot of time for ambulance or police to reach them. Most vet's go to the VA Hospital and the closet is Fargo or Fergus Falls. Even if they go to Detroit Lakes or Park Rapids it is well over a half hour away.

Wildlife! I hunt the property that is next to it! This will affect the wildlife big time and what happens if a vet has PTSD and cannot handle the sounds of gun shots. We duck hunt and rifle hunt; this can affect their well-being and can cause mental and physical damage not to just them but others around them.

I could just keep going on and on but I believe this got my point across.

There is a lot of factors on why this location is not a good location.

Thank You,
Alyssa Cariveau

In concern to homeless shelter(shell lake township),

I am a resident of shell lake township and I feel that there is far to many cons then pros of putting the (veteran) homeless shelter out here. We have many elderly people out here that shouldn't have to worry about crime or people walking through their yard. Let alone we are at least 30 minutes away from any law enforcement. That is on good road to, not the winter conditions if something were to happen. Then we have people that hunt out here that would not be very save to have veterans that may have ptsd or develop ptsd out here. Plus the long travel to and from town will be a lot of gas. It would save alot of time and Mahune's money so they can use it on other things. I think it would benefit having it closer to town for the resources that they may need. There is no parks or recreational things they can do out here. I have nothing against veterans/homeless shelters I just think the location is terrible.

I personally won't feel safe in my own home with this being out here and law enforcement being so far away if

256

something did happen plus, I won't want to have to worry about my future kid safety playing in the yard.

Sincerely, Hannah Clark

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258

From: Matt Clark <1985mattclark@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 9:35 AM
To: Nicole Bradbury
Subject: [EXTERNAL]

BECKER COUNTY SECURITY NOTICE:

This email originated from an external sender. Exercise caution before clicking on any links or attachments and consider whether you know the sender. For more information please contact support.

Hi I'm hear for the camp u are trying to pass on school house road off ove 34 it a great area for a family to live out on every body hunt out on there property and the wild life right next to Bernie property . It is not a good place for veteran or other that need help it is to far out of town for them to get the help they need. A great place would be next to the army va or in town so when they need help it's mins away. So my vote is no for the camp.

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Good morning.

I am writing to voice my support for this project of Bernie's Place. We live in the Snellman area and believe that the quiet rural surroundings here can be a very calming and positive atmosphere for homeless veterans trying to get back on their feet.

The tiny houses are efficient and living in one will offer veterans the quiet and peaceful solitude they may emotionally, mentally, and physically need. These may also offer them more autonomy that they would not have were they living in crowded apartment buildings, etc. which can be vital for restoring or boosting one's sense of self-worth.

We've known Bernie for decades. This is a wonderful gift Bernie has given. He and his family have consistently spearheaded projects to build and boost community in the Snellman, Shell Lake, Ponsford, Pine Point and Osage areas. We are blessed to have a fantastic VA in Fargo, but they cannot do everything. Each community in this country needs to pitch in and do what we can as well.

I am a disabled veteran myself and have seen some of the struggles homeless veterans have endured. Supporting our troops includes supporting them when they return injured, scarred, and suffering, not just while they are in combat overseas.

I fully support this project for our homeless veterans and encourage Becker County's Planning and Zoning Commission to support this as well. Thank you.

Very Respectfully,

Budd Parker

261
262

From: sarah clark <sarahclark271@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 11:28 AM
To: Nicole Bradbury
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Homeless shelter

BECKER COUNTY SECURITY NOTICE:

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To whom it may concern

I think it's a great idea for a homeless shelter but I do think it's a horrible location that 35 minutes out of town can you imagine if there's any emergency I've lived 10 minutes out of town and it's took the sheriffs office 45 minutes to get to my house. What about transportation and what about them having activities to do? I mean that's 35 minutes out of town it's not like they can just walk. Also, you have to think that there's a whole bunch of hunters out there and there's such thing as PTSD, which is very traumatic for some that I know personally because my father is a Vet you're gonna have active hunters out there duck hunting deer hunting. You got muzzleloader and see if their PTSD goes on whack and somebody gets injured in the process of that who is to blame because you guys put them out 35 minutes out of town like I said it's a great idea horrible location if you're being gifted this property, put it up for auction use that money to buy a property closer to town it will be way beneficial to them to be closer to town where they are able to access stuff get help when they need help go to the park. Walk to go fishing. Thanks Sent from my iPhone

I support the development of Bernie's Place. As a Realtor, I am very aware of the shortage of affordable housing in Becker County. This is a great opportunity that started with a gift of rural property that is highly sought after by those who want to acquire hunting land or some acreage to build a single family home. Putting the land to use to alleviate homelessness in the region and providing a safe environment surrounded by nature makes it very unique, especially when it can help veterans.

I hope the zoning commission quickly approves this project. Also, hats off to Mahoney OTWA for being willing to provide transportation as needed and to assist with collaborative services for future residents.

Deanna Sinclair
Counselor Realty of Detroit Lakes
218.850.6547

From: Trevor Stilke <tstilke23@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 11:54 AM
To: Nicole Bradbury
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Bernie's Place

BECKER COUNTY SECURITY NOTICE:

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My vote is NO. With building construction in such a remote area will eliminate alot of wildlife habit and grazing. Please consider the safety of the elderly and children in area. With this being in a remote there's alot of gunfire during hunting season. This could cause a issue with the vet's going nuts. Also i don't want to see the area become destroyed

Hello,

This email is concerning the proposed shelter that will be going by Shell lake. While a veterans home is a nice idea, I do not believe this is the place to have it. Placing a shelter like that in the middle of no where raises lot of concerns such as the ability to get medical or police out there in a timely matter would be near to impossible, the people that live in this area are a tight nite community and having a bunch of random homeless people coming and going would be a safety concern. Sometimes veterans or homeless people can have some forms of mental health issues or can suffer from PTSD and there is no clinics near this area to aide if need be. I would not feel comfortable having my children around an area like this if this does go through. Please reconsider the location for this facility.

-Concerned citizen

Hello, This is to support the creation of living space for needy veterans in our very community.

I am sure I would have questions if it were to be in my back yard or neighborhood, even concerns.

It seems important for this project to be a success, and that means a well thought out plan with good oversight and supportive services for the community on both sides, the veterans and residents.

We as a society get really bad marks on how we have treated war wounded veterans in past times. This is a great chance to correct those mistakes and give our veterans the respect and help they deserve.

Bruce Engebretson

Osage



Wadena County Veterans
Service Officer
David A Anderson
415 Jefferson Street South
Wadena MN 56482
(218) 631-7617



01/31/2024

To: Becker County Planning and Zoning Commission
Subject: Bernie's Place, Tiny Homes Veterans Village

I David A Anderson Veterans Service Officer for Wadena County and in support of Bernie's Place, Tiny Homes Veterans Village. I believe this a worthwhile project to help homeless Veterans on the road to recovery and transition to a sustainable living environment.

Thank You

David A Anderson
Wadena County Veterans Service Officer

273
274

Dear Representative Bradbury,

As a member of the League of Women Voters and a Becker County resident, I'm writing to encourage you to support the rezoning needed to establish the Veterans' Housing Project. I am a daughter of veterans and have seen first-hand the need to support them and honor their service long after the uniform has been worn. I support these tiny homes with the accompanying services and transportation as a way to give back to these vets. Please support the rezoning of Bernie's Place in order for this important work to continue.

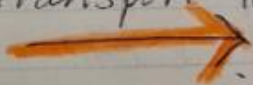
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276

Warmest regards,
Jenn (Maslyn) Johnson

Good Afternoon, Nicole,
I want to express my appreciation to the Becker County Planning Commission for considering the impact that the MAHUBE-OTWA's proposal for Tiny Homes will have helping homeless veterans find a place of refuge in this beautiful natural setting. We are excited to be able to continue our mission of providing safe places for the homeless to live while getting back on their feet. We have been fortunate to have this property donated to us for this expressed purpose. Our Board and Staff have worked diligently to come up with a proposal that we feel will benefit all our communities. We realize that this proposal has some controversy. As a township supervisor in Hubbard County I, also, do realize concerns from local citizens and take them seriously. The MAHUBE-OTWA Board of Directors has discussed some of these concerns and will be working with citizens to allay their concerns. Please relay to the Becker County Planning Commission our thoughtful planning, support, and direction for our Tiny Homes project.
Theora Goodrich
MAHUBE-OTWA, Board of Directors, Chair

277
278

that 20
Makube will be providing transportation. 24 hours 7 days
a week? ^{then anything that come up outside of normal busi-ness hours} Wouldn't it be better if they were ^{ple.}
located in Detroit Lakes? They would have more
access to services. Shopping, Entertainment, churches, ~~and~~
^{job opportunities} medical appointments ~~and~~ just to mention a few
things.

Emergency Medical Services - it's a minimum of 20 min
to Detroit Lakes on a great day, with ~~good~~ good roads.
Park Rapids ~~is even further~~ ^{is well} over a 20 min drive
again on a great day, with good roads. I've had
to call for an ambulance several times for
neighbors or relatives. The wait was for longer
than ²⁰⁻³⁰ 30 min. Even if they were to receive
help from our amazing volunteers from the Wolf
Lake / Osage area it still takes precious time
to arrive, assess the situation and transport them
back to Detroit Lakes & Park Rapids. 

The area for this proposed development is
too far from town. If we are concerned about
our Veterans, let's give them a better
location closer to town. This can't be the only
location available.

Will they have access to mental health specialists ~~at the home~~ on the property? Will there be someone there to check on their well being. Making sure they are not having problems. Someone certified to help.

→ Also why would you put a veteran in a bad situation on purpose? The area you are wanting to locate them in, is a heavily hunted area. I can't imagine gun shots going off all around them would be good for their mental health.

I don't think this development will be fair to our veterans.

When Bernard Crotts came to our house with his paper on little houses he shown it to me and wanted me to sign his paper. He wanted to know what I thought about it. I asked him who's going to live in them? He replied Home less people who can't find a place to live. Vets and re-hab people for a couple of weeks until they can get back on their feet.

I then asked Bernard how much of a kick back are you getting he's replied not much. But I do get to live in a little house free for the rest of mine life.

I thought to my self this isn't fair for what he's done to our neighbors when our property taxes did and insurance rates come up we are elderly people living on a fixed income we have so much money coming in and this raise of everything we won't be able to live in our home. plus the taxes are coming up the value of our home is going down and who would want to buy it when we have un-discriminate people living about a quarter

of a mile from our home!

this is my public testimony
regarding the application submitted
by Bernard D. Crotts

there is a negative history relating
to this property. this family has been
very unstable for many years the
sheriff has made multiple visits
for serious reasons.

of family fighting, drugs and
growing marijuana plus trying
to kill one another when they were
high on drugs. so the sheriff
would come out to break up the
fights numerous times. Tina would come
over and I would not let her in
the house fear for our safety. so she
would hide in our front yard until
the sheriff came.

they have no septic on their property
it will infect our property with human
waste

We feel this will have a negative
affect on us elderly people. It will
make us vulnerable to unstabled
individuals whose thoughts are

clouded by drug used.

people in the process of trying to break a drug addiction will be surrounding our property. This could bring drugs, burglary and physical harm to us ~~stay~~ elderly people. This will eventually force us from our homes.

our property taxes will go up and our property value will decrease.

What kind of protection are we going to have, when trouble breaks out will the sheriff have money in his budget to come out when this is trouble?

Living so far out of town people living in the little houses, will be on our door steps wanting food, rides to town because they are out of food cigarettes and liquor and if we say no they will become violent and mean.

and we have no way to protect our selves and I fear for our lives and if we say no. I am scare of body harm.

-4-

With this type of people you want to bring in you have no other places to put them. their from the bottom of the barrel of scrums and their friends are dope addicts who will ~~bring~~ bring drugs out to sale and if they don't have the money. they will steal us blind nothing will be safe. they will walk in your home and take what ever they want.

our community will no longer be safe with people like this

no we do not want this to go through. We'd had a peaceful life for 52 years and don't want it to change. I don't want to live the rest of my life in fear to answer the door to be shot or stabbed to death because some dope head wants our money and steals our car.

Martin + Carl
muff

1/31/2024

Thoughts regarding Bernie's project.

(Shell Lake Township)

- Many who are "homeless" are that way because of medical or emotional issues.
- The project site is 20 miles from any place where they can get help.
- They are usually in need of work – again 20 miles from jobs.
- If you are homeless—do you have a vehicle to get to that 20 miles?
- Who pays for services - garbage removal for example.
- Who is responsible for road maintenance.
- Who will maintain buildings?
- The project would make sense if it was a few miles from Park Rapids or Detroit Lakes-

Not the 20 miles.

287
288



BECKER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Todd Glander • Sheriff

OFFICE: 925 Lake Avenue
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
Phone 218-847-2661 • Fax 218-847-1604

JAIL: 1428 Stony Road
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
Phone 218-847-2939 • Fax 218-846-2580

January 31, 2024

Becker County Planning Commission,

The Sheriff's Office received correspondence looking to support the project being called "Bernie's Place" which will support homeless veterans in our communities. As a Sheriff's Office, we currently have and have had several veterans as part of our staff. We also work closely with our local Veteran's Service Office and frequently have contact with Veterans. We could not be more proud to employ, serve, and support those who have chosen to serve our country in such an honorable way and the sacrifices that go with that service. We support this project of bringing a place to better serve those Veterans who are in need of service from the country they served.

However, we do not support the location of this project. This project has been called "Bernie's Place", in reference to the property owned by Bernard "Bernie" Crofts. His property is located at 44570 Schoolhouse Road. The Dispatch and Patrol staff at the Sheriff's Office are very familiar with this location due to numerous disturbance calls at this residence and many have voiced their concerns in how that relates to this project. The property is subject to 46 calls for service in roughly 5 years. Several of those calls have resulted in arrests. The project being proposed is described as follows: "The unique features include: safe and dignified shelter, a strong partner with the natural environment as a trauma-informed approach, and private space for individuals or couples to focus on themselves first." While on the surface this concept looks like an incredible opportunity for those Veteran's, several staff members at the Sheriff's Office including myself have raised concerns that the environment at Crofts' is one that there is a distinct possibility could actually expose trauma to those staying there based off of our knowledge of the disturbances and the volatility at this residence. The project being proposed is to help those Veterans. As an agency, we believe there is a high likelihood of this location having the exact opposite effect of the proposed benefits being discussed. This information is public and can be obtained through a data request to our agency.

We also have concerns with his living environment at the Crofts residence. The calls our Deputies have responded to have shown that those living there do not take care of the residence, do not live



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in a sanitary environment, and have little to no value for the property. The road to the house is not maintained, significant garbage is strewn about the property, the floors inside the residence are down to the sub-floor, the sheetrock has been removed from the walls, the house has animal feces inside of it and the smell is horrendous. While we understand that money will fix up this property, past behavior dictates future conduct. If this project goes through and all new construction provides a beautiful property and facilities for those Veterans, it is our belief that this property will again fall into disrepair, unsanitary conditions, and an environment that is not a benefit to those Veterans due to an indifference to the value of the infrastructure already shown.

Lastly, while the intent is to have a secluded space in a natural environment setting for the Veterans, those veterans will need services. There are no services available in this area of Becker County for basic needs. This location puts it approximately halfway between Park Rapids and Detroit Lakes for food, toiletries, services, as well as response from our Emergency Services. While no one can predict the future, given the volatile environment already at this property, feel it highly likely that we will be called to this location in the future.

To reiterate, we fully support the efforts of implementing this program, but felt it prudent to make you aware of historical issues at that residence you may or may not have been aware of and ask that you take this information into consideration when making a decision on the location of this project. We ask that you at least consider a different location for this project that will better benefit those you intend to serve. The goal of this project is to better serve those Veterans. We feel that this project is best served at a different location.

Sincerely,

Chief Deputy Shane Richard #6102

The applicant tabled the application.

Since the January 31st, 2024, Hearing, this application has been withdrawn

Other Business:

- I) **Tentative Date for Next Informational Meeting: February 21st, 2024;** 8:00 am; 3rd Floor Meeting Room in the Becker County Courthouse, Detroit Lakes, MN.

Since there was no further business to come before the Board, Aho made a motion to adjourn. Hall second. All in favor. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:03 pm.

David Blomseth, Chairman

Jeff Moritz, Secretary

ATTEST

Kyle Vareberg, Zoning Administrator