

# Groups square off on proposed campground ordinance changes

Committee votes unanimously to update future campground project guidelines - county board will make final decision

Cindy Mickelson | Staff writer

**BURNETT COUNTY** - Proposed changes to Burnett County campground ordinances fueled discussion at the Burnett County Land Use Committee meeting Tuesday, Oct. 5.

With the moratorium on campgrounds set to expire later this month, the committee was hoping to find some common ground on #TXT-21-03: Chapters 30 and 45 related to campground items prior to moving the amended ordinances to the county board for consideration.

Campground owners and the Preserve Burnett County groups have strong opposing views on campgrounds and the proposed changes.

Campground owners would like to see high-density campground and RV parks, with sites designed to allow pull-through campers or park models, with water, sewer, electric and Wi-Fi. Campground owners, and campers leasing the space, are required to comply with county ordinances in place today which allow construction of accessory structures: decks, patios, fire pits, etc. Although the ordinances are liberal, they still need to be enforced. The sites typically allow space for parking of vehicles and trailers for ATVs and boats and often allow lake access. Campers are allowed to lease space on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis and are not required to pay property taxes.

Preserve Burnett County, local residents and cabin owners, are opposed to high-density campgrounds and would like to preserve Burnett County's wide-open spaces and rural way of life. Their focus is on preserving Burnett County's natural resources: clean air, crystal-clear lakes and rivers, and forests abundant with wildlife.

Fueling the fire were two conditional use permits submitted by Steve and Julie Austin, owners of Webb Lake Land and Cattle Co. dba Oakridge Campground.

## Public hearings

**CUP-21-26** - A conditional use permit requesting that the board allow oversized accessory structures to remain. History - Oakridge Campground had applied for and agreed to CUP-19-16 allowing 288 square feet for accessory structures in 2016.

Steve Austin, Webb Lake, would like oversized accessory structures in place today to be grandfathered in.

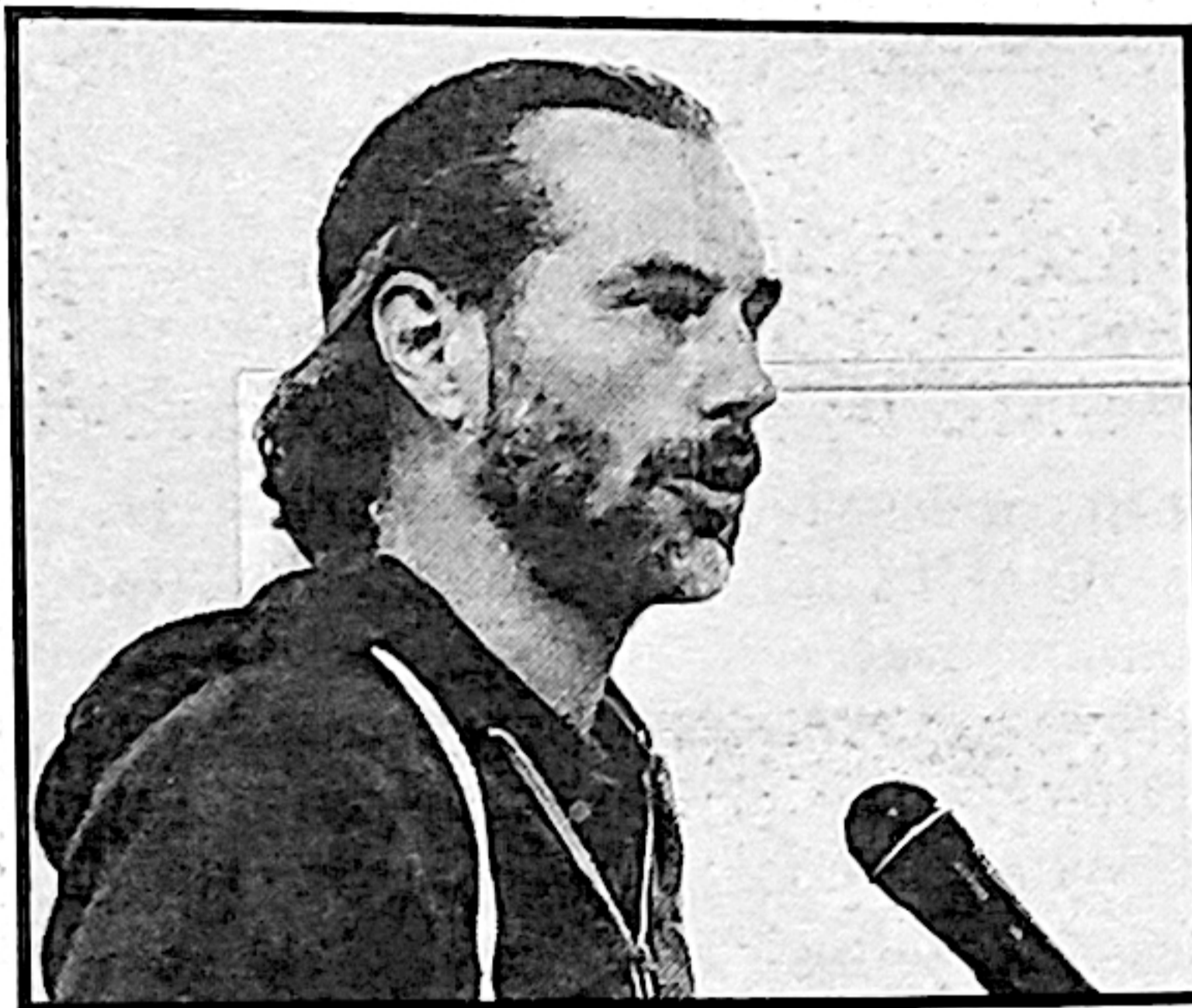
Don Hamilton, Devils Lake, encouraged the committee to deny the CUP, stating, "They agreed to CUP-19-16, now they are asking for an exception. Approving the CUP would be unwise and unfair. What you permit, you promote."

Austin asked for approval on CUP-21-26 for only the accessory structures that were built prior to CUP-19-16.

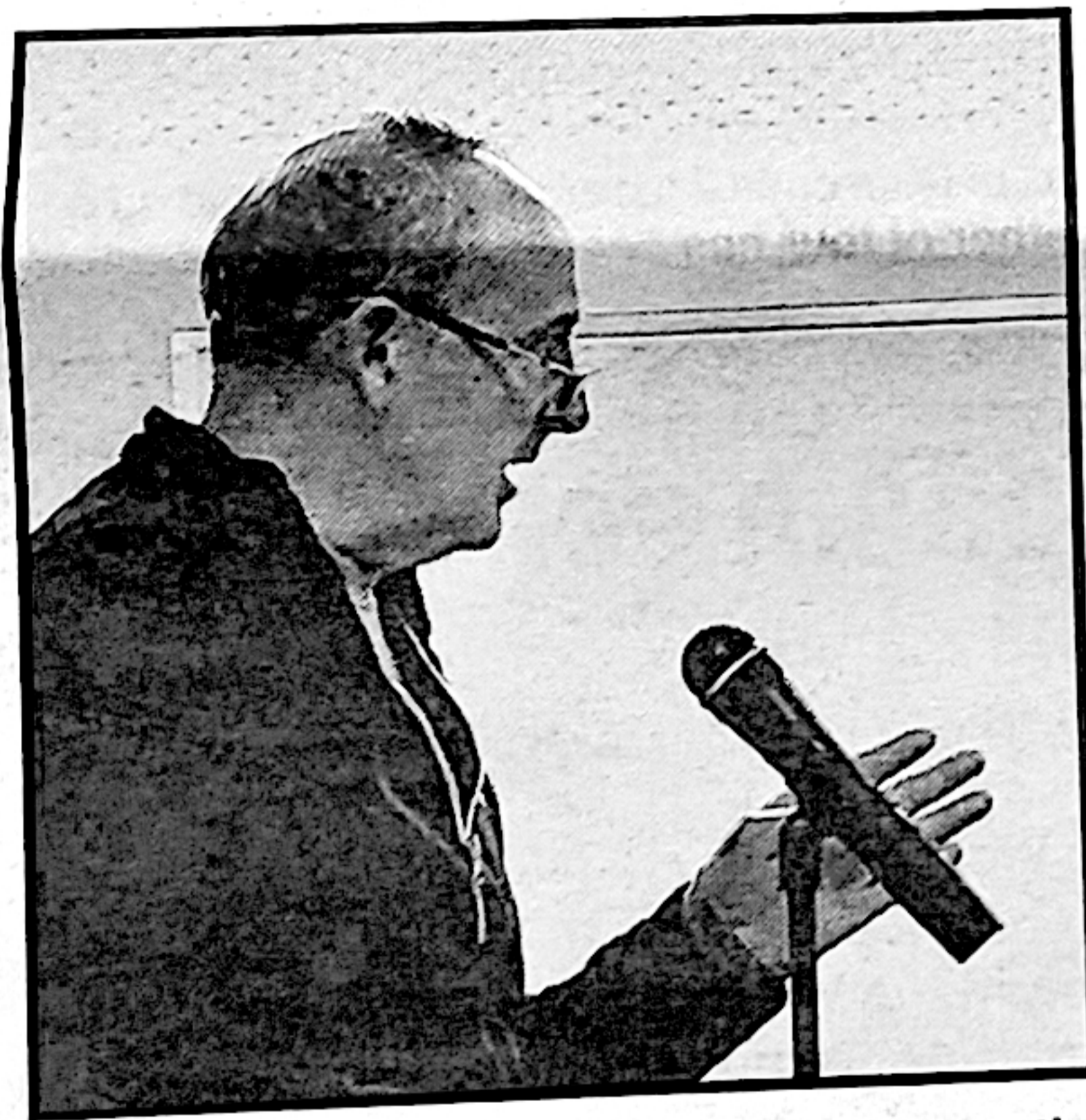
CUP-21-26 was approved with the condition that it was only approved for oversized accessory structures that were built prior to CUP-19-16, restricting the



Steve Austin, Webb Lake, responded to the board on CUP-21-26, a conditional use permit requesting that the board allow oversized accessory structures to remain.



Patrick Hanson, Siren, appeared in support of Preserve Burnett County. He thanked the committee for their service and thanked Supervisors Craig Conroy, Chuck Awe and Jim Paden for all of their work reviewing and drafting sensible changes to the outdated ordinances.



Don Hamilton, Devils Lake, encourages the board to deny CUP-21-26.

space allowed for accessory structures to 288 square feet.

**CUP-21-27** - A conditional use permit requesting that the board allow outdoor seasonal parking of recreational items from Oakridge Campground.

Austin said, "We have a CUP to build a 50-unit storage facility across the street. We would be willing to give up the CUP to allow parking for boat trailers, etc., in the summer months, no storage or wrapped boats." Supervisor Craig Conroy asked, "Is it in the campground?" Austin answered no.

Joe Cincotta, civil litigation attorney, Milwaukee, said, "Seasonal parking is how the CUP is written, they are looking to store stuff. Denial is fair to every-

body."

CUP-21-27 was denied after public comment during the public hearing for the CUP.

Text Amendment TXT-21-03: Chapter 30 and Chapter 45 Changes Related to Campground Items History - The Preserve Burnett County group has asked the board to remove conditional use permits for campgrounds from RR3 residential recreation zoning area in addition to RR1 and RR2. They were asking for a hard cap of 50 units in new or expanded campgrounds and to limit temporary camping to 14 days.

Chris and Carrie Anderson, managers of Siren Country Campers, said, "We've been in business 16 years and made 1,000 deliveries. Burnett County is in competition with other counties in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Buyers are affluent members of the community, purchasing gas and groceries, eating and drinking at local bars and restaurants. Limiting the number of days to 180 (proposed) will hurt the county."

Hamilton said, "I support camping and campgrounds, but I also support reasonable regulation. The current ordinance hasn't been updated in over 50 years. Removing the tongue from the campers, building decks and planting shrubs is living here, not camping."

Scott Brickle said, "Campgrounds have exploded due to COVID-19. Bump's campground, with annual rates, is not temporary camping. What's being developed is a high-density residential area."

## Summary

A handful of campground owners and one camper sales business spoke out in opposition of the proposed amendments in TXT-21-03.

Over 20 concerned citizens and supporters of Preserve Burnett County spoke in favor of the proposed changes to the ordinances. Several thanked the board for their service and time spent reviewing the ordinances and drafting the proposed changes.

After a brief break for lunch the board reconvened and reviewed the proposed changes. Conditional use permits for new or expansions to campgrounds were recommended to be removed from RR1, RR2 and RR3. The board is proposing a new RR-RC zone with a hard cap of 100 campsites per campground. The new RR-RC zone will need to be approved by the Burnett County Board of Supervisors and townships. Temporary camping will continue to be a maximum of 180 days.

The board took a vote approving to move Text Amendment TXT-21-03: Chapter 30 and Chapter 45 Changes Related to Campground Items to the county board of supervisors for consideration.

## Other board business

CUP-21-24 was approved, paving the way for Erickson Commercial to construct two ministorage units for inside storage.

CUP-21-25 was approved, allowing the construction of a public works maintenance facility.

The next county board of supervisors meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 21, at 9:30 a.m.