

TOWN OF SWISS

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December 8, 2020

Land Services Director Jason Towne and
Burnett County Land Use and Information Committee
7410 County Road K, 120
Siren, WI 54872

Re: Conditional Use Permit #CUP-20-47 – North Camp Properties I, LLC

Dear Director and Committee Members:

At the December 8, 2020, Swiss Town Board meeting, the board again reviewed Conditional Use Permit #CUP-20-47 – North Camp Properties I, LLC.

Our review of this application has been guided by the same standards that steer the Land Use & Information Committee decision-making process – Chapter 30, Article 8., Sec 30-633, (b) Impact and Compatibility; and, (b)(2) Basis of Approval – to consider the impact and compatibility that a new commercial district will have on the agriculture/open space areas in northern Swiss Township, as a basis to approve or deny.

We looked at the Town of Swiss Land Use Plan to determine the effects that a high-density commercial operation will have on the health, general welfare, safety, and economic prosperity of the Town of Swiss, its residents, and the neighboring lands and waters.

Impact and Compatibility (Ref: Chp 30, Art. 8, Sec 30-633, (b)) We compared the CUP application to the Burnett County and Town of Swiss Land Use Plans. The Town of Swiss has had a Comprehensive Plan since 2007 and our Plan shares many of the same land use goals and recommendations contained in the Burnett County Plan. For this CUP application, we analyzed whether the proposed commercial use is compatible with the recommendations and goals contained in our Comprehensive Plan to determine its impact on neighbors and nearby lands and waters.

Town of Swiss Comprehensive Plan – General Guidelines

The North Camp Properties I, LLC CUP application:

- Does not comply with the Plan recommendation to preserve the unique rural character of the Township (pg 8-10). This CUP application is requesting a high-density commercial use in a rural area that is mainly zoned agriculture/open space. “Density” and “intensity” are the two biggest factors involved in preserving our rural character. A development that has the potential to house 600 people on one relatively small parcel is in complete conflict with “rural” and “Northwoods character.”
- Does not comply with the Plan recommendation to minimize land use conflicts by avoiding high-density development in rural areas (pg 8-14). Most residents in Swiss Township want restrictions on the location of new, high-density commercial operations. Residents also want restrictions on the size and number of campgrounds. This development will be located next to the Wild Rivers Saddle Club; a group strongly opposed to the CUP application due to the conflict that it presents to current zoning and land usage, and its interference with the use of their property.

- Does not comply with the Plan recommendation to protect the intricate and complex hydrologic system in Swiss Township (pg 8-6). The proposed development is near 3 lakes, 2 of which have a public access. There are grave concerns about how the additional pressure from increased recreational activity on these relatively small lakes will negatively impact water quality, associated wildlife, and property owners on the lakes.

The proposed development is in direct conflict with the Burnett County Comprehensive Plan. From the September 1, 2020 Burnett County Land Use & Information Committee Meeting minutes regarding CUP 20-40: "Supervisor Conroy stated this does not meet the comprehensive plan. The ordinance does seek compatibility with surrounding uses and seeks to not harm nearby property owners." The Land Use Committee denied that CUP application.

Swiss Township Comprehensive Plan for Commercial Expansion

The North Camp Properties I, LLC CUP application:

- Does not comply with the Plan recommendation that new commercial development be near existing commercial sites located in the Village of Danbury or along the highway 35/77 corridor, near the Village (pg 8-14). These areas are zoned and designed for commercial land use. Creating a new, high-density commercial district in the middle of agricultural land in northern Swiss Township does not support the "smart growth areas" strategy of the Township.
- Does not comply with Plan recommendation to promote the creation of commercial zones rather than leapfrog development (pg 8-16). This high-density commercial development is proposing to be located outside of the commercial zones identified by the Township, in the middle of agriculture/open space land.

Swiss Township Comprehensive Plan for Farmland Preservation

The North Camp Properties I, LLC CUP application:

- Does not comply with the Plan recommendation for agriculture/open space land. (pg 8-5). A portion of the property in this CUP application is zoned A (exclusive agricultural district). A high-density campground with a bar/restaurant and event center would present a land use conflict, and remove the ability for anyone to farm the parcel zoned A.

Burnett County Comprehensive Plan for Farmland Preservation

- During the September 22, 2016 Burnett County Board of Supervisors Meeting, Chairman Taylor presented the resolution sponsored by the Land Use and Information Committee. Motion to approve Resolution 2016-28 Adopting Farmland Preservation Plan for inclusion in the Burnett County Year 2030 Comprehensive Plan was made by Supervisor Lund, seconded by Supervisor Conroy.
- This district is intended to preserve productive agricultural land for food and fiber production, preserve productive farms by preventing land use conflicts between incompatible uses and controlling public service costs, maintain a viable agricultural base to support agricultural processing and service industries, prevent conflicts between incompatible uses, reduce costs of providing services to scattered nonfarm uses, space and shape urban growth, implement the provisions of the county agricultural plan.

Basis of Approval (Ref: Chp 30, Art. 8, Sec 30-633, (b) (2): To determine if a new commercial district in an agricultural area rises to the level of "approval," we looked at its impact to the health, general welfare, safety, economic prosperity of the neighbors, and neighboring lands and waters. These are the "Basis of Approval" items required by Chapter 30.

- Health: Submitted with no environmental study to identify and/or mitigate the negative impacts this commercial use will create with septic needs, storm-water runoff, erosion, noise and light pollution, the health of the neighbors and land is a major concern. The health of Town roads will also be adversely impacted if there is a large and irreversible increase in traffic converging onto one property. A portion of this property has been a disposal site for human waste for years. This in itself should require an environmental study.
- General Welfare: Submitted with no detailed development plan, no operational plan, no security nor safety surveillance plan to enforce campground rules, the campground will likely have a negative impact on the general welfare of the adjacent neighbors, and wildlife. The campground, including a bar/restaurant and event center, will be in the middle of agricultural zoned land. Approval of this CUP will likely result in future conflicts between residents and campers.
- Safety: Submitted with no traffic management plan, no emergency response plan, and no security plan, the campground will likely have a negative impact on the safety of the neighbors and neighboring lands. The campground's main access road is a gravel township road, designed for light usage.
- Economic Prosperity: Swiss Township supports agricultural preservation in agriculture/open space zoned areas because farming is a key component of Burnett County's economy. If a commercial district is created in the middle of agricultural land, that agricultural land is lost forever, losing a valuable commodity for the Township and the County.

The rural town roads and limited budget in Swiss Township cannot afford hundreds of new "residents" who use the same resources, services, and infrastructure as our residents, but pay little or no taxes. County services - roads, refuse, recycling, fire, EMS, law enforcement, public facilities, schools, and tech colleges are funded primarily by property taxes collected from cabins and homes. The assessed value and resale opportunities of these properties has a direct impact on the Township budget. The approval of a 180-unit campground in this area will have a negative impact on nearby properties, including homes on Bass, Staples, & Tabor lakes.

The Town of Swiss Board has reviewed this CUP application, guided by the same standards utilized by the Land Use Committee. (Chapter 30, Article 8., Sec 30-633, (b) Impact and Compatibility; and, (b)(2) Basis of Approval.) After reviewing the Township and County Comprehensive Plans, the Town of Swiss Board believes that this commercial development is incompatible and will negatively impact the neighbors and neighboring lands and waters.

Our constituency in the Town of Swiss is strongly opposed to this CUP application; no one has expressed support for it at this time.

The Town of Swiss Board opposes the North Camp Properties I, LLC CUP application, along with any changes in zoning that would allow a high-density commercial operation in any Agricultural, Rural Residential, or Shoreland Residential zoned lands in our Township.

Sincerely,
 Terrance Nelson, Chair
 Gerald Pardun, Supervisor
 George Costello, Supervisor