

St. Ignace Community Not in Favor of Condominium Proposal on Downtown Waterfront

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tall motels, as an example of what St. Ignace residents don't want, or to Charlevoix and Detroit, where the waterfronts are also blocked from view.

"I really think that condos are a good idea, but not there," said veterinarian Mary Alban. "We have to protect something in this town that attracts people to come and see this town."

Nearby resident George Yshinski recalled the beachfront when it held the city garage, the old sewage disposal plant, and a railroad turn-around, now replaced by parks and playgrounds adjacent to the proposed condo site.

"I recall a lot of buildings up and down Main Street that we worked for 30 to 35 years to get removed because our biggest asset is our waterfront," said Mr. Yshinski, a St. Ignace real estate broker. "If this project is approved, what is to say if all these buildings start popping up again?"

He said he is in favor of condominiums, but not at the site proposed.

Added business owner Jack Swope, "What we have here is something just unreal, this shoreline, and you can't put a dollar value on it, you can't express it in taxes, you can't express it in profits. It is far greater than that."

Both John Lipnitz, whose True Value Hardware Store is across the street from the proposed building site, and Jon Arnold, who drives a shuttle van for Arnold Transit Company in the summer, said they frequently receive compliments from visitors about the beautiful view of the waterfront as they drive down the hill on the business loop into town.

Visitors pull over part way down the hill to begin taking photographs of the view, Mr. Lipnitz said.

"I would like to see the city buy it," he said of the property proposed for the development.

Resolutions to protect the waterfront, adopted last winter by both the Planning Commission and the City Council, plus the 20-foot height restriction along the shore,



Many people at the St. Ignace Planning Commission's public hearing Wednesday, January 24, spoke out against a proposal to build a 10-unit condominium complex at Star Line's railroad dock property (shown). Many community members say keeping the view of Straits of Mackinac is a vital part of St. Ignace's appeal. Some even suggested the city buy the available property to prevent any building from being constructed there. (Artist's rendering courtesy of Josh Dodson of The Architect Forum)

"should have sent a clear message to developers that we don't want to see 32-foot-high buildings in that area," said Wesley Maurer, the publisher of *The St. Ignace News*.

But, he added, "In fairness to the developers, I think it behooves the city to have a master plan that allows for this kind of development" in specified areas of the city, so developers know where to put such projects.

"And I don't think that it really matters to them what our restrictions are," he said, "as long as they know what the rules are coming in."

Two supporters of the condominium proposal are former St. Ignace Mayor Bruce Dodson and his wife, Carolyn, who live on Fitch Street, just across from the proposed condo site. They submitted a letter to Planning Commission stating they would like to see "a \$2.5 to \$3 million project on our city tax roll."

"We have in our possession a rendering of what our view would be with and without the condo project," Mr. Dodson wrote. "It is the

same old story, Mackinaw City gets it all, but now we don't want one piece of waterfront with this great project to be filled with new residents. Do these people realize Star Line (or anyone else) could build a warehouse to park cars, 20 feet high, on that piece?"

Resident Judy Gross, who lives on State Street across from the project, but at a lower elevation than the Dodsons, said she doesn't think the project should be built there. In a city survey, she noted, residents have already said they want to maintain the waterfront view.

As the city entertains 34-foot-tall condominiums in an area it has previously tried to keep clear, resident Joan Vallier asked commissioners, "What is it that our forefathers saw in this waterfront that we don't?"

Planning Commissioner Bob Boynton, responding to Mr. Dodson's letter, acknowledged that the city doesn't restrict develop-

ment of the waterfront and that a parking garage, so long as it is under 20 feet, would be allowed.

"As a General Business-zoned area, something else can go there," Mr. Boynton said.

But he agreed with other residents that, to prevent unwanted development, the city should try to buy the property.

Mr. Boynton then addressed Mr. Hargraves: "Please, don't give up on us," he said. "Find a way to invest here."

Mr. Hargraves' PUD request is on City Council's agenda for its meeting at City Hall at 8 p.m. Monday, February 5.

Sign Ordinance Revisions Continue

City Council will once again see revisions to the city's sign ordinance and may have to resolve a dispute between some planning commissioners and the city's Downtown Development Authority (DDA).

Commissioners agreed that memorial signs, or crosses placed beside a road in remembrance of someone who died there, are not considered signs and therefore need no regulation, as long as it does not impede a driver's vision of the road. That was one question Councilman Don Gustafson raised last month when Council reviewed the Planning Commission's revisions of the sign ordinance.

Another question Mr. Gustafson raised was whether a business should be limited to the number of commercial banners it displays, and whether there should be a time limit to display them.

DDA Director Deb Evashevski disagreed with the commission's definition of a banner as an unframed vinyl, fabric, or plastic sign. She argued that describing banners by what they are made of is "confusing and leaves too gray of an area and makes it hard to enforce," pointing out that signs can be made out of the same material a banner is.

She also wanted the commission to restrict the downtown district to displaying banners for a limited time and only for special events, from welcoming visitors to the

annual car show to advertising \$1 draft nights.

"The DDA is not trying to tie businesses' hands," she explained after the meeting. "We're trying to beautify the downtown district and keep some kind of control" with signs and banners.

After a few minutes of verbal sparring between Commission Chairman Art Underwood and DDA Director Deb Evashevski, commissioners voted to move the definition of commercial banners in the ordinance from temporary signs to permanent signs and to leave the rest of the revisions as they are. It was passed by a vote of 5-2. Commissioners Mike Lilliquist and Renee Vonderwerth voted against it, both saying that Planning Commission could honor DDA's request with little or no effort.

Showing little patience with having to revisit the issue, Mr. Underwood said, "I'm not going to continue to debate this because it will go on and on and on."

Mrs. Evashevski told *The St. Ignace News* she plans to submit a written request to Council to add her proposed changes to sign and banner displays in the downtown district.



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Friday, Feb. 2nd

7 a.m. at Shell Station on US-2 in St. Ignace

If anyone would like to donate any bake sale goods drop them off on Thursday, Feb 1. Monetary donations will be greatly appreciated and can be made at the U.P. State Credit Union, in care of Gary Ballard Jr.

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Community Calendar

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School Library. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

•Tuesdays and Thursdays: **Red Cross Swimming Lessons**, 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. Register by calling (906) 478-7605.

Strong's

•Mondays: **Non-smoking Bingo Games** at Strong's Town Hall on M-28, 6:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.

Sault Ste. Marie

•Monday, February 12: **State Representative Gary McDowell's Office Hour**, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m., Chippewa County Courthouse Annex Meeting Room, Third Floor, 300 Court Street.

•Wednesdays: **Pre-School Story Time**, 10 a.m., for children ages three to five, Bayliss Public Library.

•Thursdays: **Pre-School Story Time**, 1 p.m., for children ages three to five, Bayliss Public Library.

Mackinaw City

•Wednesday, February 14: **Annual Book and Bake Sale**, 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Mackinaw Area Public Library. Prices are 10¢ per softcover book, and 25¢ per hardcover book.

•Friday, February 16: **Project Close Up Sloppy Joe Supper**, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., Mackinaw City

School multipurpose room. Tickets cost \$3 per person. Proceeds benefit the Project Close Up Washington, D.C. field trip.

•Saturday, March 3, and Sunday, March 4: **Mackinaw Mush Sled Dog Race** has been rescheduled to these dates. Call (231) 436-7334 for more information.

Cheboygan

•Sunday, February 18: **12th Annual Travel Adventure Film Series: Rails Across Russia, St. Petersburg to the Pacific**, 2 p.m. Cheboygan Opera House.

To submit your group's information for consideration in this space, fax information including complete date, time, and location to (906) 643-9122 or call *The St. Ignace News* at (906) 643-9150. Please submit information at least two weeks prior to scheduled event.

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MON., FEB. 5	1/2 Baked Chicken, mashed potatoes and vegetable	\$5 ⁹⁵
TUES., FEB. 6	1 lb. Ham Steak, mashed potatoes and vegetable	\$6 ⁹⁵
WED., FEB. 7	Goulash, garlic toast and vegetable	\$5 ⁹⁵

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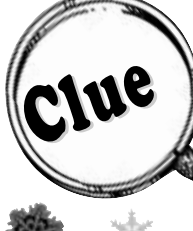


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Les Cheneaux Snowsfest CLUE HUNT



Clue 2: Dances once took place above this space, where one now finds scented soaps and Christmas hopes.

A New Clue will appear Each Week until prize is found!

Clues lead to one Les Cheneaux Chamber of Commerce member that is hiding a prize. Search business for an envelope containing the prize.

Les Cheneaux Snowsfest

Friday - Sunday,
February 16-18

CEDARVILLE