

Pelican Lake area RV park reviewed by Scambler

By Louis Hoglund

A golf course to RV park conversion proposal in the Pelican Lake area, which was shelved two years ago, has been revived. The plan is scheduled for a public hearing Feb. 25, 7 p.m. at the Scambler Township Hall.

Up for discussion is a resurrected plan for a 150-unit RV Park at the Rolling Hills Golf Course site, on the west side of Pelican Lake.

The 42 acre site has been the home to the family owned and operated Rolling Hills Golf Course since 1966, according to owner Cyril

Flem—who is the applicant.

The Feb. 25 hearing will be at Scambler Town Hall, just west of the intersection of County Road 9 and Highway 34.

The proposal is essentially the same as a 2013 plan, which drew stiff opposition from the Pelican Lakes Property Owners Association.

Two years ago, the developer was Scott Olson, who owns the RV Park that neighbors Rolling Hills Golf, to the north.

PELICAN LAKE RV PARK
Continued on Page 5

ROLLING HILLS RV PARK PLAN REVIVED

Continued from page 1

Under threat of costly, drawn-out legal tussle—Olson scrapped the plan, basically hours before a hearing at Scambler town hall. “We decided it wasn’t worth the big fight...We decided to get out before we spent a ton of money trying to defend something,” said Olson, who invested at least \$15,000 in design, specifications and environmental work.

In opposition to the project, based largely on groundwater, drainage, stormwater control, wastewater treatment and other environmental issues—was the Pelican Lakes Property Owners Association. The lake organization spent more than \$5,000 building its case against the RV park development. Vogel Law Firm and attorney Tami Norgard submitted a detailed document that challenged point-by-point the Environmental Assessment Worksheet that was prepared at the Scambler Town Board’s instruction.

The current proposal is being submitted solely by Rolling Hills owner Cyril Flem; who has hired an attorney in

what could become a one-man stand-off against the well-organized Pelican property owners group.

Labeled at the time as “bullies” by some who supported the RV park, the Pelican lake association stood firm in its contention that the Rolling Hills planned 150 RV capacity—combined with the existing Pelican Hills park of 185 units—represented environmental threats to Pelican and nearby Tamarac Lake.

The same arguments are likely to surface this time around.

As for Scambler Township, the property is zoned commercial—and an RV park is one of the allowable uses of the land.

“We’re handling this exactly by the book...We’re following it to a T,” said Scambler Town Board member Mike Johnson.

Township board members, fully aware of the controversy surrounding the project two years ago, intend to be fair and unbiased in handling the process, said Johnson. But ultimately,

a decision will need to be made whether or not to approve the conditional use permit for the RV Park.

“We would like to see the entire public comment on this matter—business owners, property owners—not just lakeshore owners,” said Johnson. “That’s what this public hearing process is for.” As for Cyril Flem, his family has had roots in the Pelican Lake area dating to 1947. In his mid-70s, Flem has been trying to retire from the demands of operating a “ma and pa” golf course—but there has been little interest from buyers in acquiring a small nine-hole course. Industry-wide, golf has been relatively flat in terms of revenues and rounds-played. A modest nine hole course like Rolling Hills also has a difficult time competing for players—against resort courses like Fair Hills or further east, the Detroit Lakes Country Club.

Flem described Rolling Hills as a golf course for “average working people.”

Comment period with Scambler Township on Pelican Lake area RV plan underway

In addition to the Feb. 25 Scambler Town Hall public hearing on the Rolling Hills Golf Course RV park proposal, the process calls for a comment period.

Letters can be emailed to scamblerwp@loretel.net.

Statements about the project can also be mailed to:

Scambler Township
Clerk Lou Ann Zurn
18799 St Hwy 34
Pelican Rapids,
MN 56572