

Township sued over waterfront project

Lawsuit claims officials
violated ordinance by
approving development

Annie Doyle

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Neighbors of a potential waterfront development in Hayes Township have filed a second lawsuit in Charlevoix County's circuit court in a continued attempt to order township officials to hear an appeal on the project.

The lawsuit has been filed against Zoning Administrator and Township Supervisor Ron Van Zee, Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals Tom Darn-ton, and Township Clerk and Recording Secretary of the Zoning Board of Appeals Kristin Baranski.

Plaintiffs LuAnne Kozma and Irene Fowle are seeking a preliminary injunction requiring the defendants and the zoning board of appeals to "perform their clear legal duty" and schedule a public zoning board of appeals meeting to consider and decide their appeal of certain project approvals and permits, and their requests for interpretation of the township zoning ordinance.

This is the latest in a series of efforts that have been made to stop Scott and Debra Law at 10034 Anglers Cove from continuing with the development that was given conditional approval from the township in 2019.

The project proposes to build a two-story boathouse, excavate for a 120x90 foot boat basin and a 30x55 foot boat channel leading from Lake Charlevoix to the boat basin. As well as the dredging out of a 73-foot-wide channel 130 feet out into the lakebed of Lake Charlevoix to accommodate large boats.

According to Kozma, "The channel would rip out a 30 foot wide by 50 foot deep section of the land closest to the shoreline, called the Shoreland Protection Strip, which is written into the Hayes Township zoning ordinance as land that must be maintained in a vegetated state in order to protect Lake Charlevoix's water quality." The purpose of the required strip of land, according to the zoning ordinance, is to prevent soil erosion, provide a filter for the removal of pesticides, fertilizers

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The purpose of the required strip of land, according to the zoning ordinance, is to prevent soil erosion, provide a filter for the removal of pesticides, fertilizers and other potential water pollutants, and to maintain a visual barrier.

"Hayes Township's zoning ordinance protects Lake Charlevoix's shoreland strip. Yet, Hayes Township officials violated the ordinance by approving a proposed boathouse-basin-channel project by waterfront property owners Scott and Debra Law on Anglers Cove," Kozma said.

This is the second lawsuit the residents have filed in Charlevoix County Circuit Court to compel Hayes Township officials to schedule and hold a zoning board of appeals hearing.

The first was dismissed once zoning administrator VanZee turned over the appeal documents to the zoning board of appeals.



Hayes Township has refused to consider an appeal and interpretation request submitted by residents LuAnne Kozma, Irene Fowle and Ellis Boal, challenging the township's decisions authorizing an inland boathouse and a channel and boat basin to be excavated out of the Lake Charlevoix shoreland at 10034 Anglers Cove. ANNIE DOYLE/CHARLEVOIX COURIER

The current lawsuit has been filed now asking the zoning board to formally review their appeal. However, according to Van Zee, it is being reviewed by the township attorney instead who has recommended the application not be accepted for review by the board be-

cause it was filed more than 30 days after the project's conditional permit was issued.

Local and statewide water protection organizations have also been involved, including Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, asking township officials to re-

consider the project and limit the impact it will have on the Lake Charlevoix shoreline.

To date, the project has received approval from EGLE and the application is under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.