

Lewiston Town Board approves rezoning PUD for Northridge Drive

Residents voice concerns over density, comprehensive plan issues

√ Town OKs funding for drainage study/maintenance plan
BY TERRY DUFFY
 Editor-in-Chief

As part of its final audit/regular meeting session of 2021 last week, the Lewiston Town Board opened with a public hearing en route to moving on a conceptual plan for an existing planned unit development. The action included a rezoning of the land area from R-1 (single family residential) to PUD status on Northridge Drive and Ridge Road, and now allows for an additional 10 units to the Northridge Drive apartments complex.

The site is owned and managed by LMK Realty Associates LLC. A plan calls for incorporating the 10 units to the existing PUD covering 4.8 acres, according to LMK representative Nick Massaro.

"I think that most people are familiar with our plan regarding this property at this time," he said, noting the project has been in progress with the town over the past eight to nine months.

"Essentially, we have large, irregular-shaped lots that are more practical to incorporate into the existing plan in the development. ... We need to incorporate it because its planned use was not classified as a planned unit development. So, what we're calling for is 10 units, drastically scaled down from the original concept plan of 30, then 26 (units). We believe that the site development is very well laid out. It's been a nice compromise."

Massaro said green space requirements are comfortably adhered to and the plan would be a nice complement to the existing property.

"I might add that there's a significant market demand for this property. This particular property meets a pretty ready demand, especially in this area," he said.

Ridge Road resident Nellie Gibbs voiced concerns over safety and density in the area.

"There's limited visibility coming off of Ridge Road onto Northridge Drive," she said. "One of the areas is that it's going to increase traffic; and then you are being closer to Ridge Road. So, there might be the possibility of creating a hazardous traffic situation there."

Gibbs also had issues with density as it relates to the town's comprehensive plan, telling the board it provides for four units per acre on the property and that up to 300 units have already been built in adjacent areas.

"That's a 650% increase, and there will be still more construction that's going on with patio homes. I think this area is overbuilt already," she said.

Raising the issue of conformity, she said Northridge Drive should remain R-1, consistent with the properties on Ridge Road. Gibbs said the change will disrupt the rural character of the community as outlined in the town's compre-

hensive plan and that this project is not compatible with the existing fabric.

A second Ridge Road resident who offered written comments also came out in opposition. Among the issues were questions over the number of available rental units in the town and village, the project's location off Ridge Road, and current projects underway on Center Street.

"Is there really a need for more in this proximity? Is there a financial benefit to the Town of Lewiston with this rezoning? If so what is that number?" the resident asked.

They went to further question the impacts of fire protection, sewer and road maintenance from the increased density. "The Town of Lewiston's own rules state that a PUD is 10 acres. Why are we cramming two additional multiple units into an area less than two acres?"

"Why is the town willing to do it? Is there not a need for additional single-family homes? By changing the rezoning, is the Town of Lewiston leaving itself exposed to further development at the top of Ridge Road?"

Later in the session, the board, on procedural votes, went on to approve a negative declaration and the conceptual plan/PUD for the LMK project. Town Councilman John Jacoby said Massaro interests "have done everything to address the zoning and PUD requirements in the eyes of the town. It has nothing to do with the two lots on Ridge Road (that are separate from the project)."

In other news from the session:

•The board approved an expenditure of \$110,700 to develop a comprehensive drainage study and maintenance capital plan to address drainage and infrastructure needs in the town over the next 10 years. To be handled by Town Engineer Robert Lannon of GHD Consulting Services Inc., the project is expected to address the issue of primary and secondary drainage in the town, and who would be ultimately responsible for its cost.

Supervisor Steve Broderick came out in support of the plan, as did Highway Superintendent Dave Trane, who said the study corresponds perfectly with the town's water/sewer updates.

"It should have been done 10 years ago. Porter already has one," Trane said.

The project is expected to take up to five months to develop and does not include the Village of Lewiston. The town plans to cover its cost via its B fund account.

•The Lewiston Family Ice Rink ended its holiday run on Jan. 2, concluding what Councilman Bill Geiben termed, "a very successful season."

On a related matter, the town approved to publicly advertise for a recreation director opening following Mike Dashineau's departure last month.

Sutherland remembered

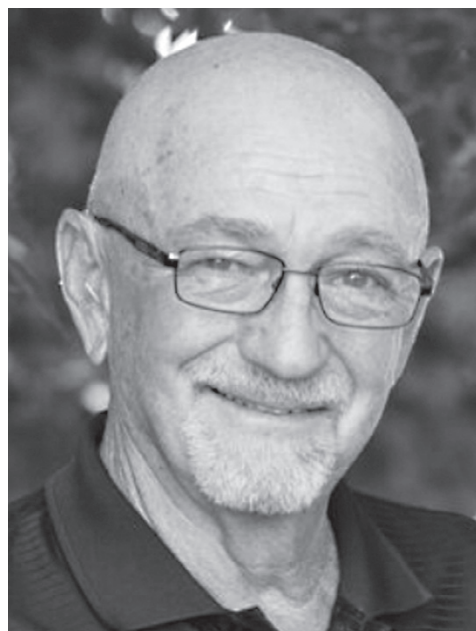
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The news of his passing hit the community hard.

Lee Simonson, one of his volunteer colleagues and good friend throughout the years, said, "One of Lewiston's pillars just collapsed and will never be replaced. Not only was this a shock to his family and community, but the impact of losing Bruce will be felt for years to come. His volunteerism and contributions to Lewiston were legendary. His devotion to his career in protecting our freedoms and way of life were praised and commended by our nation. But beyond that, and on a more personal level, his legions of friends will miss his humor, optimism, inspiration and the fascinating conversations about his wide-ranging adventures and experiences. He touched our lives and made us all better. And for that, our appreciation and gratitude for having Bruce in our lives will be forever remembered."

Longtime friend Ken Slauchoupt volunteered with Sutherland on Historical Association of Lewiston initiatives. He said, "I have known Bruce since high school. After his Air Force career, he and Jackie moved home and since then we have grown close. At least twice a week we would get together, often more. He was deeply invested in living life fully. He loved being on his front porch greeting everyone who passed by. There is a small cadre of Lancers from 1964 who keep in close touch and they are deeply touched at his passing. Life in Lewiston will never quite be the same."

Vince Canosa, who served alongside Sutherland in VFW Downriver Post 7487, said, "Bruce, as many know, was an officer in the USAF. He was also an active member of VFW Downriver Post 7487. Bruce was one of the individuals re-



Bruce Sutherland

sponsible for the establishment of VFW Post 7487 scholarship fund. He had chaired the committee for the past three years and was responsible along with committee members for selecting the winner. Bruce, along with Bill Justyk, was responsible for raising the scholarship amount and seeking to include Niagara Wheatfield in the scholarship program."

Sandy Blackwell Yates partnered with Sutherland to win the recent HAL fundraiser "Lewiston Jeopardy!" At a party earlier this month - which he attended - she said, "Bruce always puts a smile on my face when I see him! Mostly that is because he always has this incredible smile on his face. I was lucky enough to have him on my 'Jeopardy!' team this year with his long, golden, flaxen locks, and his incredible brain power. He helped us to our victory! Once I told Bruce ... that Bruce Sutherland is just the most pleasant man. I really don't know how you do it. You truly make people want to say 'Hello' to you and chat with

you. You have this incredible way about you and I hope you realize this!"

Sutherland was a supporter of Wounded Warriors and the Lewiston No. 1 Fire Co., and was active at the Messiah Lutheran Church in Lewiston.

He was a passionate golfer and participated in many tournaments. Sutherland achieved the rare distinction of shooting his age, along with completing several holes-in-one. He played at the Niagara Frontier Golf Club regularly and had served on its board of directors.

Bruce is survived by his wife, Jackie, and three children: Morgan (Noah Brown) of Hampton Bays, Long Island; Ty (Mariah) of Placitas, New Mexico; and Blake from Amarillo, Texas. Additional survivors include four grandchildren: Isaac, Lucas and Eden Brown, and Ione Sutherland. He is also survived by his brother, Dennis (Sharon) Sutherland, of Lewiston; his sister, Wendy Treharne, of Niagara Falls; his brother-in-law, Chuck R. Foss; his aunt, Mildred Coulter; along with several nieces, nephews and cousins. He was predeceased by his parents and a brother-in-law, Jeffrey Foss.

There was no prior visitation. At Bruce's request, his remains were cremated. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be directed toward any of the organizations he volunteered for or supported.

The public attended a memorial service Tuesday at Messiah Lutheran Church.

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