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LARRY BUEB
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To: La Pointe Town Planning Commission
From: Burke Henry
Subject: Recommendations
Date: Oct. 1, 2008

Madams and Sirs:

Attached is my letter to the Town Board, dated Sept. 30, 2008. I had hoped that I would be allowed to read this into the minutes of last night's meeting held jointly by the Town Board and the Town Planning Commission. That opportunity was not offered but I understand that at the TPC meeting tonight there will be public comment permitted.

I cannot attend tonight's TPC meeting. I request that my letter be read into the minutes and made part of the record.

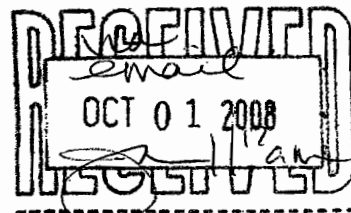
I am also enclosing a chart that I have prepared on the history of La Pointe population growth for the last thirty-eight years. I believe that you will be interested in this information because it is applicable to the issue at hand concerning forecasts in the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Thank you.

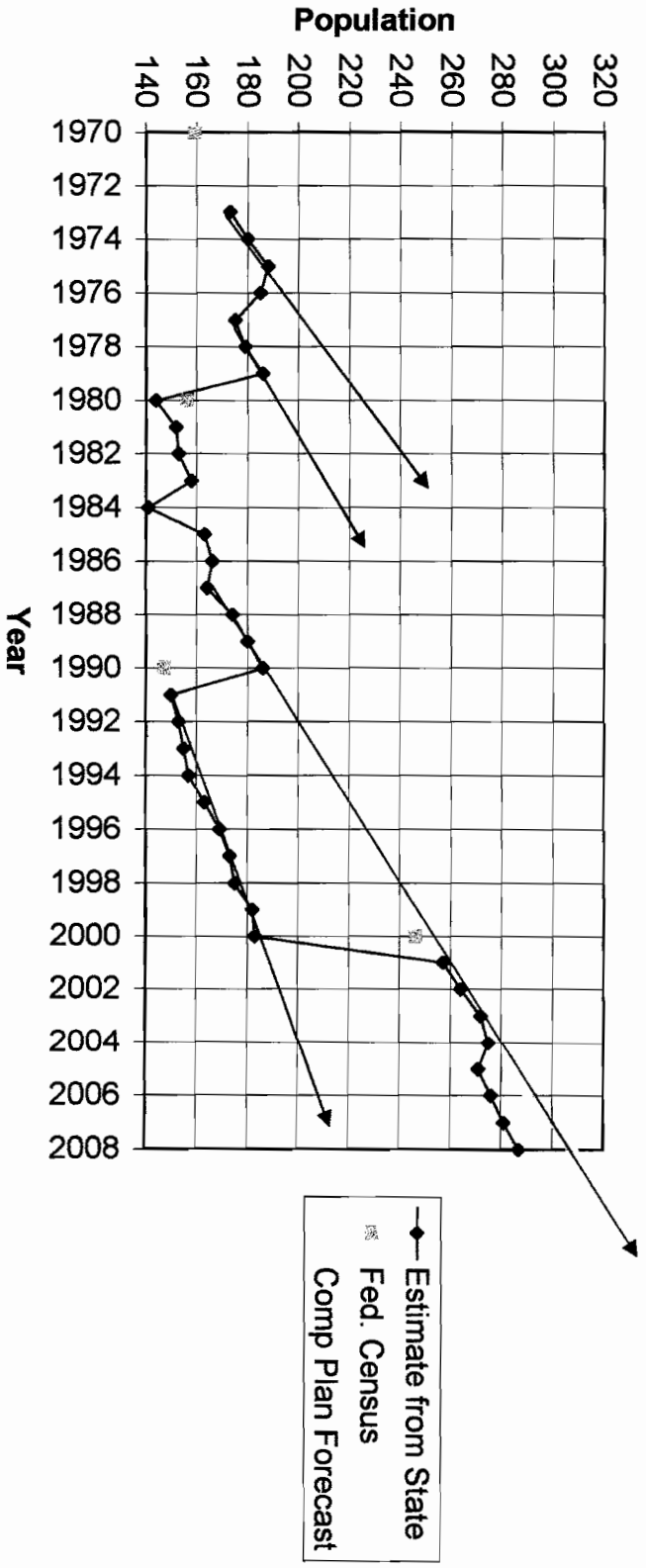
Burke Henry

Attachments:

- 1) Letter to Town Board
- 2) La Pointe Population History



La Pointe Population (VBH-10/1/08)



To: La Pointe Town Board
From: Burke Henry
Subject: Recommendations
Date: September 30, 2008

Madam and Sirs:

The Town Planning Commission (TPC) has recently prepared draft changes to the current zoning ordinance with the intention of making the ordinance consistent with the Town of La Pointe Comprehensive Plan. These changes were presented to the community in a recent public hearing. One of the proposed changes would permit the population density in all zoning districts to be increased to make room for the population growth forecasts that are in the Comprehensive Plan. The control mechanism that the TPC recommends for managing the forecasted increase in density is the Conditional Use Permit process, which is a very burdensome and expensive process. It is a process that has been very divisive to the community. I believe that the need for this can and should be eliminated if we revise the Comprehensive Plan.

Page 4-5 of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following statement:

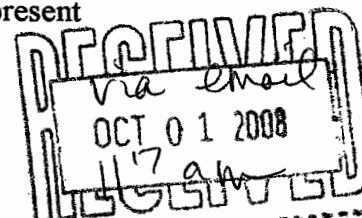
“It should be noted that these data” (meaning population and housing) “are intended for planning purposes only. It is important to keep tabs on actual development levels and update these forecasts based on more current information and to account for actual development activity and shifts in the housing market.”

I have researched the actual population and housing unit growth data for the last four years and it is less than forecast. In 2008, the population growth was 93.2% of the forecast and the number of new households was only 46.2% of forecast. I believe that today's market turmoil will continue to keep our actual growth well below the forecasted growth.

Page 4-5 also includes Table 4-6, titled “Land Area Requirements by Housing Type: 2006 to 2025.” I believe that this table is flawed since it makes no accounting of the fact that the amount of residential acreage on Madeline Island is finite and cannot be increased. The amount of residential property on Madeline Island is approximately 5600 acres, about 39% of the total Island acreage of 14,434 acres. Unless we depart from the “Island Way” which is highly valued in the Comprehensive Plan Vision Statement on page 2-2, by permitting residential land use density to increase, we cannot sustain a 3% residential growth rate as forecasted in the plan. I believe that we must not depart from the “Island Way.”

I therefore recommend that a small group, with the help of the entire community, prepare a draft revision 1 to the Comprehensive Plan. Revision 1 must address the fact that there is only a finite amount of residential property on Madeline Island and that if present

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"Island Way" land use densities are to be maintained in the future, then Madeline Island population must be capped at a number that we do not yet know, but must soon calculate. I am confident that the new numbers will be well less than the numbers that are presently in Table 4-3 of the Comprehensive Plan. This action should eliminate the requirement to modify the Zoning Ordinance to allow greater densities in all zones.

I agree that the Zoning Ordinance should be modified to permit home-based occupations. I also believe that the present commercial zone be increased in size in some fashion. I believe that our present commercial zone is underdeveloped either because the present property owners are unable or are unwilling to permit further development. I also believe that the present R3 zone behind the Town Hall needs to be further developed with affordable housing, hopefully attracting full time residents. The Town Board needs to study these issues, perhaps with the help of an Ad Hoc group, and prepare a plan for their remedy.

I thank all the people who have contributed their precious time to help accomplish the necessary work of this Community. They are hardly ever thanked but are often criticized. They are the people who are willing to stick their heads out of the foxhole knowing that they might get them shot off. They are our heroes.

Thank you for your consideration,

Burke Henry

