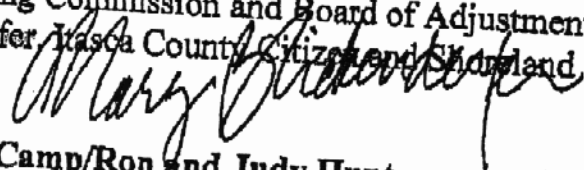


TO: Itasca County Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment
FROM: Mary Blickenderfer, Itasca County Citizen and Shoreland Specialist
DATE: April 10, 2001



RE: Living Word Bible Camp/Ron and Judy Hunt request for rezoning, conditional use permit, and planned unit development (PUD) on Deer Lake, Itasca County

As a resident of Itasca County, I strongly encourage you **maintain the current residential zoning status** of the property owned by Ron and Judy Hunt and **deny the request for conditional use and commercial PUD** on this same property.

The proposed rezoning of the property to Commercial Recreational and Special Protection Overlaying Districts and the Conditional Use Permit and Preliminary PUD are **clearly not consistent** with Article VII, Section 7.41 A (consistency with the comprehensive land use plan), B (shall not be spot zoning), D (clear public need for and benefit from the proposed zoning), E (public interest would be served by rezoning the property in question rather than other property in question), Section 8.32 A (conformity to comprehensive plan), B (compatibility with existing neighborhood), and D (consistency with a desirable pattern for development) of the Itasca County Zoning Ordinance.

First, a resort-like facility that will house 289+ people in it's preliminary request for PUD permit is of much greater density than indicated in the land use plan. It is inconsistent and incompatible with the existing neighborhood that consists of single family dwellings, few small (tax-paying) resorts, conservation easement on existing property, and close proximity to two state scientific natural areas (one on the east shore of Deer Lake). A change from its current residential status to Commercial Recreational status would be **spot zoning!**

Second, **long-term public interest would not be served by the proposal.** The very few one-time employment opportunities for local citizens while in the building phase would in no way compensate for the damage to the lake environment and subsequent additional costs to the county and other lakeshore residents if the PUD is allowed. The estimated 289+ users would cause severe, negative impacts to the unique and valuable muskie spawning area that exists along the shore of the property. Destruction of shoreland habitat that is inevitable with high-density human use would threaten other lake residents, including loons, bald eagles, waterfowl, and migratory song birds.

Lastly, if the above requests for rezoning and conditional use permit for preliminary PUD are granted, subsequent registration as a non-profit organization exempt from property tax and addition of units to the PUD (total allowable units are TEN TIMES the number of proposed units, with potential occupancy of nearly 3,000!) are little more than paperwork. These actions would not only further damage the lake environment, but would also increase the property taxes of every existing property owner in the county (definitely in the interest ONLY of the Bible Camp and NOT the public!).

C. PCB
+ Hunt