

# *Becker County* **COLA**

June 1, 2015

Eric Evenson  
Planning and Zoning Administrator

Dear Sir:

I reviewed with interest the Crow Wing Watershed draft Performance Review Report which emphasized the importance of a collaborative relationship between the Soil & Water Conservation district and the County Planning & Zoning department. It implies that Regulations are the instrument that assures implementation of the Natural Resource Preservation Plan.

It brings to mind that about 12 years ago, the Becker County Commission approved a Comprehensive Plan containing a Natural Resources Section which set goals and policy that are compatible with the interests expressed in the statutory requirement for SWCD Local Water Management Plans. At that time, Becker County initiated an update of the Zoning Ordinance to bring the regulations in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan and that project was completed with re-codification of the ordinance in 2007. The updated Becker County Zoning Ordinance was adopted to accomplish the vision of the Comprehensive Plan.

Following is a portion of correspondence delivered to the County Commission in mid-April:

The Zoning Review Committee was formed to align the Ordinance with the Comprehensive Plan shoreland development goals and policy and also to affirm the Purposes for Ordinance stated in Chapter 1, Section 1:

- \*To preserve and enhance the quality of surface waters.
- \*To conserve the economic and natural environmental values of shorelands.
- \*To discourage inferior development that might adversely affect property values
- \*To correlate land subdivision with the County Comprehensive Plan

Unfortunately, recent Ordinance Review Committee agenda has largely been focused on revision or repeal of ordinance provisions that are in place and directly related to protection of the public waters during the course of shoreland development. We agree that ordinance amendment is occasionally necessary to accommodate usability that will have little or no impact on the public waters; however that is not the primary agenda currently being presented to the Ordinance Review Committee.

The Coalition of Lake Associations respectfully requests the County Commission review and define a mission for the Ordinance Review Committee that is compatible with our interest in preservation of the Counties natural resources.

We did not receive a response and are unaware of any action to address/resolve our concern about the function of the Ordinance Review Committee.

In the meantime, it was proposed to include Natural Environment lake lot criteria on the agenda with the stated motive to reduce Lot/block development dimensions; again ignoring that the existing provisions are in accord with the Counties Comprehensive Plan goals and policy.

It is my observation that the committee meetings have evolved into one of hearing and relying on statements of opinion in the decision making process and therefore, the purpose of this message is to request your assistance. When the committee meets on June 11<sup>th</sup>, please move the deliberation to points of fact by addressing the two documents that were previously distributed to the committee members; "Retrospective Report on Natural Environment lake development in Becker County", dated April 2, 2015 and the more recently distributed illustration "Natural Environment Lakes – Lot size criteria review", dated May 12, 2015.

Thank you. If you have any questions, please call me at 701-261-6163.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Postovit".

John Postovit

COLA - Environmental Concerns Representative.

CC: COLA Executive Commiittee