

Town Board alters ag zoning limit

By MARK JAEGER

Ozaukee Press staff

The Saukville Town Board adopted revisions to its agricultural zoning ordinance last week designed to work in tandem with the state's new Working Lands Initiative.

The ordinance allows lots as small as five acres within four agricultural zoning districts: A-1, general agriculture, from 20-acre minimum; A-2, exclusive agriculture, from 35 acres; A-3, agricultural transition, from 35 acres; and A-4, rural countryside, from 10 acres.

Town Chairman Barb Jobs said the ordinance should clear the log jam on a num-

■ Chairman says eliminating 35-acre mandates puts community in sync with Working Lands Initiative

ber of properties where the owners were confounded by 35-acre lot minimums.

"With that 35-acre requirement in place, the town wasn't looking at slow growth, it was no growth. The town has essentially had no growth for five years," Jobs said.

"Now that this ordinance is in place, I know we are going to hear from four or five people who have had to wait for years to have a land division considered."

Jobs said there have been several cases

in the town where a property has been held in an estate with the heirs unable to sell an unwanted home because 35 acres had to be included.

She said the current thought is that requiring 35-acre lots actually hurts agriculture, because people are building single-family homes in the middle of large lots — cutting the land off from farming.

"There is no guarantee we are going to approve those land divisions now, but at

least this ordinance gives them the option of pursuing it," she said.

A public hearing on the ordinance drew a room full of residents to the board meeting, but no opposition was voiced.

Still, Supr. Curt Rutkowski voted against the ordinance, saying there were still too many inconsistencies in the wording.

The Plan Commission unanimously recommended adoption of the ordinance revisions at its December meeting.

Permit fee would cover inspections

By MARK JAEGER

Ozaukee Press staff

At this time of year there are more snowflakes than skyrockets filling the air, but Village of Saukville officials have been spending much of the winter preparing an ordinance regulating fireworks stands.

The issue came to high-level prominence last summer, when two tents were erected on either side of Highway 33 for the sale of fireworks in advance of the Fourth of July.

Both stands were operated by TNT Fireworks.

The company had to pay \$200 to cover the cost of a conditional-use hearing for the stands. Each vendor working at the stands also needs to secure a \$20 transient merchant permit, and a \$25 background check.

There is also a monthly base fee of \$30 for the first person working at the stands, and a \$5 charge for each additional employee.

Despite those fees, officials with the fire department protested that none of that income covered their costs in making sure that both facilities followed the stringent safety requirements in place for fireworks sales.

When the issue was brought to the Public Safety Committee in September, Fire Chief Gilly Schultz said the village should adopt an inspection fee or prohibit temporary fireworks sales altogether.

The committee decided a better approach would be to calculate an inspection fee based on the expenses the fire department incurs by monitoring the operations of the stands.

Assuming a department inspector spends four hours on site, the committee estimated it costs the village \$169.92 in wages and vehicle expenses to conduct a thorough site inspection.

Using that as a base, the committee has recommended that an inspection fee of \$175 be established for fireworks stands.

Trustee Mike Krocka, chairman of the committee, said he was told rounding the fee up to \$175 was legally justifiable.

Before the calculation was prepared, Schultz said a \$200 inspection charge seemed appropriate.

The vote against the fee was cast by Trustee Dan Sauer, who said stands seem to be paying their fair share of expenses to do business in the community.

In was Sauer who asked that a cost analysis be prepared when the inspection charge was first introduced in September.

"It comes down to a matter of principle. If we are truly trying to be pro-business and want to bring business into the village, why should we impose what looks to be a discriminatory charge?" he said after the committee vote recommending the inspection fee.

The fee faces several more obstacles before becoming law. The Plan Commission must approve the charge as part of its conditional-use approval process and the Village Board needs to adopt an ordinance change and a resolution setting the fee. Both of the board actions are subject to public hearings.



READY FOR THE 9th Annual Rabbits Unlimited Rabbit Hunt on Saturday, Feb. 5, were Bell family members Hank, Don, Greg, Jerry, Glen and Hannah. The hunt and post-hunt party at the Railroad Station in Saukville is expected to raise more than \$22,000 for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Photo by Sam Arendt

Hunting event takes aim at MS

■ Town family has been hosting fund-raising rabbit hunt for 9 years

By CAROL POMEDAY

Ozaukee Press staff

It's probably the most unique fundraiser for the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, but it certainly is successful.

In the past eight years, the Bell family of the Town of Saukville has raised more than \$200,000 for the MS Society at its annual Rabbits Unlimited Rabbit Hunt. They received the prestigious Mission Driver Award from the National MS Society for their efforts.

The ninth annual hunt will be held Saturday, Feb. 5. A post-hunt party will be at the Railroad Station in Saukville, where there will be music, games, food, raffles and silent and live auctions.

Three-person teams hunt for rabbits in the morning, then register their rabbits at the Railroad Station between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

For each rabbit registered, the team receives one lottery ticket. The daily limit is three rabbits per hunter, so a successful team can get nine lottery tickets. The winning teams will be chosen in a drawing. Half of the registration fees will go to the MS Society and the other half to the winning teams.

The registration fee, which includes food and beer, is \$60 for a returning team or \$225 for a new team.

The entry fee will be waived if the team sells at least 100 tickets for a raffle with a \$1,000 top prize. Tickets are \$5 each, three for \$10 or seven for \$25.

"That gives them incentive to sell tickets," said Greg Bell, who coordinates the hunt with his wife Dina, father Jerry and uncles Glen and Don Bell.

The Bell family has been featured in Ozaukee Press for its deer-hunting prowess and love of the sport.

But hunting bunnies, even though they are plentiful and decimate gardens and plants, may seem a bit unsporting to some.

"Trust me, it isn't easy," Greg said. "They (hunters) can't use a shotgun with buckshot, which makes it a little more interesting. They can only use a .22 caliber rifle, pellet gun or bow."

Hunters who are 69 years or older can use a shotgun. Children can participate with BB guns. Greg and Dina's children, Hank, 10, and Hannah, 12, plan to try their luck.

The rabbit meat will be given to a charitable organization, Dina said.

The hunt originated on Greg and Dina's Town of Saukville property, which has a large wooded area that provides plenty of shelter for bunnies.

One cold January day, Greg invited friends to shoot rabbits. They had so much fun that the next year 26 friends showed

up, so they divided into teams and had a competition.

"I remember one team came back with a pink stuffed rabbit it shot, and that got me thinking," Don Bell said. "Why not make it a fundraiser for the MS Society?"

Two of Don's children died from complications of MS. Rick was 41 and Margie was 48 after battling the disease 12 and 24 years, respectively.

Last year, the hunt raised \$22,000. The Bells hope this year's hunt tops that.

More than 100 items are in the silent and live auctions, including guns, bows and arrows, hunting stands, blaze orange and camouflage clothing, hunting and sports equipment, sports memorabilia, tickets to Milwaukee Brewers and Green Bay Packers games and gift certificates to local businesses.

The deadline for registering a team is Tuesday, Feb. 1.

Non-hunters may attend the event for \$20. There is no charge for children ages 12 and younger, but anyone under age 21 must be accompanied by a parent.

Raffle tickets are available at the Railroad Station, 200 S. Railroad St.; McCarthy's Pub, 3315 Hwy. I, Town of Saukville; or from any Rabbits Unlimited member.

Registration forms and more information are available on the Web site www.rabbitsunlimited.org or call Greg Bell at 284-2747.