

Reader's Forum:

Township fails to address pole barn

By Casey Cowell

Several weeks ago your paper ran an article on a large pole building erected in Glen Arbor Township by Vaughn Dietzel. The property next door is owned by my wife, Dana Cowell. Dana initiated two successful challenges of this project in the Leelanau County Circuit Court. Judge Power ruled on both occasions that accessory buildings were not per-

mitted by the township's zoning ordinance in residential districts.

The township's response to the Judge's decisions was to appeal both to the Michigan Court of Appeals and to amend its zoning ordinance to allow accessory buildings, of any size, in residential districts. The amendment was approved by the township in June, which has the effect of rendering Mr. Dietzel's 4,000 square foot "warehouse" legal.

Assertions have been made concerning this matter which should be corrected:

It has been asserted that the Township had no option but to defend these matters since, if it had not done so, it may have been liable to Mr. Dietzel for damages. Mr. Dietzel was advised, at the very early stages of his construction, that there were serious issues as to whether what he was building was permitted. He was served with a complaint which outlined these concerns. His response was not to delay construction, but rather to press forward. He did so at his own peril. The Judge's determination that his structure was not permitted was a problem of his own making, not the township's.

One consequence of the Judge's decision was that accessory buildings constructed since the ordinance had last permitted them — around 1998 — were unlawful. It has been asserted that the Township's only option was to

amend its ordinance to provide accessory buildings of all sizes and shapes. This is not true. Almost all accessory buildings built in that time period are reasonable in size and appropriate given that they are accessory to a residential use. Dietzel's building, which is in excess of 4,000 square feet, is not. The township could have easily adopted an amendment allowing buildings which were size appropriate but disallowing the Dietzel structure. It chose not to.

It has been asserted that the township will not revisit this issue and that accessory buildings will be allowed in residential districts without any size restrictions. This position is contrary to the commitment made by the Planning Commission at its May 3 public hearing when the Commission indicated that it intended to revisit this issue.

I hope that Mr. Dietzel is fully appreciative of the gift provided to him by Glen Arbor Township. Not only is he allowed to keep his accessory building which was deemed to be illegal, but the township helped to underwrite his legal challenge to Judge Power's well-reasoned opinion. That's a good outcome for Mr. Dietzel, but not for the citizens of Glen Arbor Township.

About the author: Casey Cowell is a philanthropist and investor in the greater Grand Traverse area. He resides in Traverse City. His wife has owned the property next to the large pole barn with her former husband since 1987.

Vote for dems or become 'Trump enablers'

To the editor:

To All Who May Vote in November. As we enter the fall election period, I would like to comment on the current situation. I have been a registered Republican since 1972. Gerald R. Ford and David Camp were two of my favorite congressmen who had high moral standards. Now we are in a crisis of moral corruption in the Republican Party. Two candidates running are Trump enablers, one for congress and one for state senator, based upon their public remarks and campaign literature. Each man has fine credentials but is intimidated by the party leaders.

We cannot continue in a morally corrupt state that is like the corruption faced by the Catholic Church hierarchy, and college administrators with their sports programs, e.g., MSU, OSU, and Penn State.

Voters, you have a choice—either vote for Trump enablers or send a message that the current trajectory is unacceptable.

Mary Tonneberger
Omena Point
Omena

Would you rather follow an apostle or Donald Trump?

To the editor:

I am a Christian. But even those who are not would still recognize and value the wisdom, guidance and virtues in Paul's letter to the church at Philippi when he says:

"Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8

Now think on Donald Trump. Whatsoever things are false, whatsoever things are dishonest, whatsoever things are unjust, whatsoever things are foul, whatsoever things are debased, whatsoever things are of corrupt reputation, if there be any unwholesome nature, and if there be any vile, vindictive, petty, hostile, punitive, spiteful, callous, inhumane malevolent, pernicious, rancorous, tyrannical, unfeeling, acrimonious, intemperate, boastful, lying, narcissistic, egotistical thing — it is Donald Trump.

Which leader would you follow? Think on it.

Dale Blount
Omena Point Road
Omena

more letters

Special meeting costs taxpayers and was unnecessary

To the editor:

It appears to me that the taxpayers of the village of Empire will be paying a price because of seemingly reckless and assumptive behaviors by some of the Empire village council members.

Most recently the personnel committee interviewed a candidate for the position of village clerk whom they felt would be suitable for the vacancy created by the firing of the former clerk. At the recent August 28 meeting of the Empire Village Council there was an agenda item under "Committee Reports - Personnel - Clerk position." What should have been an intention for general discussion turned out to be an assumption that an immediate vote on the hiring of the interviewed candidate would take place.

Councilmen Aylsworth and Frey both questioned this matter coming up for a vote as they had not been informed through their epackets nor further discussion prior to the meeting that the subject of voting was on the agenda.

Afterwards, the subject of a Professional Services Agreement (a contract) for the clerk was discussed and Councilmember Bacon said she would not vote on a matter of hiring a candidate until the PSA (contract) had been reviewed by the entire council. There was no PSA presented in the epackets for council review.

Now, a special meeting has had to be called to appropriately address this matter of the recommended hiring for the clerk's position as well as the matter of the clerk's contract. Perhaps in the grand scheme of expenses, paying council members to attend a special meeting is not exorbitant; nevertheless, it seems just one more inappropriate and careless occurrence by certain council members which eventually fall on the taxpayers of the village.

Mary Sharry
Michigan Street
Empire

No charges expected in death of dog

No charges are expected in the killing of a dog that law enforcement personnel say had bitten someone earlier in the day it was dispatched.

The dog, a mixed-breed husky, was killed by a Traverse City man and buried on federal property near Little Traverse Lake. The incident has drawn widespread attention on social media.

"It had bit a person earlier that day, so he took it out and disposed of it," county Sheriff Mike Borkovich said. "People are not allowed to kill an animal for any reason. But if it's a case of it destroying farm animals or being a danger to other people, the dog may be destroyed."

A report of the incident was forwarded by the Sheriff's Office to Leelanau County Prosecutor Joseph T.

Hubbell, who determined that charges were not warranted, Borkovich said. The case was also sent to the National Park Service as the dog was buried on land with Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore.

The dog's owner was issued a verbal warning for littering, Borkovich added.

Years ago it would not be considered controversial to kill a dog that had turned against people, Borkovich said.

"If someone had disposed of a dog who bit someone 20-, 30- or 50 years ago, that would not have caused controversy. What if they bite a kid? It's unbelievable the number of people who actually die from dog bites," he said.

Leelanau County animal control officer received the dog complaint on

Aug. 16. Borkovich said one reason the incident has received so much attention may be that the couple that owned the dog is going through a divorce.

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Senior Vice President -
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