

RV PARK ARTICLES - 4/26/2022 - Shared at P& Z Public Hearing

https://www.berkshireeagle.com/news/central_berkshires/hinsdale-rejects-northgate-rv-park-proposal/article_82913ed8-7346-11ec-8796-b39208316131.ht

<https://www.nwfdailynews.com/story/news/local/2021/07/23/walton-commissioners-reject-proposed-rv-resort-near-edgewood-terrace/8053834002/>

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2021/jul/20/contentious-woodland-rv-park-moves-forward-after-city-council-vote/>

<https://www.capegazette.com/article/no-middle-ground-rv-resort-traffic/42582>

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Hinsdale officials reject RV park plan, calling it too much for a small town

Central Berkshires

Controversial 'Yogi Bear' RV park proposal resurfaces in Hinsdale, where developer promises 'mutual prosperity'

"I can't get over the amount of vehicles per day making the trips and just how that alone isn't going to change the character," Viner said. "I can't get over the fact that it's not detrimental."

"Because of these reasons, I'm going to make a motion that we vote to deny Northgate's proposal," he said.

The board must still draft its decision and file it with the town clerk, after which Northgate will have an appeal period. Midway through the night's proceedings, Viner faced off criticism from a town resident, Walter D. Ulmer, who accused the ZBA of being too cordial with representatives of the applicant. Ulmer said he feared increased traffic on Robinson Road, where he lives, if RV drivers used that as a route to reach Pittsfield.

"You have to let it play out," Viner told Ulmer.

A national company sought permission to remake Camp Emerson in Hinsdale into a destination for recreational vehicles.

NORTHGATE RESORT VENTURES LLC PERMIT APPLICATION

Just before 8 p.m., after 90 minutes of additional evidence collection, Viner moved to reject the application. He did that after reviewing the town's relevant bylaws, one of which states that a special permit application must be in harmony with the town's character.

"My opinion on it is that it's not in harmony," he said. "It doesn't keep the small-town character. It doesn't lessen the congestion."

Member Bruce Alexander seconded the motion, and he joined Viner and another member in voting to deny the application. Member Dan Thornton listened but did not vote, because he had expressed opposition to the project before it was filed to the ZBA.

"I don't understand how you can put a development this big in that area and not have it completely change the character of the neighborhood," Viner said, during a five-minute recitation of his reasons for denying the proposal, which had been the target of vigorous opposition at two previous ZBA sessions, in late November and in December.

A view of the 155-acre Camp Emerson property in Hinsdale, the proposed site of an RV park. On Tuesday, the town's Zoning Board of Appeals rejected a special permit application from Northgate Resort Ventures LLC to transform the camp into one of its portfolio of RV destinations.

GOOGLE EARTH

HINSDALE — In the end, a "massive" plan to transform a family-owned summer camp into a national RV destination was deemed to be too much for a small town.

The Hinsdale Zoning Board of Appeals voted unanimously Tuesday night to reject a special permit application filed by Northgate Resort Ventures LLC. The decision ends, for now, more than six months of public debate about the proposal's impact on the Longview Avenue neighborhood surrounding Camp Emerson, and on the town as a whole. Northgate has a right to appeal the decision. In early December, ZBA members sought and secured proof that the town of Hinsdale will defend them legally, if they are named in litigation resulting from a denied application.

Hinsdale's RV park applicant has a history of challenging local zoning decisions it loses

"To me, it's a massive, massive development. It would be the biggest development in Hinsdale," said Jeffrey Viner, the ZBA chairman.

The decision is a setback for the Lein family, which reached an agreement to sell the camp it had run for half a century, contingent on Northgate winning approval for its special permit to develop 317 RV campsites on the 155-acre property. The company runs nearly two dozen RV camping facilities around the country, many branded as Yogi Bear campgrounds.

She Lein was one of more than 60 people who watched Tuesday's proceedings via a Zoom broadcast, while an additional 20 or so observed from the auditorium of the Nessacus Regional Middle School in Dalton.