2/14/2024

Ashland Daily Press

Re: Barksdale Referendum on Opting Out of County Zoning

To the Editor:

The Town of Barksdale will have a referendum question on opting out of Bayfield County Zoning on the spring ballot April 2. I encourage residents to vote “No”.

As a resident of the Town of Barksdale, I want our Town to stick with Bayfield County Zoning. I believe it does a better job of maintaining our property rights and property values. County-wide zoning addresses regional land use that ensures appropriate uses of land in the right place; business parks are located near utilities, agricultural uses are located in rural areas, retail establishments are located where there is safe access to roads, parking, and signage that fits that location.

Those who complain about the time lags and overburdened County Zoning Department need to consider the other side of the equation. Can Barksdale afford to pay someone to write the zoning code, to review the consistency with the land use plan, and to hire a zoning administrator? Can a small Town with assets less than $1mil take the risk of being subject to a lawsuit when a disgruntled landowner takes issue with their decision? What is the increase in our property taxes to take on our own zoning?

Opting out of County zoning does not remove other zoning permits for lakeshores, floodplains, wetlands, sanitary systems, and land divisions. All of those would still be in effect and administered by Bayfield County Zoning. No referendum question can change this.

The Town of Barksdale is planning an informational session on Tuesday, February 20 at 6:00pm at the Town Hall. I invite you to attend and ask what are the ramifications of opting out of Bayfield County Zoning. I think there are more risks and expenses, than benefits. Vote No.

Ruth Oppedahl
Town of Barksdale