

LOCALNEWS

CITY COYOTE



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A trail camera captured what Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Area Wildlife Supervisor Larry Petersen said is a coyote in a yard just west of Menards. Tom Worth submitted the photo, which was taken at 9:15 a.m Oct. 31.

Board to consider changing quarry requirements

BY LAUREL BEAGER
Editor

Koochiching County commissioners Nov. 18 will consider eliminating wording in an ordinance governing quarry operations within the county.

The board and a handful of audience members Tuesday heard a presentation about the ordinance followed by a public hearing on the recommendation to remove wording from the ordinance.

No opposition to the proposal was voiced or offered in written comment. The owners of at least three operations were in attendance at the hearing.

Removing the wording would not change existing operations, county Environmental Services Director Dale Olson said.

The wording proposed for removal is within subsection 6 of section 4.52 of the county's ordinance.

The section calls for information about a quarry, mine and gravel pit to be submitted to the Planning Commission within six months of adoption of the 1975 zoning ordinance. It also calls for the owners of such operations to submit within one year a restoration plan and within three years the operation shall comply with the 1975 zoning ordinance. That ordinance requires all gravel pits, quarries and mines more than one acre in size to apply for a conditional use permit.

Olson said the issue was brought to a public hearing because the frequency of complaints about blasting has increased in the past two or three years.

While the county may shut down any operation due to safety issues, the county does not control the size and frequency of blasts.

The section of the ordinance has not been enforced because of the number of gravel pits, the large size of the county and a small county staff. In addition, he said until the past few years, very few complaints about the operations were voiced.

The county board, he said, has considered eliminating the wording because it leaves the county open to lawsuits as a result of requiring the operations to be permitted and they were not.

The Planning Commission has developed "a fairly consistent" set of conditions for new quarry operations, Olson told the board. The existing operations that a change in the ordinance wording would affect already work within the conditions set for new operations, he said.

Olson told the board a few people had stopped at his office to ask questions about the issue and hearing, but were not in attendance at Tuesday's hearing.

At county board meetings earlier this year and at a June Planning Commission meeting, Ranier area residents said their homes had been damaged and their lives disrupted by nearby blasting. They urged the county to curb blasting operations.

Shoreline owners being asked to provide input on flood risk

Risk assessment considers variety of components

IJC STAFF REPORT

As part of ongoing efforts to review and evaluate the performance of water level management strategies for Rainy and Namakan lakes under the 2000 order, the International Joint Commission has been funding a project to assess the risk of flood damage in certain areas.

The IJC, on behalf of the International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board, is studying the risk of flood damages in a study area that include the shoreline of Rainy, Namakan, Kabetogama, Sand Point, Little Vermillion, and Crane lakes, known collectively as the Rainy and Namakan chain of lakes.

The flood risk assessment considers a variety of

components including the completion of more than 130 face-to-face interviews with shoreline property owners in the fall of 2013 to discuss their perspectives on potential risk of flooding damages.

Given the flood conditions observed in June and July of this year within the study area, additional input from shoreline property owners is required to ensure the flood risk assessment adequately captures the types of flooding damages experienced during that event as well as the magnitude of those damages.

The International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board asks shoreline property owners on the Rainy and Namakan chain of lakes to report on their damages during the past summer by completing a brief survey that is available on the board's website until Dec. 5.

The survey also allows for

damage reports from property owners on the Rainy River and Lake of the Woods shoreline as the information will support future water level management activities in those areas. Your participation in the process is completely voluntary and you can choose to skip any questions on the survey.

However, your participation is critical to the success of the project. Detailed information on the types and extent of observed flooding will help verify whether the flood risk assessment is properly representing property owner concerns. Any information gathered through the surveys will be held in strict confidence and will only be used for consolidated reporting. Please note this is not an application for assistance. This is a request for information on private property damage to support future review of water management strategies in the system.

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Sealed proposals will be accepted at the Koochiching County Auditor's Office until 4:30 p.m. November 14, 2014. Submitted RFP's must be labeled "Canister Site Attendant Proposal".

For a complete "Request for Proposal" packet, please contact the Koochiching County Environmental Services Department located in the County Courthouse or call 218-283-1157.

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