

3/9/67
noted

To: News Media

From: Grand Mere Association

The Grand Mere Association at present is holding off legal action not to offset the recent Lincoln Township Board's decision of rezoning the northern 1/3 area of Grand Mere.

About two years ago, April, 1965, the Township officials first unveiled plans for the development of the entire area with these words quoted from supervisor Harry Gast through the News Palladium.

"Rezoning of the area from its present residential status to industrial is regarded as a mere formality unless neighborhood objections should pose some unforeseen problems. The Lincoln Township board have already expressed full accord on the project."

This complete acceptance by the Board for rezoning the most significant natural area in Southwestern Michigan for commercial and industrial development without bothering to consult township residents led to the formation of the Grand Mere Association whose membership includes, not only people who live in Grand Mere, but people who live in other parts of the Township, County, ~~and State~~ and nation

In the 23 months since April, 1965, we feel we have accomplished much for the people of this Township and others.

Some of these accomplishments are:

1. Caused the township authorities to look more fully at this particular project as well as their zoning laws generally, which in turn has resulted in the following:
 - a) A sand mining ordinance
 - b) Expansion of basic classifications, adding "limited industrial" and "Marina"

2. A great reduction in the area of rezoning - the main dune area is still residential
3. A need for preserving open land for future public use

Even with part of this area rezoned, we will continue with our goals which are:

1. Action at the Township, County, or State level to acquire land for present and future recreational and outdoor education needs. Specifically we would like to see the establishment of county parks commission. We requested this of the county board over a year ago and we repeat this request at this time.
2. Public acquisition of the remainder of the Grand Mere area.
3. A Watchdog role to see that the Township officials use the tools of "Planned Development of Grand Mere" to their maximum.
We intend to make sure that engineering feasibility studies, Corp of Engineers approval and a time table are solved prior to any marine development so this becomes a reality in the foreseeable future and not just a large scale sand mining project as we have predicted.
4. A long term study of the economics of this area.

Township Supervisor Harry Gast has publicly stated that he will both encourage and work with any group to acquire a portion of the lake frontage for a local park. We will work with him, the Conservation Department and the land owners with hopes that the public can some day lay claim to the ownership of Grand Mere for purposes of outdoor recreation. As we have stated in the past, recreational areas are and will continue to be in short supply. We will continually urge our public officials - local, state, and national, to back measures that will insure our future generations of adequate recreational facilities. We are confident that the time is near when the long range esthetic values of natural areas will be recognized as of greater significance than the immediate short term gains.