

TWIN CITIES

Container CORPORATION

COLOMA, MICHIGAN... HOWARD 8-3153

June 22, 1967

FRANK LAHR, Treasurer

Mr. Glenn Gregg
Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation
Department of Conservation
Mason Bldg.
Lansing, Michigan

7/3/67 Gregg called
is asking Nelson
Crawford to get in person

Dear Mr. Gregg,

Busy as you are with your manifold administration problems I hesitate to add to your work, and would not write if I did not feel there is justification and urgent need for this letter.

We discussed recently the local action regarding the Grand Mere area. Just a brief review may put this in the proper perspective.

In the past two years the Grand Mere Association has raised and spent over \$6000 - and many many hours of time and effort - to develop support for public acquisition of some 1000 acres of Grand Mere's dunes, bogs, and two miles of Lake Michigan shoreline.

On June 6th in Lincoln township, by means of a referendum vote, we successfully challenged recent action of the township officials in rezoning some 300 acres of this area for commercial-industrial use. The land has reverted back to residential classification. This expression of public interest in support of the aims of the GMA was despite strong opposition by township officials, a Lakeshore Development Corp., local Jaycees, local Chamber of Commerce and local Lions Club. It was a testimonial to the worth of this area, since in all of our activities we have argued for public acquisition of the area.

Aside from the township opposition we have had general support from the county (except as you are aware from the local Republican senator). We are working thru the County Planning Commission for formalization of such support.

At the State level recently the Michigan Parks Association placed Grand Mere, along with Sleeping Bear Dunes, as the two priority areas for acquisition. Last year in the legislative session there was wide support from knowledgeable conservationists and scientists for acquisition of the area.

It is painfully obvious that lake frontage of any kind is short in supply and high in costs-and both trends will continue.



6/22/67

Recently the owner of some 300 acres of Grand Mere, Judge Philip Shapiro of Chicago, died. His estate, estimated at \$25,000,000, is in the hands of the Northern Trust Co. of Chicago. This land may soon be available.

Mr. Victor Peters, Winnetka, Illinois, owner of some 500 to 600 acres, may be more receptive to some proposal since the rezoning to commercial-industrial has been rejected. Especially if it can be tied in with some limited commercial development at the interchange on I-94.

Mr. Russell Manley, Manley Bros Sand Company will undoubtedly be hard to deal with. He owns some 150 acres. At the local level we will continue to seek zoning restrictions which will make sand mining more expensive.

Of immediate concern is the fact that some 22 acres of duneland area is on the market at about \$2500 per acre. This is adjacent to property owned by Mannley and he is likely to buy it and mine the sand. This could lead to selling by the smaller land owners at the south end of Grand Mere at distressed prices to sand mining interests.

We know that legislation this year is unlikely. Also we know that you have more demands for funds than are available - but we also feel that there is need for action now if this land is to be eventually acquired for public use.

The GMA cannot continually raise money, hire lawyers and fight the battle with sand mining interests as we have for the past two years.

The recent local election is an expression of definite support for preservation and eventually public acquisition of the area.

The immediate problem is the 22 acres mentioned - and the Shapiro property. Are there any funds available for optioning the property for a year?

Last year the approach made by the Department to the owners was not an impressive one and was not pursued. With these recent changes and with hope of fund availability next year, are you not in a position to make a strong approach to the Shapiro and Peters interests at this time?

Can you recommend any course of action to us at the local level?

We would very much like to discuss courses of mutual benefit.

Sincerely,

FL/mas
cc: Mr. Ralph A. MacMullan
Director,
Department of Conservation

Frank Lahr