

Application for Aztalan dairy goat farm formally withdrawn

By Randy Radtke Special to the Union | Posted: Thursday, February 18, 2016 12:29 pm

AZTALAN — Reality caught up with the rumor mill Thursday morning when Jefferson County Planning and Zoning Department director Rob Klotz confirmed that the application to build a goat dairy farm and fertilizer processing plant in the Town of Aztalan had been formally withdrawn.

“I just got off the phone with the petitioner a few minutes ago and he’s verbally withdrawn the application,” Klotz said. “He said that he would confirm his verbal request to us in an email and I’m still waiting for that email to arrive.”

The application’s petition was filed by Kenn Buelow of New Holstein, a manager for Holsum Dairies. Holsum operates two large farms, Holsum-Irish and Holsum-Elm; both house 4,200 cows, while Holsum-Elm also has 2,500 calves.

The proposed 9,000-goat farm and its fertilizer processing plant had generated concern and opposition throughout Jefferson County, given the size and scope of the operation. The farm and plant would have been located on vacant farm land southeast of the City of Lake Mills near the intersection of Harvey and Mansfield roads.

The application for a conditional-use permit was approved 2-1 by the Aztalan Town Board of Supervisors on Feb. 1. However, the approval came with several conditions, requiring the applicant, Drumlin Dairy LLC, to post a significant bond to cover road upgrades and/repairs to the town’s roads and modifications to the intersection of Harvey and Mansfield roads.

The township contended that the increased semi-truck traffic in and out of the proposed farm would cause excessive wear and tear on the two roads that would be utilized by the farming operation and fertilizer plant.

Buelow blamed the landowners of the Ardis M. Eilenfeldt Trust, in a story published by the Watertown Daily Times on Wednesday afternoon, as the reason for the application’s withdrawal. However, Klotz said he had heard otherwise.

“I heard it had to do with the conditions, and the cost of those conditions, the Aztalan Town Board added to its approval more than anything else,” Klotz stated.

The withdrawal means the application will not be part of the regularly scheduled public hearing on zoning matters and conditional-use permits held every third Thursday by the county’s Planning and Zoning Committee. The committee’s next scheduled public hearing is March 17.