

# BREAKING NEWS: SPACEPORT PLANS DEFEATED!

*Posted on November 21, 2023*

Scroll down to see a letter from CSCLS President Denny Ferraro breaking the news, and the Resolution passed tonight by the Powell Township Board:

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

We are pleased to announce that the Powell Township Board has enacted an official “RESOLUTION” rejecting the plan by the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association (MAMA) to rezone Granot Loma to build an industrial rocket launch site, finding under the Township Zoning Ordinance that it:

- **would not be appropriate or lawful; and,**
- **would be tantamount to illegal spot zoning; and,**
- **would be inconsistent with the Township Master Plan for current and future land use; and,**
- **that this planned heavy industrial use is legally prohibited.**

Protecting Lake Superior’s Freshwater Coast by preventing that illegal rezoning plan has been the mission and driving force of our campaign at Citizens for a Safe & Clean Lake Superior (CSCLS).

Founded by people from Powell and Marquette Townships, in the past three years CSCLS has:

- investigated and exposed the harmful details of the rocket launch plan,
- provided public information regarding the launch plan locally, regionally, and in national media,
- mobilized public action at local events and organized letter writing campaigns,
- assisted in gathering over 26,000 signatures opposing the launch plan, and,
- appeared at Township/City/County meetings requesting official action against MAMA's plan.

To achieve conclusive official action, CSCLS engaged the legal services of the *Conservation Law Center* (CLC) to assist a Big Bay resident, Phil Bakken, in filing a petition to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance to specifically prohibit spaceports/rocket launches at Granot Loma. That petition received supporting signatures of 176 other Powell Township residents and property owners, as well as 50 more people from adjacent townships.

After consulting with the Township attorney, Mr. Bakken and CSCLS and its attorneys agreed that an official Resolution by the Township would be more forceful and effective than a zoning amendment. Accordingly, the petition to amend was withdrawn and in its place the official Resolution was enacted.

Thanks to all of you who have supported this effort, and we hope you will continue to support our work defending the Superior shoreline.

Dennis A. Ferraro, CSCLS President

# RESOLUTION:

## **RESOLUTION OF THE POWELL TOWNSHIP BOARD REGARDING ROCKET LAUNCH SITES, SPACEPORTS, AND RELATED STRUCTURES, AND ACTIVITIES**

WHEREAS, On February 13, 2020, the Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association (MAMA) prepared a “Spaceport Site Selection and Feasibility Study” describing a detailed plan to construct and operate a 2892-acre vertical rocket launch facility/spaceport with multiple launch pads at Granot Loma (Loma Farms) near Thoneys Point in Powell Township; and then on July 23, 2020, without consulting with or notifying the Township, MAMA announced that Granot Loma was chosen for that rocket launch facility/spaceport; and,

WHEREAS, the proposed site is located within the Timber Production (TP-40) and the Lake Shore/River 2 (LS/R 2) Zoning Districts; and

WHEREAS, On July 8, 2023, Phil Bakken, a resident of Big Bay, filed with the Township a Petition (Bakken Petition) to amend the Township Zoning Ordinance to add “ PROHIBITIONS ON ROCKET LAUNCH SITES, STRUCTURES, AND ACTIVITIES ” ( a copy of which is incorporated herein by reference), and which Petition has since been supported by the signatures of One Hundred and Seventy-Six (176) other residents/property owners in Powell Township and Fifty (50) residents/property owners in adjoining Townships; and,

WHEREAS, The Powell Township Board, after reviewing and considering all documents and information submitted with the Bakken Petition and upon considering the Township attorney’s 09/14/2023 legal opinion, a copy of which is contemporaneously released with this Resolution, has determined:

- The proposed amendment is unnecessary because a rocket launch site or spaceport, as described by MAMA and/or as defined in the Bakken petition, would not be appropriate or

lawful in the TP-40 or the LS/R 2 Zoning Districts under the terms of the Powell Township Zoning Ordinance; and

- A rocket launch site or spaceport facility, as described by MAMA and/or as defined in the Bakken Petition, are not expressly listed as permitted land uses by right or conditionally in these Powell Township Zoning Districts and are not similar to any expressly listed land use in the Township; and, therefore, pursuant to Section 306 (B) of the Zoning Ordinance, such a rocket launch site/ spaceport is already prohibited; and,
- As advised by the Township's planning and zoning consultant during the development of the Township's current Master Plan, "both the current zoning of Granot Loma (LSR-2 and TP-40) and the proposed, appropriate future uses of the land (Waterfront Development and TP40) are inconsistent with any heavy industrial use of the property" such as a rocket launch site or spaceport as described by MAMA and/or as defined in the Bakken Petition; and,
- Allowing the rezoning of land in Powell Township for the construction and operation of a rocket launch site or spaceport facility, as described by MAMA and/or as defined in the Bakken Petition, would be tantamount to illegal "spot zoning" given existing land uses, zoning designations, land use intensities in proximity to the proposed site, and planning goals of Powell Township as set forth in the Master Plan; and,
- Wherefore, for all of the above reasons, the Township Board has respectfully requested that the Bakken Petition be withdrawn; and,

WHEREAS, In consideration of the findings and statements made in this Resolution, the Petitioner, Phil Bakken, respectfully agrees to withdraw his Petition as referred to above.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved:

- that the Powell Township Board finds that amending the Zoning Ordinance as requested by the Bakken Petition is unnecessary because a rocket launch site or spaceport facility, as described by MAMA and/or as defined in the Bakken Petition, is already prohibited within Powell Township under the terms of the current Zoning Ordinance and would be inconsistent with current and future land uses and planning goals as defined in the Master Plan of the Township; and,
- that the Township Board hereby affirms all of the aforesaid findings and statements by means of passing this resolution on this 21st Day of November 2023.