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## Plans for Plymouth topless bar dropped

Strong opposition from public halts restaurant change

BY BOB PETRIE • SHEBOYGAN PRESS STAFF • JUNE 4, 2009

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TOWN OF PLYMOUTH — Faced with heavy public opposition, a restaurateur has dropped plans to open a topless bar at his business on state Highway 57.

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Arif Farizi, owner of the Wilderness Restaurant & Bar, withdrew his request to seek permission to expand his business to include the topless bar on Tuesday, hours before his case was to go before the Plymouth Town Board for consideration.

"He didn't want to go to the meeting because of the hostility," said Jason E. Dierkes, Farizi's attorney, on Wednesday.

Farizi, who has run the restaurant at N5575 Highway 57 for about 17 months, was looking at the topless bar as a way to boost business in a difficult economy, Dierkes said, but that it ran into a buzzsaw of opponents who wrote letters to local newspapers and called town supervisors to complain about the plan.

"The response was less than receptive, and I'd say crossed the line to outright hostile," Dierkes said.

The topless bar, complete with pole dancing, would have operated from 4 p.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week. It would have been separate from the restaurant portion of the business, Dierkes said.

Farizi declined to comment Wednesday.

An overflow crowd of about 150 people showed up at Town Hall Tuesday night for the meeting, even after word spread in the community that Farizi had withdrawn his application for the topless bar at the Wilderness, said Town Clerk Sue Raeder.

Raeder said the audience cheered when told that

the application was pulled, and about 20 people spoke to ask the supervisors to consider enacting an ordinance to prohibit topless bars in the town.

Jim Lubach, Town Board chairman, said the town would be looking at similar ordinances in other communities to either ban or heavily restrict topless bars. The town currently has no such ordinance, and wants to create one as soon as possible, Lubach said.

"There are places around that do ban it and do a pretty good job of it," Lubach said.

Lubach took several calls from [residents](#) who said a topless bar was "inappropriate" for the community, but



The Wilderness Restaurant and Bar in Plymouth is seen mid-morning on Wednesday. Photo by Sam Castro/The Sheboygan Press

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he also said Farizi was vague with town officials on exactly what he wanted to do with his business.

"We never really found out what it was going to be," Lubach said.

Greg Hunolt, 66, who lives a short distance from the Wilderness, said he was happy to see that Farizi withdrew his request.

"I think it's bad for the community, I don't think it's the kind of thing that we need," Hunolt said, adding he was concerned about more alcohol being served at the Wilderness if a topless bar were established there.

The Plymouth area does have one topless bar, Trudy's, which has operated for decades, but Lubach said he didn't like the thought of another such business opening in the vicinity.

"We really don't need that here. We had a reputation back (in the 1950s) when I was being born of being a pretty bad city," said Lubach, who is 52. "We had a lot of prostitution houses in this town many, many years ago."

Gene Blindauer, another town supervisor, said he took about a dozen calls from residents, and "everybody was against it."

Dierkes said he didn't know how long Farizi could continue running the Wilderness in the current economy. About 20 people are employed there, and Dierkes said Farizi was trying to think of ideas on how to keep his employees working.

"What's next? I don't know, we shall see," Dierkes said.

Farizi also operates the Hub City Family Restaurant in Plymouth.

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