

# PARMA TOWNSHIP Salvage yard is topic of petition

By Nick Tabor  
For the Citizen Patriot

Two men who hope to open a salvage yard in Parma Township will need to jump through more hoops than they expected if a new petition by area residents meets its goal.

But the prospective owners won't find out until at least next month, which is the soonest the township board will again consider new conditions for issuing a permit for the controversial project, which would be on 23 acres near I-94 and M-99.

"Show me the facts," said Milne Martinez, who presented township planners with the petition during Wednesday night's meeting.

"Show me your plans. Show me your proposal. Make me and the board feel comfortable," Martinez said, summarizing her expectations of the investors.

The township board decided in July not to act on the planning commission's recommendation to issue the permit. Instead it urged planners to learn more about the potential environmental impact of the salvage yard and reconsider.

When planners met Wednesday, about 18 residents came to speak — most of them hoping the commission would revoke its recommendation or suggest stricter permit conditions.

"It's been told to us repeatedly that yes, this could affect our property — tax-wise and environmentally," Martinez said.

She said a salvage yard near their homes could decrease property values and emissions from cars in the lot would sink into the ground and damage the water supply.

"We're just fighting for clean water," resident Mona Wilson said.

Pete Preus, a prospective owner of the salvage yard, has said the business will be a good neighbor and that he hopes to make it an example for other auto salvage yards.

Planning commissioners repeatedly reminded residents that they can base a recommendation on township ordinances — not on residents' preferences.

"I would assume that if we deny this, (the investors) would have legal recourse," planning commission Chairman John Noakes said.

The petition — signed by about 20 people — asks the township board to require the investors to meet standards established by the Department of Environmental Quality and other government bodies before it issues the permit.

Though those organizations should enforce the regulations themselves, residents said they fear statewide budget cuts have made the township board the last line of protection.

"You guys are sort of our last hope," resident Bill Dobbins said.

The planning commission will discuss the petition on Sept. 3.