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Prostitution alleged at The Inn at Laurel Lake

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LEE -- Two innkeepers face charges they were running a prostitution business out of their historic lakeside bed and breakfast, Lee police said on Thursday.

Tara Viola will face one count of soliciting sexual favors for a fee at The Inn at Laurel Lake along Route 20. Viola, 39, and her husband, Thomas Fusco, 47, also will each face one count of keeping house of ill fame and conspiring to promote prostitution.

The couple will be summoned to the Southern Berkshire District Court at a later date to answer to the charges, according to Lee police Officer Ryan Lucy.

On Thursday night, Fusco refuted in a brief statement to The Eagle the police report that he and his wife will be charged in connection to the alleged sex crimes. Later, police confirmed that those charges are indeed pending.

Lucy said the monthlong investigation by Lee police and the Berkshire County Drug Task Force will continue and additional charges are pending against the couple.

According to police, Viola and Fusco tried discretely to advertise the prostitution service on the Internet under the guise of the wife's massage business conducted at the lakeside inn. Viola is a licensed masseuse.

Lucy said authorities were alerted to the online advertisement that had been posted for some time.

On Thursday morning, Lee police and drug task force members arrived at the inn and informed the couple of their investigation. The couple live at the inn.

Later in the day, Viola waived her right to an attorney and gave a statement to investigating Lee police officers, Lucy said. Fusco hasn't formally spoken to police.

Fusco bought The Inn at Laurel Lake in 1996, one of only five owners of the 130-year-old establishment, according to the inn's website. Built in 1881, George W. Boardman was the original innkeeper, who also served as Lee's fire chief from 1913 until his death in 1930.

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