

Avon Township News

Prepared by Cliff Borgerding
Avon Township Zoning Administrator

Construction Season

Summer is here! Construction is in full swing with lots of new construction occurring in the township. Even though the township only issues permits for driveways and accessory buildings we still have many folks asking about the permit process. The Stearns County Environmental Services Department staff is also very busy at this time of year with lots of applications to review and site visits to complete.

Remember, be sure to ask before you build anything to get answers to your questions about what's allowed and what's required. If you build without a permit or don't follow the ordinance rules you can expect fines and delays including the possibility of being required to remove a structure that doesn't meet the ordinance requirements.

You can find out what is required by contacting the staff at Environmental Services at 320-656-3613 or by checking out the Stearns County website at www.co.stearns.mn.us. If you need a permit for a driveway or if you are building an accessory building (i.e. garage, storage building, etc.) contact the township zoning administrator, Cliff Borgerding, at 320-356-7191 or by email at Cliffborgerding@aol.com.

Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind when considering a construction project:

If you plan to replace windows, doors, shingles or siding you won't need a permit. These projects are considered repairs and don't change the "footprint" of the existing structures. In other words they don't change the area covered by the existing structures.

If you are building a deck you may or may not need a permit depending on the design of your deck. A deck that is less than a foot off the ground and doesn't have any railing or roof will most likely not need a permit. If however, your new deck is greater than a foot above the ground, a construction permit will be required either from the county or from the township depending on whether your property is located within the Shore Land Overlay District or not.

The Shore Land Overlay District refers to property within 1,000 feet of any lake or within 300 feet of any stream. This overlay district has special rules that apply to any construction project. Its best to check out the ordinance on-line or check with Environmental Services people to find all the rules that apply. The number of buildings is restricted as well as the size of

buildings in the Shore Land Overlay District so it is very important to make sure you know what you can and can't do when constructing anything.

The penalties for violating the ordinance can result in severe financial penalties and you can be required to remove any structure and return the property back to the same condition it was in before the construction began. It's important to know what's required before you start a project.

Road Construction Update

Minnesota's other half of the season! The township is planning to overlay about two miles of 160th Avenue beginning at the intersection with County Road 52 and heading south. There will also be a couple of areas that will require additional repairs that are small stretches of 100-200 feet.

We have about 44 miles of asphalt roads in addition to about six miles of gravel roads in the township and we are trying to do maintenance to keep the roads in the best condition we can without breaking the bank. The cost of the work this year will be approximately \$140,000 for repair and snow removal.

The budget, as set at the annual meeting in March, includes an increase in the total levy to \$290,000, which provides an additional \$40,000 in the budget for road repairs such as overlays and patches. Many of the roads in the township are aging and need more overlays and patches to keep them in good shape. By doing this preventative maintenance we hope to avoid major work on our roads until necessary.

Every spring, the Avon Township Board of Supervisors does road inspections to identify which roads need to be repaired. Based on road inspections, input from the crack-filling contractor and input from residents of the township, the board determines which roads need repair.

The board then reviews preliminary cost estimates of the repairs. They then make decisions regarding which sections of road will be put out for bids with contractors. After the bids are received, the board makes the final decision about what repair work will be completed during the current the year. The township tries to complete the bidding process as early in spring as possible so the successful contractor is able to schedule the work with their other jobs in the area, which can help us to keep our costs lower.

Although work usually goes smoothly and the work is completed as planned and within the planned budget, in 2002, additional work was required that exceeded the original estimate and resulted in about \$50,000 of

added expense. Every project will bring its own unique circumstances that can result in added cost for a planned repair and while the board tries to anticipate all possible contingencies, sometimes there are unexpected problems that can increase the cost of a project.

Changes to the Planning Board

LORI YURCZYK has retired from the Planning Commission after serving almost 12 years on the Planning Commission as well as a number of years on the County Planning Board. Lori had most recently been the chairperson for the Planning Commission. We want to thank Lori for her many years of service to the community. Her dedication and commitment to the area is very much appreciated and her years of experience and knowledge will be sorely missed. THANK YOU LORI!

RICHARD BRESNAHAN has returned to the Planning Commission to replace Lori. Richard has served on the Stearns County Planning Board for a number of years and has also served on our Planning Commission in the past as well. We welcome Richard back to the Planning Commission and we will benefit from his past experience both on our Planning Commission and on the County Board as we continue to experience more growth in our township in the years ahead. WELCOME BACK RICHARD!

STEVE PLANTENBERG was elected to serve as the new Planning Commission Chairperson. Steve has been on the Planning Commission for about four years and has been a great representative for the community. His experience in the commercial construction field is a great asset to our board as well as his perspective from living in the community for over 20 years. CONGRATULATIONS STEVE!

The rest of the Planning Commission members are Misty Baker, Cliff Borgerding (Zoning Administrator), and John Merdan who along with Steve and Richard make up the current Avon Township Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission will be working hard to manage the growth expected in the future so that we don't lose the character and feel of the township that we all enjoy and cherish and yet provide the opportunity for growth to allow others to share in the enjoyment of living and working in the Avon area. We have some challenges facing us in the future including increased pressure to develop more residential areas while assuring that additional development has minimal negative impact on the water quality of our lakes, streams and aquifers as well as on the agricultural businesses that continue to operate in the township.

We are also striving to increase the coordination of efforts between the Township and the City of Avon to work together to make sure we both benefit positively from the future changes bound to affect our joint communities.

Lake Associations can be a Positive Influence

We all live together in this community of Avon and share the common goal of preserving the great qualities of the area while we embrace the future that will most certainly mean changes to our community as well.

We want to welcome the efforts of those who are working to develop the area lake associations including:

- Avon Area Lakes Association representing the areas around Middle Spunk, Lower (Little) Spunk, Anna, Keppers, Linnemann, and Minnie Lakes.
- The Pelican Lake Association, recently formed, becoming active in preserving the water quality as well dealing with other issues of concern for the residents on and adjacent to the lake.
- The Upper Spunk Lake Association, re-energized over the past three years, is proactively working on water quality issues, noise quality, fishing improvements, and social activities including a grand "4th of July Boat Parade" and Youth Fishing Contest.
- Two Rivers Lake had an association but has not been active for some time now. If you live in the Two Rivers Lake area and are interested in becoming involved consider an associate membership in the Pelican Lake association or get involved with your friends and neighbors in the effort to resurrect the Two Rivers Lake Association.

Thanks to all the folks involved with these organizations. We welcome your efforts to help maintain and improve the quality of life in our area. If you haven't been involved yet and would like to be more active in the community please become a member of one of the associations and help preserve and improve what we all enjoy about living in the Avon area. Our lakes and streams are a major asset to community.

We encourage the various lake associations to work together on projects since numbers make a difference and the more broad based community support that can be generated the more funding and other resources that can be focused on issues of concern such as pollution, urban sprawl, sustaining agriculture businesses and family farms, recreational uses, residential growth, business growth, sewer and water issues.

The Township is not directly affiliated with any of the efforts of the lake associations other than as a resource to them for issues related to township government especially construction and zoning related issues. However, we always encourage citizens to become involved in their community.

Contacts for the area Lake associations:

Roger Moran, President Upper Spunk Lake Association
320-356-0367 or www.spunklakes.com or
info@spunklakes.com

Denis McGuinness, President Avon Area Lakes
Association 320-356-2879 or www.mnlakes.org/aala or
DenJMc2@aol.com

Barb or Joe Lange, Pelican Lake Association
320-356-7700 or jblspunk@aol.com

Trash costs money!

We always have a few instances where people seem to think our roadside ditches are for their unwanted "treasures." Unfortunately, this practice spoils the looks of our community and cost you, as a taxpayer, money to have it removed and disposed of properly. We are asking everyone to keep an eye out for those who are doing this and ask them to stop. Also, if you see trash along your road – maybe you and your family could take responsibility for cleaning it up.

The St Cloud Times recently ran a series of articles on recycling and provided a list of places to recycle things no longer needed such as waste oil, metal, appliances, etc. You can also contact the Tri-County Solid Waste Commission (320-255-6140) at the Stearns County Environmental Services department for a list of all the recycling locations.

Here are just a few local sites available:

- Opatz Metals in Holdingford takes metals, aluminum, oil and antifreeze. 320-746-2819
- Batteries Plus in St Cloud takes batteries. 320-240-2332
- Central Appliance Recycling in St Cloud takes used appliances. 320-252-3221
- Bueckers Sanitation in Melrose takes aluminum, paper, tin and glass. 320-836-2299
- Waste Management in St Cloud takes a variety of items. 320-253-6491
- Monitor Tire in St Martin takes tires. 320-548-3496
- Household Hazardous Waste Facility in St Cloud takes Paints, solvents, and miscellaneous chemicals. 320-255-6140

Take a little time and get rid of that trash responsibly and keep our township looking good in the neighborhood!

Growth Planning Data Update

We are in the process of updating the growth planning information with corrections and the new tax data and expect to have this completed by the end of summer or sooner. Copies will be available in the Avon City Hall for people to review and at the Albany Library in the reference documents area as well. Each member of the Township Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission will also have a copy.

Your comments or suggestions for additional information is welcomed and appreciated. We expect this data to be very useful as we evaluate requests and various issues brought to the township boards for review and action.

Remember:

If you don't get involved nothing will ever change so do your part and become an active responsible citizen and member of your community... you might just meet some new friends, learn something new and have some fun at the same time! Help us keep our community healthy and vibrant now and for future generations.

Enjoy the summer and experience the unique community we have available to all of us who live and work in the Avon area. Feel free always to contact any member of the Township's boards with questions or just to thank them for the time and effort they put into making this a great community!