

**Avon Township News**

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 Avon Township Zoning Administrator

**Planning Notes for your Next Construction Project:**

Just a few reminders. First, the township has changed the Land Use Ordinance to reinforce the intent of the Board of Supervisor's and the residents to limit construction to one house per 40 acres in areas zoned A40. This was the intent of the township when the county ordinance was adopted but language in the ordinance allowed an exception to this restriction under certain circumstances.

Second, a change was made to the ordinance to limit the size of accessory structures based on the size of the property owned. The change adopted the same language used in the Shoreland Overlay District to restrict accessory structure sizes to remain consistent with the original Township land use ordinance. The purpose behind the limitation is to avoid creating conflicts with view obstructions and neighborhood images. Based on the changes made and the current Shoreland Overlay District rules, accessory building sizes will be limited as follows:

Accessory Structure Size Limitations		
Lot Size (Acres)	Maximum Accessory Building Area	Sidewall Height
0-.49	900 Square Feet	10 feet
.50-.99	1200 Square Feet	10 feet
1-1.99	1500 Square Feet	12 feet
2-4.49	1800 Square Feet	14 feet
4.5-9.49	2400 Square Feet	14 feet
9.5 or Greater	Unlimited Size **	

\*\* Lots 9.5 acres or greater will only be limited by the total lot coverage restriction.

Third, structures less than 150 square feet located within the Shoreland Overlay District require a building permit and must meet setback requirements. These smaller building, if they qualify as water accessory buildings, may have less restrictive setback requirements.

If you have question about a project be sure to check before you start construction. The Stearns County contact is the Environmental Services Department at 320-656-3613 or by checking out the Stearns County website at [www.co.stearns.mn.us](http://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](mailto:Cliffborgerding@aol.com).

Here's a summary of the construction related activities in the township year to date as of October 31, 2003

- 22 Township Accessory Building Permits Issued
- 15 Township Driveway Permits Issued
- 5 Township Plats/Splits approved
- 4 Township Variances Granted
- 3 Township Certificates of Compliance Issued
- 2 Township Rezoning Requests Approved
- 2 Township City Annexation Requests Presented
  
- 15 County New Home Permits Issued
- 12 County Home Adtns/Acc Bldg Permits Issued
- 1 County Major Shoreland Alteration Permit Issued
- 1 County Mining Permits Issued in Township

**Avon Hills: Planning for the Future**

The township has always been focused on managing growth in the area to insure the survival of the character of the area and the community we all enjoy. Recently the township has gained a new ally in the cause for celebrating our past, enjoying our present and planning for our future.

Actually, the ally is really a very old friend... the community of the Order of St Benedict at St John's Abbey and University. The Benedictine community has been an integral part of the fabric of the Avon area for over 150 years. Many of the early settlers in the area had ties to the abbey in one way or another not only as a source of spiritual support but also as an employer, educator and as a model teaching us how to work with the land and use the natural resources available to make our lives better in many different ways.

Now they are striving to work with others in the community to help initiate a community visioning process that will offer as its end product, a collection of planning resources to help guide future development of the "Avon Hills" landscape. The process will involve representatives from the local community, The Nature Conservancy, as well as St John's.

Township Supervisor, Leroy Gondringer, and Steve Plantenberg chair of our Planning Board along with the Mayor of Avon, Marge Evens, as well as other government officials and residents from the surrounding townships were asked to be part of committee to help in this effort. There were also representatives from Stearns County, the Minnesota DNR, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy and of course St John's Abbey..

On a Saturday in late October a tour was made of the area often referred to as the "Avon Hills". The tour was by bus and covered parts of St Joseph, St Wendel, Avon and Collegeville townships to show the unique

habitat and natural features that exist in the area. A total of almost 50 people participated in the tour.

For more information about this effort see the recent articles in the St Cloud Times, the Stearns Morrison Enterprise and the Sagatagan Seasons Newsletter of the St John's Arboretum. Watch these publications in the future for more information on the efforts of the group.

This effort should partner very nicely with our recent and on-going efforts to develop a better understanding of the issues and concerns related to growth and development within our community.

### **Thanks to the Lake Associations:**

The area lake associations sponsored an event held recently at Rascal's here in Avon to bring together many local government officials of the area to hear a presentation titled "Linking Land Use to Water Quality." Julie Westerland from NEMO (non-point education for municipal officials) made the presentation to the group of 75-100 people in attendance. Thanks to those involved in sponsoring this event to provide an opportunity to educate folks on this important issue.

### **Upper Spunk Lake Road Safety Issue**

The board of Supervisors decided to contract with the city of Avon for some additional police service to try to alleviate the traffic problems with Upper Spunk Lake Road. After a month of activity it appears the additional attention is having the desired effect. Tickets have been issued to violators and things have improved.

The board will be asking township residents to approve the continuation of the extra patrols at the annual meeting in March 2004. Continuing the patrols will require the approval of township residents to insure compliance with existing state law regarding contracting for law enforcement from the city police force. If you feel this is important and you want to see it continue make sure you're at the annual meeting to give your support.

This won't solve the problem permanently unless residents stay actively involved and continue to monitor the situation. Also, we all need to change our own behavior and slow down when we drive in this area. Remember we can best lead by example so remember to follow the rules... **Slow down and drive safely!**

### **Snow Season is here!**

Now that everyone has had a chance to remember how to drive again in Minnesota when the snow flies here's

a reminder of the guidelines for snowplowing township roads.

1. No parking on any road right-of-way during winter months.
2. Plows will be dispatched according to snow conditions.
3. Widening and sanding roads will be done after all roads have been plowed at least once to allow use of the road.
4. Plows are not liable for any damage to fences on township property or mailboxes that are not up to US Postal Standards.
5. Cleaning snow away from mailboxes is the responsibility of the property owner.
6. Snow from private driveways may not be dumped on the township right-of-way. Adjacent land owners will be held liable for all damages and injuries incurred by snow piles pushed on the road right-of-way.

Just a reminder most roads in the township have a 66 foot right of way with about 25 feet of that covered by the actual road surface. Generally speaking, the right of way extends 33 feet out from the center of the road so nothing should be placed in this public area including snow from your personal residence driveway, lawn clippings or other yard waste. Be a good citizen and take care of your own waste and snow properly, don't make the rest of us pay for cleaning up your waste and snow.

Remember too, snowplows are LARGE HEAVY TRUCKS and they can't stop on a dime nor can they maneuver as quickly as your car or passenger truck. Most of the time plows also have snow flying around making visibility for the driver difficult. Slow down and give them the respect they deserve! They don't lose any battle with passenger vehicles and trying to win against them will only cost you money!

Now that we've taken care of all the "Official Stuff" about snow be sure to get out and enjoy the snow season by snowmobiling, cross country skiing, snow shoeing, ice fishing and all the other fun stuff us hardy cold weather fans enjoy!

### **Annual Meeting Notes:**

It may be a little early to be talking about the annual meeting when it's still almost four months away but there are a few things you need to be aware of now.

First, the actual meeting date is the same as it is every year... the second Tuesday in March. In 2004 that date will be March 9<sup>th</sup> at 8pm.

Second, as usual, there will be an election held for two positions on the township board. One supervisor's position will be up for election and that will be Jim Yurczyk's position. The supervisor serves a three year term. The other is the Town Clerk position currently held by Renee Smith. The Clerk serves a two year term.

Candidates for the positions must file with the Township Clerk and can file beginning December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003 and the latest date to file is January 13<sup>th</sup>.

The forms to file for either position should be requested from the Town Clerk, Renee Smith by phone at 320-356-7224, by mail at 16895 County Road 9, Avon, MN or by stopping to see Renee and picking up the forms in person.

Remember the deadlines! Think about it. Is it time you got involved in the township and contributed more than just your taxes to the community? Serving on the board is one way to become active and have a direct voice in what happens in your township's future.