

Avon Township News

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Project Planning Time – Winter!

Well, now that we have turned the corner on winter and are on our way to spring... really it's just around the corner! Just because we just had a 10 or 12 inch snowfall doesn't mean spring isn't on the way. The weather man said its so and everyone knows the weather man is always right!

Even if he isn't this is the time of year everyone starts to think about all those spring and summer projects they want to complete. So ... it's time to review the rules again and remind folks where to get information concerning building projects.

The township issues permits for accessory buildings outside of the shoreland overlay district and for driveway permits for new construction building sites. Contact Cliff Borgerding (356-7191) or by email at cliffborgerding@aol.com.

All other permits are issued by Stearns County Environmental Services (656-3613) at the Administrative Center in St Cloud. The staff there will help you get all the permits you need. You can find much of the information you will need and any forms as well as the costs for various permits, hearings, etc. at the Environmental Services Website located at www.co.stearns.mn.us/departments/environment/forms.

Remember all buildings and structures in the lakeshore overlay district require permits ... even small structures near the lake. Permits can often be issued for what are called "water accessory buildings" without any special hearings or hoops to jump through if they are within certain guidelines.

As always it's better to check first than to go ahead with a construction project and then find out you've violated a rule and you have to pay fines or remove a project after you have spent time and money. You can always call Cliff Borgerding to get you started on the process.

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

- 26 Township Accessory Building Permits Issued
- 15 Township Driveway Permits Issued
- 5 Township Plats/Splits approved
- 4 Township Variances Granted
- 6 Township Certificates of Compliance Issued
- 2 Township Rezoning Requests Approved
- 2 Township City Annexation Requests Presented

- 15 County New Home Permits Issued
- 13 County Home Adtns/Acc Bldg Permits Issued
- 1 County Major Shoreland Alteration Permit Issued
- 1 County Mining Permits Issued in Township

Avon Hills: Update:

The next meeting for this group is scheduled for Saturday February 21st from 9am to 4pm at St John's in the New Science Building Rm 146.

Just a reminder the purpose of the group is three fold as presented in a recent communication.

1. To incorporate local knowledge of the Avon Hills Area with ecological and other scientific knowledge.
2. To identify tracts of land which contribute to the rural nature of the area.
3. To create a vision for the future of the Avon Hills Area that focuses on its rural character, that is economically productive and is environmentally sustainable.

I would urge anyone in the area with an interest in the future of our shared communities to participate in this process by attending the meeting of the committee or making your feelings and opinions known to the local representatives on the team involved in the review. Leroy Gondringer (845-4580) and Steve Plantenberg (356-9447) for the township and Marge Evens (356-7560) for the City of Avon are the local government representatives on team.

For more information see the SJU Arboretum website www.csbsju.edu/arboretum/land_steward/avonhills for additional information about the Initiative's efforts.

Spring is coming ... but the Snow is Still Here!

Just a reminder of the things you should know about snow plowing in the township. This is repeat information but it bears repeating since typically the largest snowfalls are yet to come.

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 or your life!

Annual Meeting and Election Tuesday March 9th

The annual meeting is just around the corner. Jim Yurczyk is retiring after serving the township for many years as a supervisor. We want to thank Jim for his devotion to the township and his devotion to his neighbors he served for so many years.

Thank You Jim Yurczyk!

The election will be for two positions; the Clerk and one supervisor (3 year term). The candidates who filed for the positions are as follows:

Town Clerk -- Renee Smith (incumbent)
Supervisor – Bob Gugenberger (first time)

Write in candidates are allowed in the township elections if you feel another person is a better candidate for either position. Be sure to get out and vote even if you can't make the meeting itself.

The town meeting itself will be held at 8pm at the Avon City Hall. There are a number of issues to be reviewed at the meeting a few of which are listed below.

The most important issue will be the approval of a budget for the 2006 fiscal year for the levy to be assessed and payable in 2005. The budget is always two years into the future.

It is expected that the budget will need to be raised to insure we have sufficient funds available to continue to

maintain the roads in the township. The Township completed bituminous surfacing of all the roads in the township in the late '70, the 80's and early 90's and now 10+ years after completing all the roads we are beginning to see the need for more major maintenance to keep our roads in good condition.

We have approximately 44 miles of roads to be maintained and we have been resurfacing them at a rate of 1-2 miles per year. We need to be maintaining roads at a rate closer to 4 miles per year in order to avoid major repairs and to allow each road to be resurfaced over the course of 10 years.

The maintenance required is crack filling, which is done every year, bituminous overlays which are required every 6-10 years and seal coating which can sometimes delay the need for the overlay process. This would allow us to make sure all roads have been properly maintained at the lowest cost to the township.

The current cost of maintenance is about \$700-900 per mile for crack filling, \$6,000-8,000 per mile for seal coating and \$45,000-50,000 per mile for overlaying the roadway.

The town will also need to consider whether to continue to contract for additional police surveillance to keep the speeders under control along Upper Spunk Lake road from County Road 9 to the Upper Spunk Lake access. The township did contract with the city of Avon for additional patrols for a time at a cost of about \$500 per month but it was determined the board would need approval at the Annual Meeting to continue this contract. If this is an issue you feel strongly about be sure to attend the meeting to have your concerns addressed.

The completed books of maps and data for the township will be available at the meetings for everyone to review. These books were prepared as a result of the meetings held last year in January to review the future of growth in the Avon area and especially in the township.

Copies will be available permanently at the Avon City Hall and at the Great River Regional Library in Albany as well for residents to use. Residents can make copies of data they may want to have at each of these locations for a fee or they can obtain a copy from the township at a cost of about \$2-3 per section.

Township government is the most basic form of democracy in our country. Participate ... get involved and attend the Annual meeting and share in the responsibility of governing our township! **See you at the Annual Meeting. Be there and be responsible.**