

**Avon Township News**

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**Summer Time Construction Projects**

As summer approaches everyone gets ready to complete that project that's been in planning stages all winter waiting for warm weather. Now that summer is here it's time to get started on that project you've been planning.

Now the question becomes ... do I need a permit? It's a good idea to always check with the township Zoning Administrator Cliff Borgerding at 320-356-7191 and the Stearns County Environmental Services Department at 320-656-3613.

Permits are required for all structures constructed in the township. Where you get your permit depends on the structure being built.

The Township issues permits for residential accessory buildings (shed or garage) and agriculture accessory buildings not used for animals (machine shed, garage, hay shed, etc).

The township also issues permits for building driveways off township roads. The township also issues Interim and Conditional Use Permits (CUP's) for certain uses while generally not suitable in a particular zoning district may under some circumstances be allowed if conditions are attached to the use.

Stearns County issues all other permits including new homes, and all structures located within the Shoreland Overlay District which is any property located within 1000 feet of a lake or 300 feet of a stream or a river. Applications for permits from Stearns county can be found on the web at the Stearns County home page.

Permits generally are not required to complete maintenance projects like re-siding a building, replacing windows, doors or shingles and replacing driveways. Even though a permit may not be required it's a good idea to check before beginning any project just to be sure a permit isn't required.

If you build a structure without a county permit you may be required to remove it or pay an after the fact permit fee of \$500 in addition to any other permit or variance costs. The township after the fact fee is \$75 in addition to any other permit or variance costs and can also require the structure to be removed.

**Total Construction Activities YTD 05-13-2004**

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

**13 Total Township Actions Taken**

- 4 County New Home Permits Issued
- 8 County Home Remodels/Additions
- 7 County Accessory Bldg Permits Issued
- 3 County Decks/Gazebos/Porches
- 0 County Major Shoreland Alteration Permit Issued
- 0 County Mining Permits Issued in Township

**22 Total County Actions Taken****Animals in the Township:**

More and more people are moving into the country to enjoy the pleasures of country living everyday. One reason people are doing this is that they hope to be able to have some animals on the land they own.

It is important to make sure you check with the county before adding any animals to your family. Horses, goats, sheep and rabbits are just a few of the animals people are including in their country life style. You may be living in the country there are specific rules that apply to having animals on property that is not zoned for agricultural use.

Even if it is zoned agriculture, if the lot is a small lot (i.e. 40 acres or less) you may not be able to have the animals you would like to have. You may need to follow the same rules that farmers are required to follow if you choose to have animals on your property other than your pet cat or dog. You may need to register your property as a feed lot just like a farmer would or you may need to get a conditional use permit before you can have animals on your property.

Again, it is important to check before you add animals to make sure you are within the regulations and to avoid any potential penalties. If you haven't followed the regulations you may be required to remove the animals. The regulations regarding animals are administered by the Stearns County Environmental Services Department's Feed Lot division. So call them at 320-656-3613 to get the information you need. If you have animals and don't have a feed lot permit or a

conditional use permit its best to check to avoid problems later.

### **Road Maintenance Projects for the Summer**

The plan is to overlay 360<sup>th</sup> Street from County Road 9 west to Tower Road for about a mile and a half including some sections that may need to be dug out to insure the overlay is successful.

The other road that will be worked on this summer is 370<sup>th</sup> Street east from County Road 155 to County Road 3 for about a mile. Part of the street will also need to be dug out to repair sections that are damaged to be effectively repaired with just an overlay.

### **Email Newsletter?**

The township is looking for ways to communicate more often and at a lower cost. One way to reduce costs would be to email this newsletter to residents instead of mailing it. This isn't a huge cost but every penny counts and with the tax increases we are seeing at the local level it is prudent to look for ways to reduce our costs wherever we can.

If you are willing to receive your City/Township by email send your email address to Cliff Borgerding at [Cliffborgerding@aol.com](mailto:Cliffborgerding@aol.com). This will also allow communications with the residents for other information as well.

Many residents use the internet regularly and this is a good way to eliminate the cost of printing and mailing and eliminates additional paper in your home. We all get too much paper that ends up in the recycle bin anyway. So email Cliff to give the township your email address. The address will only be used for township related communications.

### **Avon Hills Initiative Update**

The Avon Hills Initiative has been working hard to gather information and discuss ways to give people a way to express their concerns about the future of the Avon Hills area. The goals of the Initiative are to "create a vision for the area which preserves the rural character of the community, maintains economic productivity and conserves the natural qualities of the area."

According to a recent letter inviting residents to attend a meeting, "Landowners have a great emotional, historical, financial and physical attachment to their land. Anytime a discussion includes land, landowners will have an inherent sense of concern."

The letter went on to say "We emphasize the following to address any apprehension regarding the purpose of the Avon Hills Initiative:

- All Avon Hills Initiative activities and meetings are voluntary. Any decisions which are reached may only be voluntarily implemented by willing landowners.
- We are not interested in eliminating development. We believe sustainable development can be achieved through thoughtful planning and decisions making processes.
- We believe landowners who choose to engage in long-term conservation for the benefit of the community should receive equitable financial compensation.
- We hope the Avon Hills Initiative will be a step in a continuing dialogue".

The next meeting for the group was held Saturday May 15<sup>th</sup> after newsletter deadline so check the website at [www.csbsju.edu/arboretum/land\\_steward/avonhills](http://www.csbsju.edu/arboretum/land_steward/avonhills) for an update on the activities of the organization.

Leroy Gondringer, Township Supervisor, and Steve Plantenberg, Planning Board Chairperson, are participating members of the Avon Hills Initiative team so you can contact them as well if you have an interest or a concern about this project.

### **New Planning Board Member**

Ken Mergen has been appointed by the Board of Supervisors to fill the vacancy on the Planning Board. The opening on the board was published in the Enterprise and posted at Dahlin's, Avon State Bank and The Store in St. Anna looking for candidates to fill the position.

Ken is a long time resident of Avon and will be a great addition to the board. Ken lives in the Sunridge addition just north of Avon. Congratulations to Ken for getting involved in the community. Welcome aboard Ken!

### **Enjoy the Summer!**

Take advantage of the best time in Minnesota and get out and enjoy the area. The Lake Wobegon Trail is a wonderful way to experience the summer as well as fishing, swimming or boating on one of the many area lakes.

Remember to get involved with the Healthy Community Partnership project and help shaped the future of the Avon area ... Do you part and volunteer to help!