

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Board
November 28, 2007
Avon City Hall

Call to Order: The regular meeting of the Avon Township Planning Board was called to order by Chairman Ken Mergen at 8:00 P.M.

Pledge: Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present – Gerry Kremers, Ken Mergen, Steve Plantenberg, Lowell Rushmeyer, and Stephen Saupe. Absent – Joe Scepaniak. Supervisor Leroy Gondringer was also present.

Agenda: The agenda was amended to include: (1) a meeting with Mr. Randy Klasen, Albany Telephone and (2) a discussion of wood-fired boilers.

Minutes: Rushmeyer moved to accept the minutes as written. Seconded by Mergen. Approved unanimously.

Business

1. Albany Phone - Variance Discussion. Randy Klasen from Albany Phone appeared before the planning board to obtain feedback about constructing a communications hut within the 93 foot setback designated by township ordinance. The 10 x 18 structure will be constructed on the Budde property, south of the Lake Wobegon Trail and east of Tower Road. They are requesting construction 72 feet from the road centerline, or 47 feet from the edge of the trail. They are not certain about the type of structure to be constructed. It may be prefab or individual construction, but in either case it will be on a floating slab. The building would house fiber optic and other equipment for the new development that is being constructed. Planning board members were concerned that to approve a variance, there would need to be a hardship. Mr. Klasen indicated that if constructed as requested the company wouldn't need an additional junction box, which would add to the cost. Mr. Klasen was told that variances are not granted for strictly economic reasons. When asked if the junction box would make the system less reliable, Mr. Klasen said no, that it is just another access point. Mr. Klasen was asked if the building would have a 911 number. The answer was probably not. They will require a driveway permit because the access will be from a township road. Gondringer thought it was reasonable to allow a utility company to be within the setback limits. Mr. Klasen was asked why the building was not put in the development; answer: because it makes more sense for future development into Avon and/or up Tower Road. They would like to begin construction in the spring.
2. Gondringer reported that Stearns County Environmental Services had contacted him to tell him about a nuisance complaint that had been filed about the Sadlowsky property.
3. Plantenberg reported on the Stearns County Comprehensive Plan, especially related to Avon Hills which is designated a policy and land use area.

Plantenberg also reported that The Nature Conservancy has adopted the Avon Hills as a pilot project and that St. John's Arboretum received a LCCMR grant to help Avon Hills residents defray costs of conservation easements. There was much discussion about the Comp Plan; it was unanimously approved by the County Planning Board and now goes to the County Board for a final vote.

4. Rushmeyer reported that he had found a township property that county maps had erroneously placed in the Avon Cit/Avon Township growth area. He will look into this.
5. Kremers reported that a resident had requested a 'Watch for Children' sign. The commissioners determined that a sign already exists in the vicinity.
6. Wood Boilers - There has been an apparent increase in the number of wood boilers which generate large amounts of ground level smoke. Because the smoke could be a problem in R1 and R5 zones, board members discussed whether there should be restrictions on where boilers can be sited. Albany and other cities have banned boilers. Rushmeyer will check to see if the County has any ordinances concerning boilers.

Adjournment: Rushmeyer moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM. Mergen seconded. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Saupe
Deputy Clerk

Minutes amended & approved: December 26, 2007