

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Board

April 28, 2010

Avon City Hall

Call to Order: The regular meeting of the Planning Board was called to order by Chairman Mergen at 7:30 P.M.

Pledge: Clerk Saupe led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present – Ken Mergen, Roger Nelson, Gerry Kremers, Stephen Saupe. Absent – Lowell Rushmeyer.

Approval of Agenda: Saupe moved to add to the agenda a discussion of a driveway permit for the Township. Mergen moved to approve the agenda as amended. Saupe second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes: In the March minutes, the date was incorrectly listed as 2009 and changed to 2010. Mergen moved to approve the minutes with this minor correction. Nelson second. All in favor. Motion carried. This same mistake also occurred in the February 2010 minutes and will be changed in those minutes, also.

Business:

1. **Safety Concerns at the Mobile Home Park** – Supervisor Richard Bresnahan convened a meeting to discuss assorted safety issues at the mobile home park owned by Mr. Dan Pitzer. Participants were introduced and included: Mr. Stephen Bresnahan (Catholic Charities), Supervisor LeRoy Gondringer, Avon Fire Chief Eric Linn, Mr. Gordy Spengler (Stearns County Attorney's Office), Mr. John Tracy (Stearns County Environmental Services), Avon Mayor John Grutsch, and Township Attorney Adam Ripple. The meeting was called in response to the State Fire Marshall's recent report documenting the unsafe conditions, as well observations made during the recent township road inspection. Concerns include: (1) accessibility to some of the homes in the back of the park because the private road is too narrow; (2) poor conditions of some of the homes; (3) a scrap metal business in one yard; (4) water quality; (5) curfew issues; (6) difficulty for the school bus turning around; (7) fighting among residents and safety of other residents; (8) homes meeting safety codes; and (9) repairs not being conducted by licensed contractors

Chief Linn stated that it's lucky that there hasn't been any serious fires or injuries. He also indicated that things seem to be getting worse. Last year there were 12 calls there, but there have been 6 calls already; the calls have been medical and domestic, not fire related. Until recently the Fire Department protocol was to not enter the park unless there was a police escort, but that has changed in the last 30 days or so.

Mr. Tracy said that the individual with the scrap business has received a letter to stop.

Everyone expressed concerns with the situation but especially for the welfare of the residents. A solution needs to be found that wouldn't displace residents. Possible suggestions included: (1) Improve/change the management of the park; (2) create

alternate housing and shut it down; (3) provide incentives for owners of trailers to swap out old ones; (4) enact a building code; and (5) move in newer trailers (i.e., FEMA trailers from New Orleans).

Supervisor Bresnahan will act to keep these discussions moving. Mr. Spengler will look into the process of changing managers.

2. **Haakonsen Public Hearing** – Mergen called to order a public hearing at 8:15 PM to consider a request by Chance & Teresa Haakonson for a variance on their property at 32155 Noble Oak Circle. They want to add 6 feet to their garage and cover an entryway. These improvements will put them 27 feet from the road right-of-way, which is closer than current ordinance allows (30 feet). No comments, either for or against the variance, were received. Mergen moved to recommend to the Supervisors to approve the variance. Nelson second. All in favor. Motion carried. Mergen moved to close the public hearing. Kremers second. All in favor. Motion carried.
3. **Collapsed Culvert Upper Spunk Lake Road** – during road inspection it was determined that an underground culvert had collapsed on private property. This has prevented water from draining properly into Spunk Lake and flooding a field across from the Smith farm on County Road 9. A garage, originally permitted by the County, sits atop most of the culvert and is less than 10 feet from the collapsed region. Access to the culvert from this property will be difficult because of the close spacing of garages, etc. The adjacent neighbors will not grant access through their property for the repair. Attorney Ripple reported that it is not listed as a County Ditch which would have simplified issues. He is determining who will be responsible for repairs. In the meantime, Supervisor Bresnahan will contact an engineer to get options. One suggestion was to slip a plastic sleeve into the culvert.
4. **Township Facility Plat & Driveway Permit** – Supervisor Gondringer reported that the Commissioners have not yet approved our plat, in part because we need a water test (by obtaining a water sample from a neighbor). This needs to be done in order to obtain the building permit. This is a concern because the excavator hoped to start next week. The township was unaware of the problem because the County sent the request to former Clerk Smith's home. The township will require a driveway permit to access the site. Nelson moved to recommend to the Supervisors the approval of a driveway permit for the new Avon Township Facility on Queen's Road. Mergen second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Reports/Announcements:

1. Solar Farm at St. John's – Supervisor Bresnahan reported that Br. Benedict Leuthner said that they are having good results with the solar panels installed at St. John's. As a result, St. John's is planning to add another 600 panels (345 kWatt). They are not expanding outside the area originally agreed upon.
2. Fire Board Meeting – the next meeting of the Joint Advisory Fire Board will be Wednesday May 12th at 7:00 PM in Avon City Hall. It will include representatives from Avon Township, Collegeville Township and the City. Saupe was instructed to publish announcement of the meeting to avoid any violation of the open meeting law.

Adjournment: Kremers moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 PM. Nelson second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is May 26, 2010 at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Saupe, Clerk
Minutes amended & approved: May 26, 2010