

Spring is here! It looks like we have finally reached the end of winter.

Now it's time to start implementing those building project plans you've been planning or dreaming about all winter. I provided information for building projects earlier this year and now it's a good time to review the process again. It is necessary to make sure you know what needs to be done before you begin a building project in Avon Township.

Who Issues Permits:

Permits generally can be issued quickly (i.e. a matter of days) if you don't need a variance/rezoning or a plat to complete your project. Variances may be required if your project does not meet the current ordinance requirements for setbacks from property lines. You may require a plat or you may need to plat your property before you can construct your building.

The Township will issue permits for accessory buildings (i.e. garages, storage buildings, machine sheds) to be built outside of the Shoreland Overlay District. The overlay district refers to property located within 1000 feet of any lake and 300 feet of any stream or river.

The Stearns County Environmental Services department will issue all permits for home construction, accessory buildings within the Shoreland Overlay District, and feedlot buildings.

Variances/Rezoning and Plats:

Contact the county or the township to find out if you need a variance or need to rezone your property or create a plat to construct your building. You can look up the county's 209 Land Use Ordinance and 230 Subdivision Ordinance online at the Stearns County website www.co.stearns.mn.us and then going to the Environmental Services department and looking for the on-line ordinance web site. It is best to have put together information about your property and building site footprint and then review with the county or the township to identify if you will need a variance.

Public Notice Required:

Any variance or rezoning or plat requires public notice usually a minimum of 10 days or more before the date of the meeting where the variance will be reviewed. The boards that review these requests usually meet only once each month so it is important to

make sure you identify what you need and what information you need to prepare to meet with the appropriate board.

Township: If you need a variance, rezoning or a plat before you can receive a permit from the township you will need to present your request to the Township Planning Board for review and then to the Board of Supervisors for final approval. This process can take 1-2 months or more so it is important to make sure you find out if you need a variance or rezoning or plat. The Avon Township Planning Board meets the last Wednesday each month at 8pm in the Avon City Hall Chamber meeting room. The Board of Supervisors meets the following week, the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 pm in the same place.

Variances are not automatically granted and can be denied. They will be granted only in very limited cases. The purpose of the Planning Board review is to allow the opportunity for a situation to be reviewed to identify the unique circumstances that would allow for a variance to be granted.

County: If you need a variance or need to rezone your property or create a plat

before you can receive a permit from the county you will need to review your request with the Stearns County Environmental Services. The county will usually visit the building site to review the situation to understand why the variance, rezoning or plat is required. The information and the situation will be reviewed and approved or denied by the Stearns County Planning Board or the Stearns County Board of Adjustment depending on the request. These boards need approximately 30 days to be able to meet the publication requirements for their meetings. The Planning Board meets the 3rd Thursday each month and the Board of Adjustment meets the 4th Thursday of the month.

What do you need a permit for?

You will need a permit for any structure larger than 10 ft x 10 ft or 100 square feet. It doesn't matter if it is on a foundation or not. It doesn't matter if its portable or not unless it has wheels and then it may need a Minnesota Highway Department license plate instead ... in the case of travel trailers and mobile homes you may need a Conditional Use permit.

If you are going to replace your siding, put on new

shingles or replace the windows and doors on a building you don't need a permit. That is considered a repair and you don't need a permit. Basically if you don't change the "foot print" of the existing building you don't need a permit. If you have any question about whether you need a permit it's better to ask first before you begin construction unless you like to pay double for a permit! If you are building driveway or an approach you will need a permit from the township and if the driveway is accessed from a county road you will need a permit from the Stearns County Highway Engineer as well.

Contact information:

Township:
Cliff Borgerding
Zoning Administrator
33504 Shorewood Drive,
Avon MN 56310
Phone: 320-356-7191
Cliffborgerding@aol.com

Stearns County:
www.co.stearns.mn.us

Environmental Services Dept
Stearns County
Administrative Service Bldg
St Cloud, MN 56301
Phone: 320-656-3613

Highway Engineer
455 28th Ave So
Waite Park, MN 56387
Phone: 320-255-6180

Finally, now that you have all this information you can get to work on that project you've been dreaming about all winter. As you can see from the information provided, the process could be very simple or can become more complex and require more time to be able to gather all the information needed to acquire your permit to build. You may need to spend a fair amount of time learning what is required to complete you project. Remember that any project can have its ups and downs but good planning and good documentation can make the process much easier and help make sure you don't miss anything along the way. Good luck with your project!