

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Board
March 25, 2009
Avon City Hall

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

Pledge: Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Present – Ken Mergen, Roger Nelson, Gerry Kremers, Lowell Rushmeyer, Stephen Saupe. All township officials (Supervisor's Gondringer, Merdan and Bresnahan, Treasurer Martini, and Clerk Smith) were also present.

Approval of Agenda: Mergen moved to approve. Nelson second. Approved unanimously.

Minutes: Several typographical corrections in the February 25, 2009 minutes were made. Rushmeyer indicated that the minutes should indicate that there will be a meeting of city and township officials, not a Joint Powers Board meeting. Mergen moved to approve the minutes as amended. Rushmeyer second. Approved unanimously.

Business:

1. Meyer Certificate of Compliance & Driveway - Dennis Meyer appeared before the board to request a Certificate of Compliance to split his current 100 acre parcel into a 60 acre parcel and 40 acre parcel that includes his existing farm house. Mr. Meyer indicated he had been to the County and was alerted to the need for the Certificate. The reason for the request is that he plans to build a home on the 60 acre piece. Mr. Meyer also indicated that there is an existing feedlot across the street but the County indicated it is not a concern. Mr. Meyer also requested a driveway permit for access to the new home. The driveway would be sited near the crest of a ridge in the road. The Board was concerned that the driveway would provide visibility in both directions when pulling out of the driveway. Mr. Meyer indicated that he planned to build the drive close enough to the top to provide visibility. Mr. Meyer was also alerted to the need for aprons and appropriate culvert. Mergen moved to recommend to the supervisors that Mr. Meyer be granted a Certificate of Compliance for his land split contingent upon its meeting all Stearns County regulations and that he be granted a driveway permit contingent upon it being built to appropriate specifications. Nelson second. Approved unanimously.
2. Facility Task Force – A group of township residents was gathered in response to the decision at the Annual Meeting to assess township needs and plan for a potential township facility. The members of this planning Task Force include: Marcy Heinen (worked at Avon school and with elections), Steve Plantenberg (Chair), Ed Springer Jr. (electrician, business owner), Eric Linn (fire chief, plumbing business), Steve Himsl (heavy equipment welder), Lee Larkey (retired IRS), Kelly Martini (Township treasurer), Zoe Graul (voting board, experience in business and planning), and Renee Smith (Township Clerk).

Chair Plantenberg opened the discussion and provided a brief history of his expertise and role in the process. He was asked by Supervisors to help lead the process of the township assessing needs. Plantenberg suggested a series of five or six meetings in which the group would meet about twice a month. The first meeting will be Wednesday April 8 at 7 PM in Avon City Hall. The following meeting will be April 22 and is tentatively set for Colledgeville Town Hall.

Plantenberg outlined a potential plan for the meetings. He suggested it will first be necessary to determine the value of the existing five-acre township property and to look at the Township growth plan to see where residents' would be best served in long term in terms of accessibility, etc. This could be followed by a space requirement assessment (i.e., Do we need a meeting room? If so, how large? What will be done in it? Would it have a vestibule? Would there be a well on the site? How large? A filling station? How large a maintenance facility?). Then the group would prioritize space needs and decide on the shell construction (i.e., what should it be constructed out of? Will it be a 'green' building?). Then based on the preliminary ideas, the group can put together a preliminary cost assessment. The final meeting would be used to reaffirm the plan before a final presentation to the Supervisors. Plantenberg suggested it would be 7-9 month construction cycle.

According to Township Attorney Ripple we can buy land by vote of the Supervisors, but a building requires a vote of residents at either a special meeting or Annual Meeting. If approved by residents, the Township could break ground next spring with maybe site prep this fall.

Graul recommended a cost analysis of the project demonstrating showing how it saves money. The group also needs to consider ongoing costs such as maintenance, utilities, insurance, cleaning, etc. The group agreed that transparency of the planning process is good and the process should take into account the long-term needs/growth of the community.

Linn said that Avon City Hall is currently the only local facility with a generator – a new township facility could include one for emergencies since the current town hall is small if a real emergency should arise.

Larkey gave a little history about a previous township plan to construct a facility. The original idea was build with volunteer labor at modest price.

Plantenberg said a township facility is now being considered for construction because: (1) the township comprehensive plan identifies the need to build a facility; (2) we spend a disproportionate amount of tax revenue on snow-plowing compared to neighboring townships. More efficient townships do not subcontract their snow plowing; (3) our current snow removal company (Lange) is planning to get out of the business, (4) we need a safe and centralized location for record storage so that records are accessible for use by township officials and the public; (5) we need a consistent place to vote and store the voting machines; and (6) we need a space with a generator for emergency services in the event of a disaster.

Mergen and Saupe will bring township maps to the next meeting.

3. Planning Board Composition – The terms of Kremers and Nelson will expire this year.

Reports/Announcements: none

Adjournment: Rushmeyer moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM. Kremers second. Approved unanimously.

Next Meeting: The next meeting is 29 April, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Saupe, Deputy Clerk

Minutes amended & approved: April 29, 2009