

# Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission

July 26, 2023

Avon Township Hall (16881 Queens Road, Avon)

**Call to Order:** Chair Lori Yurczyk called to order the meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission (PC) at 7:00 PM in the Main Chamber of the Town Hall. The meeting, like all Town meetings, was also available via Zoom at the following URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8325486945> (PIN: AvonTown).

**Pledge:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Roll Call:** Present – Craig Blonigen, Rich Sanoski, Stephen Saupe, Andrew Wensmann, and Lori Yurczyk (*Chair*). Also present: LeRoy Gondringer, Kelly Martini

**Approval of Agenda:** Sanoski moved to approve the agenda as presented. Wensmann second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** To clarify the intent of the Lang’s request at the June meeting, the phrase “entirely on their property” in the last line of the first paragraph of #1 was deleted. Blonigen moved to approve the minutes from the June 28, 2023 meeting as amended. Wensmann second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Public Hearings:** *Sanoski CUP for a Conventional Subdivision in the Avon Hills Overlay District*

At 7:35 PM Yurczyk opened a public hearing to consider a request by Rich and Brenda Sanoski for a Conditional Use Permit for a conventional subdivision in the Avon Hills Overlay district. The Sanoski’s have proposed merging three parcels they own into two, approximately equal-sized parcels, each with a building credit. Because the property is in the Avon Hills environmental overlay area, a CUP is required for a conventional subdivision. The Sanoski’s submitted a completed CUP application.

Announcement of the public hearing was published and posted. In addition, 27 letters were mailed to property owners within one-quarter mile of the Sanoski’s property. No comments by phone, email, text or letter, were received from the public. One resident attended the hearing to learn more about the project; she had no comment.

Mr. LeRoy Gondringer stated that the ordinance was primarily developed to provide options for conservation developments on larger parcels (*i.e.*, > 60 acres) with multiple building credits, but that single lot plats such as this one, do not qualify because the acreage is too small.

The building site in the western lot has not been identified on the plat. Mr. Sanoski stated that it would be in the NW corner of the property, which would be in the Environmental Overlay area.

Blonigen moved to close the public hearing. Wensmann second. Four in favor. One abstain (Sanoski). Motion carried.

The PC went through the “Findings of Facts for a Conventional Subdivision in the Avon Hills Overlay District” and determined:

1. The application appears to meet the natural resource conservation standards of the ordinance.
2. The application meets the agricultural and living pillar goals/policies of the Stearns County Comprehensive plan.

3. The proposal will maintain the rural nature of the area and there should be plenty of green space remaining.
4. The proposed building site, based on Mr. Sanoski's testimony, will be at the edge of the forested area and not impact the natural resources.
5. The applicant stated that he knows that a density bonus is not permitted.
6. There are currently no proposed building sites on the western parcel. The proposed building site will be 150 feet from any existing structures. Construction on the proposed building site will have no impact on priority natural resource communities.
7. The building site was not identified on the preliminary plat provided to the Township PC. Mr. Sanoski stated that he plans to construct only a house and shed on the parcel. Based on Mr. Sanoski's testimony, then:
  - a) The proposed structures will avoid impacts on priority natural resources.
  - b) The proposed envelope will not be larger than 2 acres.
  - c) The proposed structures will protect natural vegetation because they are proposed to be in an agricultural field.
  - d) The building site is near the Avon Hills Scientific and Natural Area, but should have minimal impact on this SNA.
  - e) The building site appears to avoid shore and bluff zones and is not on a steep slope.
  - f) The building site is near an existing road for access (*i.e.*, Peach Drive).
  - g) No visual buffers or landscaping would be required to maintain the rural character and natural views.
  - h) Mitigation standards are not applicable.
  - i) The building envelope will be part of a tillable agricultural field, but it is on the edge of the field.

Blonigen moved to recommend to the Supervisors, based on the Findings of Facts and a review of the pillars/factors in the County Comprehensive Plan, approval of a CUP for Rich & Brenda Sanoski for a Conventional Subdivision in the Avon Hills Environmental Overlay area, with the condition that the building envelope is in the NW corner of the property as stated by Mr. Sanoski during the public hearing. Wensmann second. Four in favor. One abstain (Sanoski). Motion carried.

### **Business:**

1. **Pilarski Shed** – Mr. Brian Pilarski, 19274 Red Oak Circle, Avon (MN), appeared at the meeting to request that the Township provide him a letter in support of a shed he wants to build on his property. At their 25 August, 2022 meeting, the Stearns County Board of Adjustment denied Mr. Pilarski a variance to construct a 34x40 accessory structure, because the accessory building area on this property would be 1862 sq ft more than the maximum allowed and because the proposed structures would be taller than currently allowed. Mr. Pilarski was told that the Township does not provide letters of support for resident projects, and recommended that he work with the County since the property is in lakeshore district. The County doesn't have a record of a construction site permit for a building he constructed in 1995; the Clerk will search Town records for the CSP.
2. **Lang/Schreifels/Gondringer Driveway Maintenance Agreement** – as a condition of the driveway permit issued to Barbara & Joseph Lang, 37075 Pelican Lake Road, the area between their new driveway and the neighbors (Dave Schreifels & Linda Gondringer, 37067 Pelican Lake Road) was to be maintained by

Schriefels & Gondringer. The PC generally agreed that any maintenance agreement should be a private matter between the two neighbors.

- 3. **Hiring Policy Review** – a potential hiring policy was reviewed and a typo corrected. The policy will be forwarded to the Supervisors for consideration for adoption.

**Reports/Announcements:**

- **Massmann Solar Project** – Novel Energy alerted the Township that they will not be pursuing a solar project on the Massmann property (34284 Peach Drive).
- **Fire Hall Expansion** – There was an article in the June 28, 2023 issue of the *Star-Post* regarding the Fire Hall Expansion project. They report that the City is considering two alternatives (Training room etc., vestibule/dispatch room) that would require additional funds. An attorney will be asked to draft a bonding agreement, as well as an agreement that spells out township commitment to remain under contract to the city for fire services. Sanoski, the township representative to the Fire Department, reported that he has attended four meetings about the project, though these are primarily informational.
- **Pierskalla/Ramler Property** – It appears that there will be some movement on properties near the intersection of Co Rd 155 and 360<sup>th</sup> Street. This may affect the minimum maintenance road.
- **Beacon** – there is a new password. The Clerk will email it.

**Next Meeting:** The next PC meeting is August 30, 2023 at 7:00 PM (*see ‘Call to Order’ for the Zoom log-in*).

**Other Meetings:** Other Upcoming Meetings/Events (*see ‘Call to Order’ for the Zoom log-in*) include:

- Supervisors Meeting – August 9, 2023
- Joint Planning Commission – October 30, 7 PM, Avon Township Hall

**Adjournment:** Sanoski moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 PM. Blonigen second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk

**date:** August 5, 2023

**Approval:**

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Lori Yurczyk, *Planning Commission Chair – signature*

**date:** \_\_\_\_\_