

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission

May 29, 2024

Avon Township Hall (16881 Queens Road, Avon)

Call to Order: Chair 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 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*). There was a quorum. Also present: LeRoy Gondringer & Kelly Martini.

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

Minutes: Sanoski moved to approve the minutes from the April 24, 2024 meeting as presented. Wensmann second. All in favor. Motion carried. The minutes were signed, as well as the corrected minutes from the March 27, 2024 meeting.

Public Hearings: *none*

Public Comments: *none*

Business:

- Chair/Vice-Chair** – Chair and Vice-Chair were elected at this meeting, though this should have been done at the April meeting. Saupe nominated Yurczyk to serve as Chair of the Avon Township Planning Commission. Sanoski second. All in favor. Motion carried. Sanoski nominated Blonigen to serve as Vice-Chair of the Avon Township Planning Commission. Wensmann second. All in favor. Motion carried.
- McDougle Driveway Permit** – Mr. Jim McDougle, 15671 Parkwood Circle, appeared at the meeting to request a driveway access permit to widen his existing driveway and improve a second existing driveway used to access a pole shed. Mr. McDougle stated that he needed to remove a tree adjacent to his main driveway and needs to repair the area. He plans to widen the access at the same time. The other access, along the north property line, is unimproved and is used to get to a pole shed. He said he wants to do things ‘right’. Mr. McDougle plans to extend the current culvert of his main drive, and a new culvert will likely be required for the improved access. Gondringer will examine both proposed access changes prior to the Supervisor Meeting. Sanoski moved to recommend to the Supervisors approval of an access permit for Jim McDougle, 15671 Parkwood Circle, Avon (MN) to widen his main driveway to no more than 24 feet; to allow improvements on a second, existing access used to access a pole shed; and to confirm that culverts are required and included as a condition of the permit. Blonigen second. All in favor. Motion carried. The PC discussed whether two separate access permits would be required or a single one, and if two fees would be charged. Following the model of Stearns County to allow the construction of multiple buildings with a single Construction Site Permit, the PC generally agreed that one permit and one fee is recommended, and that the damage deposit is not returned until completion of both accesses.
- Election Judges** – Ten individuals have currently agreed to serve as an election judge for the upcoming election cycle (2024 – 2026). The Clerk inquired if anyone had suggestions for more potential judges. There were none. Potential applicants should contact the Clerk.
- Joint Planning Board (JPB) Update/Report** – The City of Avon/Avon Township JPB recently met. Board members included both Township (Sanoski who was filling in for Yurczyk, Supervisor Rassier) and City (Mark Schulzetenberge, Jim Read) representatives. In addition, several other Town (Gondringer, Chad Klocker, Kelly

Martini, Saupe) and City staff (Jodi Austing-Traut, Jeff Manthe) were present. Sanoski reported that the main topic of discussion was the renewal of the Orderly Annexation Agreement which is due to expire in 2025. Both the City and Township seem amenable to renewing the agreement, though perhaps with a few ‘tweaks.’ For example, the neighborhood map might need revision and it seemed that the City could be interested in lowering the percentage of a neighborhood vote required for annexation. It was suggested that many Township residents are unlikely to vote for annexation because of assessments. The bulk of development in the Joint Powers area in the near future will likely be on vacant land.

The JPB suggested establishing an *ad hoc* committee with members from the City and Town to examine the agreement and report back to the JBP. The PC agreed this was a good idea. One question that arose is who – City / Town / shared – pays the bill for any required legal work? Saupe moved to recommend to the Supervisors to adopt the suggestion of the JPB and create an *ad hoc* committee to review the Orderly Annexation Agreement and to appoint Craig Blonigen, LeRoy Gondringer and Rich Sanoski to serve as the Township representatives. Wensmann second. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. **Policy Reviews** – The PC was authorized to review existing Township policies and guidelines. The PC discussed how to approach the review. It was agreed that the Snow & Ice Control Policy (and plow routes) should be considered first because there will be a change in maintenance staffing. After that, the PC suggested that the Clerk decide the order in which policies be reviewed and put them on the agenda as time permits.

Reports/Announcements:

1. **Power Pole Alignment Update** – The County Planning Commission recommended approval of the revised CUP submitted by Xcel to realign power poles from Saint John’s to I-94. Approval was based on the condition that signed easement agreements were obtained. Saupe said that he had submitted a letter to request another condition for approval (include a plan to protect both the creek that will be spanned by two poles, and the wetland, in which a new 90’ pole – the tallest on the line – will be installed).
2. **CSP in Joint Powers Area** – Mr. Nathan Hylla is considering purchasing property for a business in the orderly annexation area. He inquired about the process to receive a CSP (the Township administrator – Nancy Scott – will handle the paperwork).
3. **Driveway Fence Concern** – A call was received from Barb Lang (37075 Pelican Lake Road, Avon) who was concerned that a fence installed between her property and that of her neighbor, Linda Gondringer (37067 Pelican Lake Road), was in the Town road right-of-way. Both parties will likely attend the June Supervisors meeting to discuss the situation.
4. **Gondringer Driveway Permit** – At their May meeting, the Township Supervisors decided that Bryan Gondringer, 18245 360th Street, Albany (MN), didn’t require an Access Permit because he was going to improve an existing approach and it didn’t appear to need a culvert. However, during the construction work, the driveway was moved and a culvert appeared necessary. This means a driveway permit should have been required. This issue will be discussed at the June Supervisors meeting.
5. **Irrigation Pipe beneath Tower Road** – Supervisor Rassier reported that there were complaints (work being done without a permit; equipment blocking the road) about an irrigation pipe that was installed beneath Tower Road by contractors working for LeRoy Gondringer. The sheriff was summoned to the site. The contractor was requested to keep the road open. No permit is currently required by the Township to install a pipeline beneath a Township road.
6. **Gertken Solar Farm Vegetation** – No inspection is needed for seeding/landscape plan of new Gertken solar project because the panels have not yet been installed.
7. **145th Avenue Roadwork** – has begun and should be complete by the end of the week.

- 8. **Junk Stored on Property** – Blonigen has received complaints from residents regarding junk that is being stored on a property near Two Rivers Lake. He wondered if anything can be done to enforce a clean-up. The County handles these situations. The PC said that there are regulations against unlicensed vehicles stored on a property, but otherwise it is not easy to rectify these situations.
- 9. **Noise Barrier** – Blonigen suggested that it might open the Township to liability if the Town were to serve as a financial account holder for noise barrier donations.
- 10. **Maintenance Staff** – Koopmeiners resigned his position, though it’s not clear if a formal resignation has been received. In the event that the Supervisors decide to rehire this position, the PC recommends creating an *ad hoc* hiring committee including Saupe, Blonigen and a Supervisor. We should also contact the City to see if they have suggestions for potential candidates, especially considering they recently hired a similar person.

Next Meeting: The next PC meeting is June 26, 2024 at 7:00 PM (*see ‘Call to Order’ for the Zoom log-in*).

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

- Supervisors Meeting – June 5, 2024

Adjournment: Sanoski moved to adjourn the meeting at about 8:40 PM. Yurczyk second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk

date: June 2, 2024

Approval:

Lori Yurczyk, *Planning Commission Chair – signature*

date: _____