Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission
January 28, 2026
Avon Township Hall (16881 Queens Road, Avon 56310)

Call to Order: Chair Andrew Wensmann called to order the meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission (PC) at about 7:00 PM in the Main Chamber of the Town Hall. The meeting was available via Zoom at the URL: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8325486945 (PIN: AvonTown).

Pledge: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present – Craig Blonigen, Kelly Martini, Stephen Saupe, Andrew Wensmann, and Lori Yurczyk. There was a quorum.

Approval of Agenda: Added to the agenda was a discussion of emergency procedures for elections and emergency contacts. Blonigen moved to approve the agenda as amended. Martini second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes: Yurczyk moved to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2025 meeting as presented. Blonigen second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Hearings: *none scheduled*.

Public Comments: *none*.

Business:

1. **Frie Variance Request** – Ms. Cindy Frie (34139 Lower Spunk Lane; PID 03.01227.0007) appeared at the meeting to discuss a variance to construct an addition to her garage that would be closer to the road right-of-way than currently permitted. Ms. Frie previously attended meetings of the Planning Commission (May 2025) and Supervisors (June 2025) to discuss this issue. Ms. Frie brought additional information for consideration – a survey and septic design for the property. Ms. Frie said that the addition would extend 8 feet from the existing garage. Her original plan was a 12-foot addition but she scaled it back after the previous township concerns about the setback from the road. After reviewing the additional documents, it was still not clear to the PC how far Ms. Frie wanted the new addition to be set back from the road center. It appeared that Ms. Frie would need a variance of approximately 28 feet from the center-of-the-road. She was told that the smaller the variance request usually the greater likelihood of approval. It was recommended to Ms. Frie to request the surveyor to add the required measurements to the survey. Once this information is received and clarified, the PC could review it at the February meeting and then make a recommendation to the Supervisors to hold a public hearing at the March meeting (because Ms. Frie is unable to attend the February PC meeting).

2. **Rifle vs Shotgun Hunting Law Change** – A new state law eliminates shotgun zones in Minnesota, but allows each County to opt out. The PC discussed whether the Town should make a recommendation to the County regarding this change. Concerns expressed by the PC were the range of bullets, potential property damage, whether the law change would affect property values, and safety to residents. Most hunters use elevated stands which would mean that bullets would not fly as far. Further, muzzle loaders still have a long range. There was also a discussion of safety issues regarding youth hunting. After considerable discussion, the PC reached no consensus on whether the Town should recommend to the County to maintain shotgun-only areas.

3. **Permits issued in 2025** – the County requested a listing of permits (variances, CUP's, IUP's) issued by the Township during 2025. The PC identified three; they will be reported to the County.

4. **Road Plan** – Blonigen has been working on the Road Inventory spreadsheet to design an algorithm to help rate roads in need of resurfacing. His algorithm multiplies the age of the road by a factor of two and subtracts it from an arbitrary baseline number of 20, resulting in a higher score for roads in greater need for resurfacing. The algorithm factors in (a) road age – the last time the road was resurfaced or using the default of 2000 if the actual year is unknown; (b) road quality – rating on last inspection, and (c) grouping roads so that the Township resurfaces about 2 miles per year. The model doesn't include finishing the second half of Queens Road and Tower Road. Traffic volume, number of parcels on the road, and ROW width were cited as additional factors that could be used to help refine the model. The PC recognized that the model appears to be a great tool to help the Township make road resurfacing decision. The PC also discussed the limitations of the current data used to build the model and noted that road ratings that differ by a few points may not be statistically significant. The PC also addressed the discrepancies in the total length of roads – our records show 46.8 miles while the County records 44 miles of roads.

5. **Emergency Voting Plan** – The PC reviewed the current PC election emergency plan. The consensus was to leave in the document, specific names and phone numbers despite the risk of the document becoming out-of-date. The Town should confirm that the St. Anna Church is still available. Potential problems that were cited include the diocese might shut down this church in the near future and that the basement may not be handicap-accessible. It was suggested that deputy clerk, Marion Gondringer, contact Avon Church to see if it could be our alternate voting location.

6. **Emergency Listing** – A draft sign listing emergency contacts was presented. It was suggested that all of the Supervisors be included.

7. **Form Review** – the Certificate of Compliance / Administrative Subdivision and Plat review forms will be examined at the next meeting.

Old Business/Policy Reviews/Reports/Announcements:

- The reappointment process for PC members was briefly summarized.
- Blonigen reported that he didn't identify anyone local who might revise the town website.
- Township Election – Chad Klocker filed to run as Supervisor and Stephen Saupe filed for Clerk. Absentee ballots will be sent out next week. A ballot must be sent to anyone on the permanent absentee ballot list.

Next Meeting: The next PC meeting is February 25, 2026 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 – February 4, 2026
- Board of Audit Meeting – February 4, 6:00 PM
- Township Day at the Capitol – March 2, 2026
- Town Hall open to accept absentee ballots – March 7, 2026; 10 AM – 12 PM
- Public Accuracy Test – March 7, 2026; 10:15 AM
- Town Hall open to accept absentee ballots – March 9, 2026; 1-5 PM
- Township election (2-8 PM) & Annual Meeting (8:15 PM) – March 10, 2026
- MAT Spring Short Course – March 24, 2026 (St. Cloud)

Adjournment: Wensmann moved to adjourn the meeting at about 8:43 PM. Martini second. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,   **date**: February 2, 2026
Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk

Approval:

_____   **date**: _____
Andrew Wensmann, *Planning Commission Chair – signature*