

# November 19, 2019 Planning Commission Working Minutes

Royalton Township Working Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006

Email: [royalton@royaltontownship.com](mailto:royalton@royaltontownship.com) -- Website: [www.royaltontownship.com](http://www.royaltontownship.com)

19 November 2019

Approved

6:30 p.m., 19 November 2019, Chair Leslie Orvis convened the Royalton Township working planning commission meeting with members Jeff Schlaeger, Priscilla Schneider, Duane Swanson, and Gary Valvoda present.

The commission reviewed the septic information for the Pangerl/Nordby minor subdivision request and will await Zoning Administrator John Kemen's recommendation. Clerk Swanson presented drafts of two resolutions: one formalizing the current practice of electing a vice-chair at the reorganizational meeting and one declaring that Christopher Columbus Day and the day after Thanksgiving are not holidays so that official business may be conducted. The commission's consensus was to move forward with both resolutions.

Clerk Swanson summarized the updated wage theft law that affects how employees are treated. The definition of "employee" includes Royalton's road superintendent, assistant road superintendent, deputy clerk, election judges and elected officials when performing work beyond their elected functions. Although this relates only to new hires, the law does require much more paperwork, including job descriptions and forms acknowledging that employees have received specific information about pay, pay times, and job duties. Most troubling for townships at this time is the requirement that employees be paid at least once every 31 days. Because town meetings may be spaced more than 31 days apart, the Minnesota Association of Townships recommends that townships establish a procedure to pay employees twice a month, a practice that is permissible by law and that can be accomplished without the board of supervisors approving the payroll at a meeting prior to the employee being paid. [Such payroll would be approved by the board at the next meeting.] More study regarding the implementation of this law is needed.

The board discussed the communication from County Administrator David Minke notifying the township of a hearing of the county board about the possibility of the county taking over all assessing functions, thus preventing the township from contracting with private assessors. Members expressed serious concern with this possibility, anticipating increased costs and increased lack of local control. Unfortunately, the hearing is scheduled for the same time as the November town board meeting. Members expressed the need for increased communication with county board members.

Chair Orvis then turned the discussion to the proposed solar energy ordinance. He distributed copies of relevant portions of the draft Pine County zoning ordinance that contain definitions and policies for commercial solar projects (specifically, paragraphs 1.6, 2.4(1)(e), and 4.9). Members expressed agreement in principle with the definition of commercial solar projects and, especially, with the decommissioning plan requirements for them. It appeared that there was

interest in combining the solar garden and solar farm categories previously discussed into one commercial category.

Deputy Clerk Schneider brought up her recommendation to stop taking a monthly salary as of 1 January 2020 and, instead, be paid a straight wage for hours worked. Currently, this would result in a monetary savings for the township. After some discussion about how this might affect future positions, the commission recommended that this issue be added to the board's November agenda.

At 8:20 p.m., Chair Orvis declared the meeting concluded.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk/Member

Leslie Orvis, Chair/Member

Jeff Schlaeger, Member

Priscilla Schneider, Member

Gary Valvoda, Member

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