

September 15, 2020 Planning Commission Working Minutes

Royalton Township Working Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

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15 September 2020

Approved

6:30 p.m., 15 September 2020, Royalton Township working planning commission meeting convened with members Jeff Schlaeger, Priscilla Schneider, Duane Swanson and Gary Valvoda present and Chair Leslie Orvis absent. Supervisor Wayne Olson also attended. Social distancing was observed and masks were worn.

The commission first considered the 17 March 2020 draft of a proposed solar energy systems ordinance. It reviewed each sentence in the draft, suggested wording and substantive changes, and authorized Clerk Swanson to incorporate changes into a new draft to be reviewed at the regular September meeting. Major changes included substituting "Community/Commercial Solar Energy Systems (CCSES)" for "Community Solar Energy Systems", changing maximum panel height from 12 feet to 20 feet, adding a clause that the township will not be responsible for road dust or other airborne particles that may settle on solar equipment, and equalizing setbacks between ground mount energy systems and community/commercial systems. Screening regulations generated substantial discussion resulting in removal of certain language and inclusion of specific language authorizing the board to waive or reduce screening requirements at the recommendation of the planning commission. Members could not reach consensus on the minimum acreage for solar energy gardens and farms, tabling this issue for future discussion. Discussion centered between 10 and 20 acres.

The commission then considered the issues surrounding the proposed abandonment of a small portion of Riverbed Road west of Linden, as requested by property owner Michael Murphy. Clerk Swanson distributed copies of the Minnesota Association of Townships work sheet describing the processes for extinguishing a town's interest in roads. Members expressed opinions noting the long-term impact of abandoning a town road, the need to protect access to adjacent properties, and any potential savings to the township. Supervisor Olson and Zoning Administrator John Kemen had visited the site of the proposed abandonment in July and talked with the landowner. The landowner requested various road upgrades to the existing intersection. More study of this issue will be needed.

At 8:00 p.m., 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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