

Royalton Township Public Hearing Minutes  
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006  
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23 February 2021  
Approved

At 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, 23 February 2021, Zoning Administrator John Kemen called to order a duly published and posted public hearing. In accordance with the Governor's emergency pandemic order, masks were worn and social distancing was observed. In attendance were Planning Commission members Leslie Orvis, Jeff Schlaeger, Priscilla Schneider, and Duane Swanson, with Gary Valvoda absent. Supervisors Wayne Olson and Marshall Pearson also attended. Approximately four members of the public were present, including Laura Martin, Teresa Kukowski, Greg Schneider, and Dan Saumer.

Administrator Kemen noted the purpose of the hearing was to receive testimony on a proposed solar energy ordinance for Royalton Township. Planning Commission Chair Leslie Orvis gave a brief history of the proposed ordinance, noting that the draft wording had been in discussion for nearly two years and had been the subject of numerous public working planning commission meetings. He reiterated the township's encouragement of alternative energy sources while at the same time recognizing that installations had to be done in a safe manner and in ways that did not cause blight to the surrounding landowners.

Clerk Swanson reported that no verbal comments and one written comment had been received prior to the meeting, the latter being an e-mailed letter signed "A group of concerned citizens". This letter, which is part of the record of this hearing, was discussed at the February working planning commission meeting. Laura Martin, representing the authors of the letter, asked several questions about how this draft compared to those of neighboring jurisdictions, would this ordinance hinder solar energy usage in the future, who would be inspecting installations, the difference between personal and commercial use regarding "buybacks", what would ensure that systems were not abandoned, and about vegetative screening. Administrator Kemen, Chair Orvis, and other members of the planning commission responded: This issue has been discussed by other county and township jurisdictions (Royalton is not alone in developing one); the township building inspector is responsible for issuing required permits (although state electrical inspectors may be required for certain types of installations); there are size limitations based on acreage and/or square footage for ground-based installations; large installations are required to bond with sufficient reserves to ensure clean-up; and the vegetative requirements can be waived by the town board upon recommendation of the planning commission.

After asking if anyone still wished to speak, and hearing no one, Administrator Kemen declared the hearing adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_, John Kemen, Zoning Administrator  
\_\_\_\_\_, Leslie Orvis, Planning Commission Chair  
\_\_\_\_\_, Jeff Schlaeger, Planning Commission Member  
\_\_\_\_\_, Priscilla Schneider, Planning Commission Member  
\_\_\_\_\_, Gary Valvoda, Planning Commission Member