

Royalton Township Working Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
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8 August 2023
Approved

6:35 p.m., 8 August 2023, Chair Leslie Orvis convened the Royalton Township working planning commission meeting with Members Jeff Schlaeger, Priscilla Schneider, Duane Swanson, and Gary Valvoda present. Tom Madison also attended.

Chair Orvis noted that several issues were on the agenda. He began with a discussion of a smoking/tobacco policy for the township and environs. Smoking is prohibited within the town hall and garages, per the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act. That Act requires signage, which the township does not have. Chair Orvis offered to see that appropriate signs were made. The township will require at least four – two for the town hall and one for each garage. Discussion then centered on whether the entire campus should be smoke and tobacco free. How would this be enforced? The consensus seemed to be that it could not be effectively enforced. There was agreement that a cigarette receptacle should be acquired for outside the town hall. There also seemed to be consensus that the commission should recommend that the entire campus be smoke free. If so, should this be made a part of a revised rental contract?

Tom Madison was present to continue his concern about dust emanating from the gravel pit to the north of his property. He referred to his recent letter to the town and commission, copies of which were handed out by Clerk Swanson. He noted his discussion with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency that confirmed that dust can travel a long way. He recommended that the board amend its ordinance and consider amending any conditional/interim use permits to require a timeline for reclamation of gravel pits and other commercial mining operations. Clerk Swanson noted that he would forward to members Mr. Madison’s citation to a 1992 DNR-produced reclamation guidebook that is a good resource. Chair Orvis noted that he would also discuss this issue with Zoning Administrator John Kemen. Mr. Madison then left the meeting.

The board directed the commission to review the recent cannabis legalization legislation. Should a moratorium on retail sales be imposed? Some local jurisdictions are considering this. Chair Orvis noted that two separate issues are being conflated. The first issue, presented by Joe Zappa at the last board meeting, concerns the growing of cannabis on a large-scale basis. The commission continues to recommend that the board work with Mr. Zappa through the conditional use process to ensure that all state regulations are met or exceeded. The board has no authority to deny outright such an enterprise. Mr. Zappa has expressed his desire to continue to work with the township on this project and those discussions should continue.

A separate issue is the retail sale of cannabis products permitted by the recent acts of the Minnesota legislature. That legislation has caused a great deal of confusion for local jurisdictions that is beginning to be sorted out. Member Valvoda relayed his discussion with Senator Rarick about this issue, with the senator saying that the law has little specific guidance for local jurisdictions and seemed to have been written and passed without considering its impact on local jurisdictions. The consensus of the commission was to continue to study ordinances of other local jurisdictions (especially Pine City and Pine County) for guidance on what a possible moratorium on the sale of cannabis products would look like, how it would be enforced, and what would be the process for establishing one. Additional direction from the board would be welcomed.

LO____ JS____ PS____ DS____ GV____

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

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk/Member

Leslie Orvis, Chair/Member

Jeff Schlaeger, Member

Priscilla Schneider, Member

Gary Valvoda, Member