

Royalton Township Working Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
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16 January 2024
Approved

6:30 p.m., 16 January 2024, Interim Chair Jeff Schlaeger convened the Royalton Township working planning commission meeting with Member Duane Swanson present in the meeting room and Members Priscilla Schneider and Gary Valvoda present via electronic means. Chair Leslie Orvis was absent. Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, Deputy Clerk Andrea Anderson, and members of the public also attended.

Clerk Swanson distributed copies of the ordinance pages relating to the items that the commission had to review when considering an interim use permit. Interim Chair Schlaeger reviewed each item. Applicant Daniel Smith was present to respond to questions and provide additional information. He explained the nature of his detailing business, stressing that work was done in an existing structure. By consensus, the commission agreed with the following statements: The town's comprehensive plan encourages businesses that are compatible with its requirements; this proposed business meets those requirements. There will be no excessive demand for public facilities and services, the proposed business having only one customer at a time. Because the current business operations are contained in an existing structure (shed/shop) with a significant distance from the nearest residents there is no depreciation of surrounding land values or deterrence to development of vacant land. The nature of the business is compatible with the overall needs of the town and existing land use and is consistent with the purposes of the zoning ordinance. There will be no traffic hazards or congestion caused by this business, being only one vehicle at a time can be worked on, with a maximum of six vehicles in the shop at any time.

The commission then considered requirements for commercial businesses as mandated by the ordinance: All activity shall be in one existing building, so there are no land issues or setback concerns. Sufficient distance exists from other residential areas, so no additional landscaping is necessary. The applicant will comply with all town, county, state, and federal laws, regulations, and ordinances and shall secure any permits necessary for the operation of the business. The applicant requests one permanently placed, non-lighted sign, two feet by four feet on his property but off the road right-of-way. Discussion questioned how this compared to other signage approved by the township. Signs up to four feet by eight feet have been approved with special variances; there is no specific distance from the road right-of-way mandated by the ordinance, that distance being in part determined by the placing of the sign in relation to buildings and topography. No parking will be permitted on Greeley Road, the access to the property. Greeley Road, a blacktopped county road, is sufficiently designed to accommodate the proposed usage of this business. The current driveway has been updated to limit dust impact. No additional lighting is needed; no additional drainage or erosion control is needed. The architectural appearance and functional plan of the current building is not dissimilar to existing buildings in the area, so no blight issues are present. Should the applicant decide to alter the size of the current building, the necessary building permits must be acquired.

Regarding potential additional restrictions, the commission considered the following: Should the existing building be enlarged or substantively changed or should additional structures be needed, required site and/or building permits must be received. Hours of outdoor work will be sunrise to sunset. Any additional access points to the property must have the required permits. Increasing the width of the street is a county matter beyond the control of the township. Should the business seek to expand beyond its current space, the issues of parking spaces, signage, screening, landscaping, etc., may need to be revisited by the township. This application assumes that the business has no

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employees beyond the current owner/applicant. The applicant has stated the no toxic substances (chemicals, acids, etc.) will be used in the operation of the business or retained onsite. Mr. Smith noted that a Pine County employee had visited the property with Royalton's Zoning Administrator John Kemen, had verified the road right-of-way boundaries, and had approved the placement of the proposed sign.

Applicant Daniel Smith participated in these discussions and agreed to the points declared in these minutes. Clerk Swanson then noted that letters had been sent to 38 Royalton addresses in accordance with the ordinance requirements, that a public hearing had been established for 6:30 p.m., 30 January 2024 in the town hall, that announcements of this hearing had been placed in the Pine City Pioneer and the County News-Review (Cambridge) and on the town's bulletin board. Interim Chair Schlaeger thanked Mr. Smith for his cooperation and Mr. Smith left the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

Member Valvoda asked about the status of no smoking issues, specifically how far from the door smoking would be permitted if the grounds were not declared entirely smoke-free. It was noted that the county apparently permits smoking immediately outside some exit doors; however, the front doors are signed to prohibit smoking within twenty (20) feet. The Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act prohibits smoking in the town hall; local jurisdictions may enact ordinances that further restrict outdoor smoking. The difficulty of enforcing any policy was acknowledged. After discussion, it appeared that the consensus of the commission was to erect a sign near the cigarette receptacle with the wording: "Please, no smoking near the entrance."

Clerk Swanson updated the commission on his attendance at the community outreach gathering hosted by DW Companies, specifically the talk by Isanti County's wetlands person. The commission discussed the need to be aware of when permits are needed as ditching and culvert installations continue. John DeGray of Grasston Excavating provided valuable insight into his experiences with wetlands remediation efforts. Interim Chair Schlaeger noted the desirability of studying additional ditching on private lands adjacent to Pine Bough Road, detailing how this would benefit maintenance of the road.

Clerk Swanson provided verbal updates on the upcoming elections (presidential nomination primary and town elections), noted that Mike Gainor has been hired by Pine County to replace Caleb Anderson, and on the status of the FEMA grant requests.

At 7:29 p.m., Interim Chair Schlaeger concluded the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk/Member

Leslie Orvis, Chair/Member

Jeff Schlaeger, Member

Priscilla Schneider, Member

Gary Valvoda, Member