

**MINUTES  
OF  
ROYALTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
WORKING MEETING  
May 13, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.  
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006**

Chair Les Orvis called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

Members present were Gary Valvoda, John Graham, and Priscilla Schneider. Also present were Zoning Administrator John Kemen and Septic Inspector Amy Thompson.

Others present were Joe and Chris Zappa, Mark Mansavage, Kyle and Casey Thompson, Dale and Mary Johnson, Roger and Connie Doenz, Jeff and Pam Peterson, Michelle Schlaeger, Bryan and Denise Weis, Roy and Cindy DeGidio, Patrice DeGray, Abbie Mattson, Steve and Jean Froehlich, Kelly Froehlich, Barb Dreyer, Linda LaTourelle, Becky Larson, Tori Sigurdson, and Beth Shephard.

Chair Orvis explained the purpose of the working meeting and stated the differences between the working and regular monthly planning commission meetings.

Chair Orvis called for public comment but limited speakers to two members of the audience, each were allowed two minutes for comments. Denise Weis shared her concerns about industrial cultivation and the growing process of adult-use cannabis. Steve Froehlich stated he would like to be a resource to the township for cannabis growing since he has built numerous greenhouses across the United States. However, Froehlich did express support for a moratorium on any type of cultivation and growing cannabis.

Chair Orvis stated on May 13, 2024, he visited with both Pine County Sheriff Jeff Nelson and Pine County Commissioner Josh Mohr on the cannabis topic. Both Nelson and Mohr stated the State of Minnesota is regulating the growing and/or retail sale of cannabis. At this time, Pine County will not move forward with a moratorium on cannabis because it is under the State of Minnesota's control.

Member Valvoda read the definition of moratorium from the MN Association of Townships Manual noting it is a delay in time to study and possibly a report of study.

Joe Zappa, CEO of erba, introduced himself and addressed public concerns about his proposed cannabis cultivation business on Cabin Drive. Zappa expressed his desire to work with the township to ensure all state regulations are met or exceeded and that security measures (fencing, surveillance, and personnel) are taken to create a safer environment for his business and neighbors. Zappa encouraged members of the commission and public to contact him with any questions or concerns, stating he wishes to run a reputable company and become a respected member of the community. Zappa also commented on the

various cannabis permits that are available through the State, stressing he is only seeking growing and transportation permits. Zappa mentioned the State of Minnesota continues to work on legislation regarding cannabis and commented on the stringent reporting and testing requirements of the Office of Cannabis Management. Zappa then conveyed his concern about reported efforts in the township to expand nearby gravel pits and the potential to upset and/or pollute the water table.

Tori Sigurdson questioned the commission if a conditional use permit could be used for the cannabis growing operation. In response, the commission stated because this type of business is being mandated by the State, a township conditional use permit would be invalid.

At 7:15 p.m., the cannabis discussion ended.

Zoning Administrator Kemen discussed the township eliminating MN State Building Code. In order to do this, Kemen stated two people will be needed to handle township building permits for the purpose of reviewing blueprint and material lists. By eliminating the State Building Code, building permit fees would be back to reasonable amounts.

Commission discussed Deputy Clerk and/or Assistant to the Town Clerk position. The difference is the Deputy Clerk works in the absence or illness of the Town Clerk, whereas an Assistant to the Town Clerk works for the board under the direction of the Town Clerk at standard township wage.

Commission discussed campgrounds. It was recommended to review Rock Creek City Ordinance 77 for more information on campgrounds.

Member Valvoda noted the comprehensive plan includes economic development in the township.

Commission discussed Northern Hollow Winery; questions were asked if it is an agricultural related business. Member Valvoda noted the township classified the winery as an agriculture business at its inception.

Respectfully Submitted,

Les Orvis, Chair/Member

Gary Valvoda, Member

Priscilla Schneider, Member

John Graham, Supervisor/Member