

**MINUTES
OF
ROYALTON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
WORKING MEETING
June 18, 2024 – 6:30 p.m.
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006**

Chair Les Orvis called the meeting to order at 6:31 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 Braham Fire Chief Ross Benzen, John Zappa, Roger Teich, Denise Weis, and Patrice DeGray.

Chief Ross Benzen was present to discuss current fire protection coverage in Royalton Township. Benzen noted the township is currently being served by Braham, Pine City, and Rush City Fire Departments. Benzen would like to encourage the township to designate boundaries to distinguish fire protection coverage areas for residents that are served by Braham or Rush City Fire Departments and also Braham and Pine City Fire Departments.

Cannabis Retail Sales Discussion

Discussion was held on whether the township should handle retail sales through our zoning or if the county should handle this. It was noted Pine County has 6 attorneys on staff that could handle issues rather than the township hiring an attorney. At this time, members of the public were disruptive and were asked to stop.

Chair Orvis asked those who attended this afternoon's Pine County Committee of the Whole meeting in Sandstone what stood out to them and why; the meeting covered cannabis retail sales.

Member Valvoda repeated the concern he had with County Attorney Fredrickson earlier in the afternoon about the Supremacy clause in the U.S. Constitution (Article 6, Clause 2) relating to state and local laws. A concern was that Federal and State elected officials swore an oath to "Support and Defend the Constitution..." that seems to be ignored. Also of concern was the preemption of state law over local control. Member Valvoda also questioned the 0.03, 1.20 and 3.0 limits of THC meanings. No answer given.

Denise Weis shared that 2,000 acres of hemp are planted in Minnesota with 600 acres destroyed due to THC levels over 0.3%. Weis feels our government has decriminalized cannabis. At this time, the public was again disruptive and was asked to stop. Chair Orvis stated if there were further disruptions, members of the public would be asked to leave.

John Zappa posed a question to two residents on what and where they feel the cannabis topic should go. Chair Orvis commented that answers to the residents' concerns about the cannabis industry may be found in MN House File 4757.

Member Valvoda again brought up that the state law was ill-conceived because cannabis is still a Schedule 1 drug.

Zoning Administrator Kemen questioned the purpose of holding a public hearing related to cannabis since the commission cannot answer concerns over the legality of cannabis.

Member Valvoda stated he talked to Pine County Commissioners Lovgren, Mohr, and Hallan after today's Committee of the Whole meeting and was told that we could use the County Attorney for any questions on the ever changing cannabis legislation.

After continued disruptions and interruptions, and since cannabis discussions have gone nowhere over the past 6 months, Chair Orvis recommended that Denise Weis and Patrice DeGray secure a personal attorney and that further cannabis discussions be handled between their attorney and the township attorney. Chair Orvis recommends further cannabis related discussions end at the township level and that future conversations be held between the township attorney and said subjects personal attorney.

Because of repeated disruptions by the public, Chair Orvis adjourned the working commission meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Les Orvis, Chair/Member

Gary Valvoda, Member

Priscilla Schneider, Member

John Graham, Supervisor/Member