

Royalton Township - Planning Commission **Working Meeting Minutes**
March 3, 2025 Royalton Township
6052 Royalton Road Braham, MN 55006

Chair Johnson called meeting order at 6:37pm

Members present were Jessica Johnson, Gary Valvoda (Remotely via Teams), Doug Stanger. And supervisor Jeff Schlaeger. Also present was Zoning Administrator John Kemen. Members absent were Gordy Nordby and John Graham.

No members of the public in attendance.

Zoning and Cannabis:

Member Johnson and Zoning administrator Kemen completed a conference call with Mark Allseits attorney with Couri & Ruppe on February 27th. Mr Allseits provided fundamental information as to the cannabis laws in which the township and county must abide by to meet the letter of the law with the state. He advised on the approach many townships are taking in writing ordinances around retail businesses and how many licenses Pine county will be required to approve and he provided status updates on licensing with OCM. We shared our desire to have legal counsel write an ordinance that ensures the town is meeting the requirements for the county and the state. We asked questions about zoning districts and about cannabis crops and it's interpreted industrial, commercial and agricultural classifications. Mr. Allseits advised his office will write a cannabis ordinance for Royalton Township, will review the agreement the township signed with Pine County on retail licensing and look at our zoning map and districts. He is aware of our working meeting on March 3rd and our hope to be able to review a draft.

March 3rd working Meeting: The drafted zoning ordinance was received 30 mins prior to the start of the meeting there for there was insufficient time to print or review. However the attorney advised that it was a very rough draft and preferred it not to be distributed until he had further clarification and approval. The planning commission determined there was not a lot for us to be able to work on at that point.

The commission did discuss the building code repeal:

Discussed adding to the permit approval for the property owner to notify the township at 50% completion or prior to insulation and drywall. This would allow the township the opportunity to inspect. There have been previous discussions on possibly contracting with experts in the field should a consultation be warranted. Per the townships zoning ordinance section 13 Subd. 4,B., 2 it contemplates that "consulting time" costs will be passed on to the applicants. The township will need to ensure Section 4 adequately covers the full range of cost recoveries and fees that will arise under the revised site permit process. Supervisor Belland had shared concerns around fees and this is likely where some of those concerns are coming from. The commission to further research this.

Member Johnson and Zoning Administrator Kemen called Couri & Ruppe's office on Wednesday March 19th and completed a conference call with attorney Mark Allseits for an update. Mr. Allseits advised he had originally suggested for the Township to look at cannabis related amendments to the townships zoning ordinance first, and then doing a broader revamp. He has since determined the revisions to just address cannabis zoning would be too piecemeal, making the ordinance very hard to read with so many separate amendments, and ultimately it

was just not the best option. He advised that repealing the standing zoning ordinance and adopting a new zoning ordinance for the sake of clarity was warranted. (The township will need to make sure to incorporate the prior 2021 amendment to the ordinance which he intends to include). He requested direction as to if this is the route the township is seeking. Zoning administrator Kemen approved of this approach as it makes the most sense with so many updates and changes.

It was then shared with Mr. Allseits that the commission has been working on drafting updates to the zoning ordinance around campgrounds, short-term rentals that the board recently approved the next steps to a public hearing. Since we are moving in the direction of adopting a new amended zoning ordinance it made sense to include these topics.

The attorney then provided guidance on the townships zoning map. The community has shared questions over the impact of cannabis businesses and how Royalton Township is going to regulate the zoning. The state has advised that local municipalities are in control of designating which zoning districts these types of businesses can operate. In order to allow for the township to better manage agricultural and residential uses while allowing for limited commercial uses, including adult uses and cannabis stores, on an interim use bases it is ideal to amend the zoning map and districts. This approach ensures that the district supports agricultural and residential development while providing flexibility for certain commercial activities that meet the needs of the community without compromising the area's rural character.

The attorney advised zoning administrator Kemen to work on drafting the proposed zoning boundaries for an ARC district and to provide that information to him. Mr Allseits will then draft the amended zoning map. In the meantime Mr. Allseits hopes to get the drafted zoning ordinance to us before the next board meeting to allow at minimum an update. Couri & Ruppe will assist when the time comes with the public hearing for the zoning map amendment and the amended zoning ordinance which will include an outline of the updates to the zoning ordinance.

The working Meeting scheduled for March 10, 2025 at 6:30pm was cancelled as there was no update from Couri & Ruppe for the commission to work on.

Proposed next working meeting to be April 8th, 2025 at 6:30

Chair Johnson adjourned the Working Meeting at 7:02pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Member/Chair Jessica Johnson

Member Gary Valvoda

Member/Supervisor John Graham

Member Gordy Nordby

Member Doug Stanger