

# **Avon Township Facilities Task Force Recommendation Report to the Supervisors June 10, 2009**

**Introduction:** In response to resident comments at the most recent Annual Meeting (March 10, 2009), the Avon Township Supervisors appointed a Facilities Task Force to examine and identify space needs for our Township. The Task Force was convened to provide guidance to the Avon Township Supervisors and residents so that they can make an informed decision regarding the merits of a future building program for our Township. This report documents the work and recommendations of the Task Force.

The Facility Task Force, which was appointed by the Supervisors, was comprised of the following Township residents: Ed Springer Jr. Eric Linn, Kelly Martini, Zoe Graul, Marcy Heinen, Lee Larkey, Steve Himsl, Roger Nelson, Ken Mergen, and Steve Plantenberg.

Meetings were conducted on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009 and June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Meetings were posted and open to the public with meeting notes taken by Stephen Saupe, Avon Township Deputy Clerk. Other individuals who joined the Task Force in open discussion included Gerry Kremers, Lowell Rushmeyer, Leroy Gondringer, Richard Bresnahan, Renee Smith, Gene Casey, Hank Springer, and Arlene Truscinski.

**Reasons for why the Township is exploring the building of a facility:** The primary reason for formulating a Facility Task force was to ensure the residents of the Township were able to make an informed decision regarding the merits of a future building program. The following reasons were identified by the Task Force as the primary reasons for considering a building program.

1. The Township's snow plowing contractor has informed the Supervisors of the firm's intent to discontinue snow plowing services. The Supervisors advised the Task Force that they have previously explored securing the services of other independent contractors without success. When comparing annual snow plowing costs with comparable Townships in the area, Avon Township is paying a disproportionate amount of taxpayer funding for snow removal. The Supervisors confirmed adjacent Townships are plowing roads themselves and are not subcontracting the work.

It is the consensus opinion of the Task Force that a financial recap of annual snow plowing expenses be formulated by the Supervisors for presentation to the residents prior to proceeding with any building program. The recap should take into consideration the cost and depreciation of equipment and the anticipated cost savings if the Township plows its own 46 miles of roadway. In addition project cost savings should be identified to offset a portion of the cost to build a facility.

2. Due to space requirements of the City of Avon, our continued use of the City Hall is increasingly limited and in jeopardy. At the request of the City of Avon we must find an

alternate polling place and a larger centralized location to store voting equipment and Township records. This unfortunate situation has forced the Township to house voting equipment and records in multiple locations such as Township official residences without ease of access and proper protection.

It is the consensus opinion of the Task Force that storage of important documents and voting equipment should be addressed immediately with provisions made to consolidate these items into a central fire-proof and secure storage facility until said time a future decision is made on the building of a permanent facility.

3. The only free-standing emergency generator available to Avon Township and City of Avon residents is in the Avon City Hall. Considering the continued and long-term growth of our community, it is important that Avon Township be prepared to face future emergency situations by having access to a generator.
4. The Task Force believes that our elected officials have a long history of being good stewards of our Township's tax dollars. However they have not yet implemented the Township's Comprehensive Plan requirements to build a Township Facility. It is the consensus opinion of the Facility Task Force that we have limited community identity and we need a permanent location to conduct polling, monthly meetings, and storage of public documents.
5. Conclusion: Based on our discussions and thorough review and assessment of the information cited above, the Avon Township Facility Task Force recognizes the need to construct a township facility at this time.

**Facility Location:** The Township currently owns five acres adjacent to the City of Avon, east of the elementary school. The current site houses a small utility building used to store road salt. The Task Force has confirmed that we require a site of at least five acres to meet our needs. Unfortunately, this site doesn't serve the needs of the township because it is in the middle of the City, is not easily accessible and does not consider future demographic trends in the Township. The Task Force concluded that in the long-term, the Township would be best served by locating a new facility along County Road 9, south of St. Anna. Such a location provides easy access with east/west connections to Queen's Road and 360<sup>th</sup> St. The assessed value of the current township property has increased in the past years and the sale of this property could be used to offset the purchase of new property.

**Facility Space Requirements:** To better understand our Township's long-term needs and space requirements, the Task Force considered a variety of sources of information. In addition, the Task Force toured the township facility recently constructed by neighboring Collegeville Township. Based on our thorough review, to meet the current and future needs of our Township the Task Force concluded that we require a:

1. minimum of approximately 3800 sq foot structure to house snow plows and road maintenance equipment
2. minimum of approximately 2800 sq feet to accommodate the storage of township records, voting machines and other materials, as well as a meeting space, rest rooms, and common spaces.
3. structure(s) designed to accommodate future expansion/growth

To meet these needs, the committee discussed building one structure, two structures, or two, linked structures. Although the committee prefers two separate structures, a future architect and Township building committee should analyze all options to design the most cost effective and functional facility for the township without under or overbuilding while being sensitive to final cost, safety features and location.

**Items to be incorporated into a building program:** The Task Force identified the following items that should be incorporated into any future building program: room for a separate drain field and well, propane tank and fuel tank storage, emergency generator, salt storage, road maintenance supply storage (i.e., signs, culverts), well-lit parking area with space for a minimum of 32 vehicles, heated floors in the maintenance building, in-floor drains to accommodate washing of equipment, overhead doors and parking stalls large enough to accommodate snow plow equipment, security system, commercial grade exterior doors and frames, energy efficient heating and cooling options, small kitchenette, small meeting room, fireproof record and voting equipment storage, public restrooms, low maintenance building materials, clearly defined and inviting main entrance with a posting area, small conference room with separate zoned heat to accommodate periodic meetings, office area (for election judges, Treasurer and Clerk), and a meeting area to accommodate regularly-scheduled monthly meetings and voting.

**Building Material System Overview:** We need an energy-efficient structure with a good life cycle, avoiding over or under-building. Based on a review of general needs and project costs, it is our recommendation to explore the use of the following three building systems. These options should be explored thoroughly before selecting a final choice:

- common pole barn steel sided construction
- Slab on grade wood frame construction
- Pre-manufactured industrial steel building system

**Construction Delivery System Overview:** The Task Force recognizes that there two delivery options available to a public entity such as our Township: (1) Competitive Hard Bid – requires an owners representative; and (2) Agency Construction Management. If the Township builds a facility, the Task Force recommends prior to proceeding with any building program that the Supervisors and future building committee explore and understand these systems because it is important that we have a checks-and-balance system to insure the quality of any future building project.

**Estimated Cost & Funding:** Based on similar-sized facilities in the area constructed out of moderately-priced building materials, we anticipate that the final cost of our recommendations will range from \$400,000 to \$600,000. It would be difficult to refine a projected cost until a concept drawing is completed. We are very sensitive to the current economic climate for the taxpayers in our community, and are convinced that completing this project now will save the Township money in the long-run. It is important that the Township Supervisors explore all options to offset any financial burden on our community without compromising the quality of the township facility. The Task Force recommends that the Supervisors explore the following funding options:

1. Sale of existing township property to offset the cost of a new site
2. Redistribute dollars saved on snow plowing to offset the future financial burden of building construction
3. Review grant opportunities and governmental assistance programs
4. Contact the MN Association of Townships to identify low interest grants and loans
5. For an interim period of time, redirect a portion of Road & Bridge Funds towards future construction.

We understand that the Township has approximately \$200,000 in reserve and by next year the amount will be approximately \$300,000. Thus, we would have a mortgage of about \$300,000 with payments of approximately \$15,000 per year, which is the amount we'd save on plowing.

**Time Table Overview:** To maximize our community tax dollars, the Facility Task Force recommends the following time for construction of a new facility:

- July 2009 – Township Supervisors conduct informational meeting(s) for public
- August 2009 – Project comes to voters for approval
- August 2009 – Supervisors form building committee
- September (early) 2009 – Finalize selection of building site and purchase property
- September (mid) 2009 – Supervisors secure services of architect to proceed with schematic design/development drawings
- November 2009 – authorize architect to proceed with bid documents
- February, 2010 – completion of bid documents and projects
- March 2010 – open bids, select contractor(s)
- April 2010 – groundbreaking
- October 2010 – building program completed and dedicated to community

**Conclusion:** The Facility Task Force takes very seriously the responsibility of how community dollars are spent. We believe that we would provide a disservice to our community if we did not bring this to the voters for consideration at this time. We acknowledge that the economic situation is difficult at this time for everyone. However if we make the effort to redirect current funds more wisely, our community will be better off in the long run, without the need to raise tax dollars.