

### **Avon Township News**

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Avon Township Zoning Administrator

Well, summer must be close at hand! I am being flooded by requests and questions about permits for new homes, storage buildings, variances, etc. People are concerned about whether they need permits for their construction projects or not.

### **Do I need a Permit?**

The best thing is to always call and check first but here are some general ground rules:

1. If you are simply replacing your shingles, a door, a window, siding or a driveway surface then usually you don't need a permit. If you put in a bigger door, or window or change the roof structure than a permit may be required and you should call first before beginning any work.
2. Buildings less than 150 square feet does not require a building permit if it will be located outside of the shoreland overlay district but it still needs to meet the established setback requirements. In the shoreland overlay district all buildings require construction site permit.
3. The size of your residential accessory building (i.e garage, shed, storage building, etc) is restricted based on the size of your property. The reason for this is to avoid having very large buildings in areas that are more like a city neighborhood than a true rural home site. Variances may be granted based on individual circumstances. Agricultural accessory buildings (machine sheds, feed storage buildings, hay storage buildings, etc) are not limited in size but they must be part of an active farming operation.
4. The township issues construction site permits for accessory buildings and decks not attached to the house outside of the shoreland overlay district. Permits are also issued by the township for driveways that are located on township roads.
5. All other permits are issued by the Stearns County Environmental Services department. (320-656-3613). This includes permits to construct a new home or an addition to a home including adding additional room, a window, door, patio door, a porch, a deck attached to the house or changes to the roof

line. If you live in the shoreland overlay district the county will issue your permits.

### **Annexation Activity**

The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor and City Council along with both the township and city planning boards have been working hard on an Orderly Annexation Agreement acceptable to both sides. It has been a long process with more than a few bumps along the way but an agreement is very close and hopefully it will be completed by the time you read this article.

This is one of the first steps in a long range effort to help manage the growth of our community. We need to be sure to maximize the benefit of the growth we experience. We also need to preserve the great benefits of living in a small town and living in a unique rural environment that includes clean lakes, plenty of wooded areas, marshes, prairies, and wonderful views of nature and the life style of living in a small town farming community. Our little piece of Lake Wobegon ...

Remember to thank those who worked so hard to make this agreement a reality. A phone call or an email would be a great way to say thanks!

### **Changes in Township Officials**

Ken Stommes has resigned after over 14 years of service to the township on both the planning board and the board of supervisors. Ken is moving to a new home in St Joseph. Ken will still be in the area and when you see him be sure to thank him for his many years of dedicated services to Avon Township. Thanks Ken for all you have done for the township!

Richard Bresnahan has been appointed to fill the vacant supervisor position and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the township. Most recently he has been a member of the Avon Township Planning Board again. Before that he served on the Stearns County Planning Board and before that served for 12 years on the Avon Township Planning board. Richard we welcome you to the Board of Supervisors and appreciate the experience you bring to the board.

Lowell Rushmeyer has been appointed to fill the vacancy created by Richard Bresnahan's appointment to a supervisor position. Lowell has been a life long resident of the area and has worked

for Stearns County in Environmental Services.  
We welcome Lowell to the planning board.

**Planning Board Activities**

The Planning board has been busy working on the Orderly Annexation Agreement along with the supervisors. The board has also been reviewing the current subdivision ordinance, other townships ordinances and the county's ordinance. This will be important to the future of the township as it manages growth that will likely continue in the township even with the orderly annexation agreement.

**HCP and the Township**

The HCP program is working to help develop plans for the future of the community. They are looking for volunteers with an interest in the future of the community. Become involved get on the phone and call one of the following task force co-chairs to get involved in the process.

Community Center/Youth & Senior Activities  
Kathy Schulzetenberg 356-7922

Main Street Renovation  
Art Diedrich 356-7363  
Kevin Ehlinger 356-9800  
Bill Skay 356-7606

Economic Development  
Jim Schlangen 356-1080  
Chris Panek 356-9038

Planning/Land Use/Zoning/Environment  
Jeff Johnson 356-7221  
Hugh Knox 356-7127

**Road Issues:**

Plans are underway to resurface approximately 3 miles and the final decision on which roads will be resurfaced will be made in June.

Residents are asked to remember to be careful how they use the road right of way. The area is designated for use by the township for roads and for utilities such as electrical wires, gas lines, drainage, plowing snow etc.

66 feet Width of the road right of way.

22 feet Width of the actual road surface

44 feet or 22 feet on each side of the road surface that is reserved for ditches, expansion and utility services. This is the area of concern.

Many of us maintain this 22 foot area as though it was our own property but it's not. Anything you put in that area you risk having damaged by snow plows, utility vehicles, etc and you may be creating a liability for yourself.

Technically you can't plant trees, shrubs, gardens, install sprinkler systems or landscape this area. If you do you do so at your own risk. The township is not responsible for any damage to property in the road right of way and does not approve of using the road right of way in this manner. The right of way may be used for short term parking of guests as long as it doesn't obstruct traffic. It is never to be used for permanent parking or as a storage area.

Another problem is people using road ditches and empty lots as a dumping ground for unwanted "stuff" that should be properly disposed of with the Bueckers Sanitation Company or some other authorized repository. Certain areas such as Norway Road and Meadow View Rd are repeat problem areas and are watched to help prevent these activities.

People who are identified improperly disposing of material along township roads will be prosecuted. Residents are asked to keep an eye out for these activities and to get license plate numbers when possible and to notify one of the township supervisors. People who dump increase our taxes.

**Total Activities YTD May 11, 2005**

**County Activities with township contact involved.**

1 New Home Permits Reviewed  
5 Home Remodels/Additions Reviewed  
3 Accessory Bldg Permits Reviewed  
**9 Total County Actions Taken**

**Township Activities**

5 Accessory Building Permits Issued  
2 Driveway Permits Issued  
2 Plats/Splits Received  
2 Variances Received  
1 Interim Use Permit Requests Received

**12 Total Township Actions Taken**

**21 Grand Total**