

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission

May 25, 2025

Avon Township Hall (16881 Queens Road, Avon 56310)

Call to Order: Chair Andrew Wensmann called to order the meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission (PC) at 7:00 PM in the Main Chamber of the Town Hall. The meeting was available via Zoom at the URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8325486945> (PIN: AvonTown).

Pledge: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present – Craig Blonigen, Kelly Martini, Andrew Wensmann (*Chair*), Stephen Saupe, and Lori Yurczyk. There was a quorum.

Approval of Agenda: Added to the agenda were discussions of a pipeline beneath a Town road and an inquiry regarding splitting a property on Shorewood Drive. Blonigen moved to approve the agenda as amended. Yurczyk second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes: A typo was corrected. Yurczyk moved to approve the corrected minutes from the April 30, 2025 meeting. Blonigen second. All in favor. Motion carried

Public Hearings: none.

Public Comments: none.

Business:

1. **Frie Variance** – Ms. Cindy Frie, 34139 Lower Spunk Lane (03.01227.0007), appeared at the meeting to request a variance to construct an addition to the garage that would be closer to the road than is currently permitted by ordinance. She currently has a one-car garage and she wants to expand it to accommodate 2 vehicles. She would like to add 12-14 feet to the existing garage (excluding a 16-inch overhang). The addition would be about 23 feet from the center-of-the-road (COR). The existing driveway will be torn-up this summer as a part of a septic system replacement. Utilities may have to be moved including burying her electrical lines. Ms. Frie was told that the Town usually prefers to keep structures aligned with existing ones and the neighbors. Other concerns are that there could be damage by the snowplow and safety relative to backing out of the garage into the road. Saupe said that this request might be a 'hard sell' to the Supervisors because of how close the addition would be to the road.

Saupe moved to recommend to the Supervisors to set a public hearing on June 25, 2025 at 7:15 PM to consider a request by Ms. Cindy Frie, 34139 Lower Spunk Lane (03.01227.0007), for a variance to construct an addition to a garage on her property that is 40 feet closer to the center-of-the-road than is currently permitted (Section 9.9.9A(3) of Ordinance #6). Yurczyk second. All in favor. Motion carried. Ms. Frie was asked to mark the proposed position of the new garage so it could be inspected.

2. **Thell Certificate of Compliance** – the resident requested a postponement until next month.
3. **Backes Certificate of Compliance** – Rick & Marlys Backes (32553 Co Rd 50), appeared to request a Certificate of Compliance to transfer about 13 acres from one parcel (03.01120.0000) they own to the adjacent parcel (03.01119.0000). They will be moving the property line between their adjacent properties. Yurczyk moved to recommend to the Supervisors to approve a Certificate of Compliance for The Marlys Backes Trust. Martini second. All in favor. Motion carried. The Backes's were advised to confirm what happens with the existing

building entitlements

4. **Borgerding Encroachment Agreement** – Mr. Cliff Borgerding, 33504 Shorewood Drive (03.01489.0000), appeared to request an encroachment agreement to site part of a septic system in the Township road right-of-way (ROW) and in the utility easement. He provided a septic design from Watab, Inc. Blonigen moved to recommend approval of an encroachment agreement with Mr. Cliff Borgerding, 33504 Shorewood Drive, to site a septic system five feet into the Town road ROW and in the platted 10-foot utility easement as presented in the septic design document.
5. **Himsl Septic Variance** – The Stearns County Board of Adjustment will hear a variance request by Shane & Tiffany Himsl, 12902 Norway Road, on June 12, 2025. Since the property is in St. Wendel Township, the PC took no action or made any recommendations to the Supervisors regarding the proposed variance.
6. **The Store Sign Variance** – The Stearns County Board of Adjustment will consider a variance request from Kelly & Gordon Caspers, *The Store*, 37215 Co Rd 9, from Sections 7.25.4B & D, to construct a sign that is 72 sq ft (which is larger than permitted – 32 square feet) and 16 feet in height (which is taller than permitted – 10 feet). The County recently denied the Caspers' request for a sign that was 80 sq ft and 18 feet tall, so the Caspers submitted this revised request. The PC discussed a potential Township recommendation to the County regarding this new request.

Although appreciative of the smaller size being requested, Saupe opposed the request for a larger sign because it still 8 sq ft larger than the maximum allowed by ordinance and that the proposed sign includes what he considered superfluous information (*i.e.*, 'Welcome to St. Anna,' large Sasquatch image). He said he could accept the taller sign as a compromise. Wensmann wasn't certain that a new recommendation was required since the issue was previously discussed. Blonigen was supportive of the variance request, especially since the Town had supported an even larger sign at their previous meeting. After considerable discussion, Saupe moved to recommend to the Supervisors to recommend to the County Board of Adjustment to deny the variance request by Kelly & Gordon Caspers for a new sign at *The Store* larger than 64 sq ft., and that we take no exception to a sign that does not exceed 16 feet in height. Yurczyk second. Saupe, Wensmann and Yurczyk in favor. Blonigen and Martini opposed. Motion carried.

7. **Gondringer Pipeline** – LeRoy Gondringer was present to alert the PC that he will be extending a pipeline sleeve beneath the Township road for an irrigation system. The pipeline extends beyond the ROW so he will not do any work in the Township road ROW. There is no encroachment agreement for this situation.

Policy Review: Town Hall Rental/Use. A request was received from the Avon Pickleball Club to use the Town Hall for a holiday party. They were told that the policy is that the Hall is available for use by non-profit, youth-based groups, no alcohol is permitted, and that the Supervisors would make the decision at the June meeting. This provided the idea to review the Rental/Use policy.

There was general agreement that increased use by residents was positive, but it comes with a number of problems including: (a) increased wear and tear on the building; (b) potential need for a larger parking lot; (c) competing with local businesses; (d) time and cost of hiring someone (manager) to schedule, clean, open/close the Hall; (e) potential need for more insurance; (f) fees including security deposit to be charged; (g) whether the Town should allow both youth (*i.e.*, scouts) AND non-profit organizations (*i.e.*, FFA, daycare provider training, County meetings, League of Women Voters); (h) group size (*i.e.*, there are about 40 chairs); and (i) food/cooking will result in more cleaning. Residents Cliff Borgerding and LeRoy Gondringer both agreed it is shame to not use the Hall more, though acknowledged the problems. It was suggested to check with other Townships on their policies, fees and problems with renting out their Town Hall. No recommendations to the Supervisors were

suggested.

Reports/Announcements: An inquiry was received from a resident on Shorewood Drive about splitting a property in two in which one parcel would have the residence and another with just a shed. There were a number of concerns related to property size and shape, lake frontage, etc. If a permit is issued, the Joint Planning Commission would be the responsible body since the property is in the Urban Expansion area.

There will be a hearing at the June Supervisors to consider an ordinance to revoke the Township Noise Ordinance.

Next Meeting: The next PC meeting is June 25, 2025 at 7:00 PM (*see 'Call to Order' for the Zoom log-in*). Wensmann may be unavailable; vice-chair Yurczyk will present the PC Report if necessary.

Other Meetings: Other upcoming meetings/events include (*see 'Call to Order' for the Zoom log-in*):

- Supervisors Meeting – June 4, 2025; 7 PM.

Adjournment: Martini moved to adjourn the meeting at about 9:15 PM. Blonigen second. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk

date: June 13, 2025

Approval:

Andrew Wensmann, *Planning Commission Chair – signature*

date: _____