

Royalton Township Working Planning Commission Meeting Minutes  
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7 October 2025  
Approved

6:30 p.m., 7 October 2025, Chair Jeff Schlaeger convened the Royalton Township working planning commission meeting with Members Pete Belland, John Graham, Jenessa Saumer, and Clerk Duane Swanson present. Septic Administrator Amy Thompson and members of the public also attended.

Chair Schlaeger welcomed Kelly Schroeder, Pine County administrator, to address the meeting. Administrator Schroeder had been invited to clarify the respective roles of the county and township in matters relating to cannabis businesses. Because the township has transferred zoning authority for cannabis businesses to the county, the county ordinances will cover only the permitting process for cannabis zoning activities and the cannabis shoreland septic issues. These ordinances prescribe what type of permits are needed, including annual renewal authorizations. They carry bond requirements to ensure that clean-up activities are paid for should the business lapse. The county has determined that these businesses generally do not have an interim use permit and have issued an administrative permit for them. Regarding septic permits, the county has responsibility only for those that exist in the Shorelands area. The county's responsibility covers those subsurface treatment systems that dispatch sewage into the ground. Industrial wastes that are stored in holding tanks need to be hauled off premises to be processed. The county does not do ongoing checks of these systems. However, they do need water meters and processing contracts. Complaints about these systems can go to the county.

Other issues, including permitting of structures and related issues, including setbacks, fencing, lightning, etc. are the responsibility of the township. The town has adopted the state building code, and the town building official is responsible for enforcing it, including installation of holding tanks not used for sewage. This includes permits for changes to existing structures. The town's rules can be either more or less restrictive than the county's. Unless the town changes its ordinance, there is no provision for cannabis businesses to have an interim use permit from the township.

Administrator Schroeder responded to questions and comments from audience members as well as from commission members and from Septic Administrator Thompson. Chair Schlaeger thanked Administrator Schroeder for her attendance, and she left the meeting.

Chair Schlaeger proceeded to read the proposed ordinance regulating parking on Country Drive as drafted by legal counsel. Discussion centered on extending the ordinance to other town roads. The consensus of the group was that complaints had not been received on other roads. Clerk Swanson noted that this ordinance did not require a public hearing but that a summary would have to be published in the newspaper and the full copy filed with the county law library and local public library.

Chair Schlaeger called for review of a proposed revised zoning ordinance as drafted by legal counsel Mark Allseits. Clerk Swanson and Zoning Administrator John Kemen had reviewed the proposed ordinance. Led by Clerk Swanson, members reviewed each page of the proposed ordinance, noting especially the updated definitions, the additions of a new zoning district (agricultural-residential-commercial), inclusion of regulations governing adult entertainment establishments, and expanded regulations governing greenhouses, short-term vacation rentals, and campgrounds. Members

PB \_\_\_\_\_ JG \_\_\_\_\_ JMS \_\_\_\_\_ JS \_\_\_\_\_ DPS \_\_\_\_\_

concurred with the aforementioned updates. Members expressed the need for expanded definitional and regulatory references to junk, refuse, and assorted nuisances. Specific verbiage relating to lot area requirements included: 1) “enough buildable land to support one well, two septic systems having a building area of 2,500 square feet with soil borings on all four corners to be filed with the township;” 2) “setback requirements for buildings, septic systems, and all other structures shall be 75 feet off road right-of-way, 30 feet off side and rear property lines;” 3) “all septic systems shall be a minimum of 30 feet from the property lines to the toe area of the mound;” 4) “all parcels not fronting on a public road shall require at least a 66 foot wide access owned in fee simple to the parcel;” 5) all septic systems must meet or exceed requirements of all current Minnesota septic statutes. [Section 11, subd. 3]. Members agreed to reduce the current 85-foot requirement from road right of way to 75 feet to be consistent throughout the ordinance. Members also agreed that the requirements for building permits to be issued by the zoning administrator must be changed to be issued by the town building official.

Commission members discussed the office assistant position, concluding that the board should move ahead with the finalization of a position description, with a requirement that regular office hours of at least four per week be established. Interim Deputy Clerk Priscilla Schneider is keeping a log of hours and work tasks to assist the board in finalizing position requirements.

Member Belland suggested that, as the town’s website and email are updated, each board member should have an individual email address so that personal emails do not become intermingled with town business. Commission members agreed. Clerk Swanson will work with Travis Kemen to develop such a system.

Treasurer Saumer and Clerk Swanson apprised the commission of the town’s responsibilities under the Minnesota Paid Family Leave Act, which takes effect 1 January 2026. Board members will have more information at the October meeting and will be asked to name an administrator, determine percentage of costs between employer and employee, and define any limits on intermittent leave. There was acknowledgement that this program will require substantial additional staff hours to operate.

At 8:36 p.m., Chair Schlaeger concluded the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk/Member

Pete Belland, Supervisor/Member

John Graham, Supervisor/Member

Jenessa Saumer, Treasurer/Member

Jeff Schlaeger, Chair/Member