

Royalton Township Working Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
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20 February 2024

6:30 p.m., 20 February 2024, Chair Leslie Orvis convened the Royalton Township working planning commission meeting with Members Priscilla Schneider, Jeff Schlaeger, and Duane Swanson present in the meeting room and Member Gary Valvoda present via visual and audible electronic means. Zoning Administrator John Kemen, Septic Administrator Amy Thompson, Deputy Clerk Andrea Anderson, Supervisor John Graham, and members of the public also attended.

Chair Orvis read the draft findings of fact for the Daniel Smith interim use permit line by line, asking for input on each. Relating to the sign, he provided some distance figures: from the fog line of Greeley Road to the sign is 14 feet, 6 inches. From the fog line to the milkhouse is 25 feet. The consensus was that if the sign were to be moved farther from the road it would not be visible, particularly if coming from the north. Discussion followed, centering on the need to explain explicitly the reasons for permitting the sign to remain where it is. Zoning Administrator Kemen explained that this is a unique parcel of property, being bisected by the road and having existing structures very near the road. The commission recommended that this justification be added to the findings of fact in addition to being recorded in the minutes. This decision is explicitly recommended for this specific parcel of property and does not establish a precedent for other parcels in the township. With this addition, the commission appeared ready to endorse the interim use permit at its regular meeting.

Zoning Administrator Kemen addressed the meeting, first showing a Township Law Book from 2005 and the current township officers' manual. He stressed that these were the guiding legal volumes for the administration of the township and that they were not currently being followed. His specific examples included not holding an emergency meeting during the spring flooding of 2023 to authorize work to be done and two supervisors spearheading the mounting of a camera in the file room without specific authorization at a public meeting and the camera feed going to a private residence and not to an elected township official. He also recommended that a series of cameras be installed on the campus to monitor events during rentals and meetings; these cameras would be connected to the township computers only. This installation would eliminate the accusations of missing supplies and files, and damage to the town hall.

Administrator Kemen continued with comments on the budget, specifically that if the current levy is maintained, the township will be between \$60,000 and \$70,000 short in 2024/2025. He advocated for a close look at the expenditures, noting that the fire protection costs would increase dramatically in the current year. He also suggested that the frequency of grading certain roads might be reduced and that the current widening of certain roads results in a greater expense for gravel.

Chair Orvis then called for discussion on an ordinance permitting the imposition of administrative citations for building, zoning, and septic enforcement. Member Schneider distributed copies of the recent ordinances in Rock Creek and Sandstone and related her discussions with the enforcement person in Sandstone. Compliance has been high, and much improvement has been made in enforcing the codes. Chair Orvis asked members to study the handouts and be prepared to work on a draft at the next meeting. He encouraged a fast-track project for this update.

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Here followed a general discussion of building permits, inspection costs, and general dissatisfaction with the way the current system operates. Dale Heidelberger was present to express his complaints with how inspections were handled during the construction of the restaurant and again with the possible erection of the bleachers he has purchased.

Finally, Chair Orvis noted that he has had numerous people express concerns about the marijuana - growing operation proposed by Joe Zappa. Although these concerns may seem valid, the township has no legal authority to prohibit such an operation.

At 8:05 p.m., Chair Orvis concluded the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk/Member

Leslie Orvis, Chair/Member

Jeff Schlaeger, Member

Priscilla Schneider, Member

Gary Valvoda, Member