

Royalton Township Working Planning Commission Meeting Minutes
6052 Royalton Road, Braham, MN 55006
Email: royalton@royaltontownship.com -- Website: www.royaltontownship.com
6 January 2026
Approved

6:31 p.m., 6 January 2026, Chair Jeff Schlaeger convened the Royalton Township working planning commission meeting with Members Pete Belland, Barb Dreyer, and John Graham, and Clerk Duane Swanson present. Zoning Administrator John Kemen, Acting Deputy Clerk Priscilla Schneider, Clerk Assistant Mollie Davis, and members of the public also attended.

Chair Schlaeger recognized Barb Dreyer, welcomed her as a new member of the planning commission, and thanked her for sharing her expertise with the township.

Mr. Joe Zappa, representing Erba, Inc., was present at the request of the board to respond to questions from commission members, specifically regarding the light emanating from the greenhouses at 7440 Cabin Drive. Mr. Zappa reported that wall curtains had been installed on the west and south walls of the greenhouses in an attempt to shield neighboring properties from the lights. No plans exist to cover the tops of the greenhouses. He described the light as “beautiful” and noted that residents have expressed their positive attitude to the glow emanating from the facility. Member Dreyer responded “that’s a matter of opinion,” and other commission members expressed disagreement, noting that night sky cannot be viewed and neighbors’ yards are bathed in light. Mr. Zappa noted that to cover the tops of the greenhouses with light darkening shades would be expensive, if it were even possible given the construction of the structures. In addition, because this facility is a mixed light one, the sun is needed at certain times of the year to facilitate plant growth. He is experimenting with different types of lighting in different greenhouses to determine which settings and sources provide optimum growth potential. At the same time, he is experimenting with different lighting hours in order to accommodate neighborhood concerns.

Clerk Swanson distributed copies of the cannabis outdoor cultivation administrative permit, dated 24 June 2025, that was issued by Pine County for the facility. Members questioned whether the installation of new shades constituted rebuilding, and therefore, may need a building permit. Mr. Zappa responded that it was his interpretation that no Royalton permits were needed based on an email from Clerk Swanson, dated 20 October 2025. Copies of this email were distributed to the commission. Clerk Swanson noted that the contents of this email had been approved by Zoning Administrator Kemen. Clerk Swanson read item #3: “Replacement of greenhouse coverings: No site permit is required because the remodeling is to an existing structure whose footprint is not being changed. However, a building permit would be required for the building of any new commercial structure or the remodeling of an existing commercial structure, including residing, reroofing, or remodeling.” Member Belland repeated the wording of the 20 October 2025 email. Discussion ceased. Chair Schlaeger thanked Mr. Zappa for attending the meeting. At 7:02 p.m., Mr. Zappa left the meeting.

Chair Schlaeger called for discussion on the proposed noise and nuisance ordinance. Clerk Swanson noted that members had a copy of the existing town ordinance, legal counsel’s draft of a new ordinance, and Clerk Assistant Davis’ draft melding the earlier two into one document. Chair Schlaeger noted that the third draft had some stronger wording and encouraged members to review all three versions. He tasked Member Dreyer, Supervisor Belland, and Clerk Swanson to meet, with the goal of preparing a final draft for review at the January regular meeting.

PB _____ BD _____ JG _____ JMS _____ DPS _____

Chair Schlaeger called for discussion on the updated zoning ordinance. Clerk Swanson noted that no further instructions from legal counsel had been received and that it would be prudent to have the commission's and board's revisions to the latest draft inserted into the document before further counsel review. Chair Schlaeger asked Clerk Assistant Davis to prepare a new Word document incorporating those changes.

Members received updates on the storage of mattresses at 10696 Pine Bough, on the upcoming town election, and on applying salt to Country Drive. Chair Schlaeger noted that a sign for the picnic shelter is being made. Members had a general discussion on the possibility of installing plastic culverts as opposed to steel ones. More study will follow.

At 7:30 p.m., Chair Schlaeger concluded the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Duane P. Swanson, Clerk/Member

Pete Belland, Supervisor/Member

Barb Dreyer, Member

John Graham, Supervisor/Member

Jeff Schlaeger, Chair/Member