

**Princeton Township Special Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 14, 2020
Minutes**

A special meeting of the Princeton Township Board was called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:30 p.m.

Due to the Governor's COVID19 directive the meeting was held via teleconference.

Supervisors joining: Thomas Duden, Dan Hiller, Gene Stoeckel, Bill Whitcomb, John Wilhelm
Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl served as meeting organizer

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Resolution to approve meeting by teleconference

Chairman Stoeckel introduced the resolution which had been distributed to supervisors in preparation of the meeting. Mr. Stoeckel moved to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes
Resolution adopted.

Resolution establishing a policy for the compensation and reimbursement of town officers

Chairman Stoeckel introduced the resolution which had been distributed to supervisors in preparation of the meeting. Mr. Stoeckel moved to adopt the resolution. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes
Resolution adopted.

Resolution to acknowledge MPCA's SSTS determination

Chairman Stoeckel introduced the resolution which had been distributed to supervisors in preparation of the meeting. Mr. Whitcomb asked how long the township has been out of compliance with MPCA standards. Mr. Stoeckel observed that there is no record of the township ever having been in compliance. The township's non-compliant status was discovered in the course of an MPCA review of the township's ordinance.

Mr. Hiller asked what it would take for the township to resume issuing septic permits, and how much revenue has been coming into the township from septic permits. Mr. Stoeckel explained that charges for septic permits pass through to the inspectors. Mr. Whitcomb noted that Mille Lacs County receives reimbursement from the state for conducting SSTS permits and inspections, while the township does not. Mr. Wilhelm added that the county reimbursement was recently increased from \$19,000 to \$22,000.

Mr. Stoeckel further explained that the resolution relates to SSTS permitting only, and will not change any other township permitting processes.

Mr. Hiller moved to adopt the SSTS resolution. Mr. Whitcomb seconded. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes
Resolution adopted.

Joint powers agreement with the city regarding the project for improvements to 33rd Street and 82nd Avenue.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve the joint powers agreement with the city for the 33rd Street-82nd Avenue improvement project.

Mr. Wilhelm asked if the school board is in agreement with the project in light of its responsibility for the cul du sac included in the project area. Mr. Whitcomb replied that the township is in discussion with the school board about the project, but that the school board's decision does not affect the cost of the project.

Mr. Hiller asked if the city has considered the future of the paved road should it decide at some point to extend city water and sewer into the area. Mr. Whitcomb replied that the question has been part of the township's discussion with the city, but that the city has no active plan now, and that it would not be good to postpone the project indefinitely over concerns for what might or might not take place several years in the future.

Mr. Wilhelm asked if it might save money to get other estimates in light of the significant drop in oil prices due to the COVID19 restrictions on movement. Mr. Duden replied that any savings in material cost would likely be more than offset by increases in contractor pricing as those will be bid during the active season.

Mr. Stoeckel called for a second to the motion. Mr. Duden seconded.

Mr. Hiller questioned the priority of this project in light of the other township roads that need repairs. He cited 50th Avenue as an example of a badly neglected road. Mr. Stoeckel replied that the budget approved at the last meeting provides for repairs to 50th Avenue next year, and also includes funding for gravel as a separate item.

Mr. Wilhelm suggested making repairs on 33rd Street along with the work being done on 33rd and 82nd. Mr. Whitcomb replied that work on the street would be a separate project due to it being a different type of work, and would not be any less expensive to combine with the current project.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – No; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – No
Motion carried.

Resolution to accept Knife River's bid to Pave 33rd Street and 82nd Ave. and sign the proposed contract

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve the resolution authorizing Princeton Township to accept bids from Knife River Corporation for the 82nd Avenue-33rd Street Project conditioned by the acceptance and execution of the Joint Powers Agreement by both the City of Princeton and Princeton Township. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – No; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – No
Motion carried. Resolution is adopted.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve the final construction contract for the full project conditioned by the acceptance of the Joint Powers Agreement by the City and the Township. Seconded by Thomas Duden. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – No; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – No
Motion carried.

Silver Lake Oaks Preliminary Plat

Township Zoning Administrator Scott Richards gave an overview of the plat application. Mr. Richards advised that the 120-day period for develop-application review ends on April 19. If there is no action by the Town Board before that date the application is approved automatically.

Mr. Richards noted the email received late afternoon April 14 from the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) including a petition it received from residents of the Silver Lake Oaks vicinity. Petitioners have requested an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) on the proposed development. Mr. Richards stated that the township is responsible for determining the necessity of the EAW, and has 30 days to do so. He further noted that the plat under consideration is in the preliminary-plat stage and will have to undergo further review before considering the final plat.

Mr. Richards reviewed the process that the plat application has undergone so far, including review by the Planning Commission and Mille Lacs County (concerning driveway access to county roads). Township Engineer Todd McLouth confirmed that the plat meets all engineering requirements.

Mr. Hiller asked if the petition met the requirements for an EAW. He noted that the EAW applies to developments of 50 or more units. He asked if the petition is asking the township to make an exception to that requirement. Mr. Whitcomb agreed that the petition will require review by the township attorney. He noted that getting that review will not delay approval of the preliminary plat because the document states that no final approval can be given until the township acts on the EAW request. Mr. Richards confirmed that any action on an EAW cannot proceed until the Town Board approves the preliminary plat.

Plat developer Jesse Jondahl questioned the legitimacy of one of the signatures on the petition. Petitioner Ron Gensler confirmed that he personally collected every signature on the petition. Every person signed the petition in his presence.

Mr. Hiller asked if lots 1 and 2 will be sharing a driveway. Mr. Richards confirmed that lots 2 and 3 will be sharing a driveway. Mr. Hiller also questioned the design of two narrow lots on the east side of the property. Mr. Richards replied that those two lots have been revised from 150-ft. to 200-ft widths. Mr. Hiller commented that he would prefer to see those two lots combined into one, as well as lots 2 and 3 in order to avoid creating a shared driveway. Mr. Richards agreed that the shared driveway isn't ideal, but the County has indicated they will approve.

Mr. Richards concluded by confirming that the preliminary plat meets all subdivision criteria.

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the preliminary plat with the 13 conditions adopted by the Planning Commission as specified in Mr. Richard's March 16 memo to Clerk Doug Dahl. Seconded by Bill Whitcomb.

Mr. Stoeckel objected to the plat on the basis of his reading of township ordinances relating to providing orderly economic development, not promoting health, safety, morals, and general welfare, not protecting the public health with respect to the water supply and drainage, and not securing the rights of the public with respect to public lands and water.

Mr. Wilhelm objected that the development will likely not cover the cost of police, fire, and road maintenance. He asked where the money to cover the extra costs would come from, suggesting that it would have to come from the other residents of the township.

Mr. Hiller replied that the police get paid through County taxes; fire derives from tax capacity. With respect to road maintenance, Mr. Hiller pointed out that there will only be one new short road that will require minimal maintenance, while the main roads between the development and State Highway 95 are county roads.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – No; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – No
Motion carried.

Gave Addition Final Plat

Mr. Richards reviewed the work that has been done on the plat application. The plat has been reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. Also, the plat required a variance to allow the owner to retain his present garage. The variance has been approved. All other requirements have been met.

Mr. moved to approve the Gave Addition Final Plat. Mr. Wilhelm seconded.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes
Motion carried.

Proposal for Sign Reflectivity Testing

Mr. Wilhelm moved to allow John Roxbury to conduct sign-reflectivity testing on township signs. He suggested that doing so would save the Township a great deal of money.

Mr. Duden objected because the Town Board removed Mr. Roxbury from the Planning Commission one year ago due to his actions against Town Board and Planning Commission members. He noted that the total cost of all the signs will be less than \$6,000. He further argued that many signs are unreadable, or approaching unreadable, and need to be replaced. He contended that it will be more cost effective in the long run to replace all the signs at once, rather than stretching the process out over time.

Mr. Whitcomb added that 3M, the producer of the signs, has determined that the signs are good for 10-15 years maximum. He further noted that he has reviewed the township's entire sign inventory, and has concluded that the township may be able to eliminate approximately 1/3 of its current sign inventory. He added that replacing the signs over a 15-year period would require the Township to purchase a calibration sign kit and a retro reflectometer, and spend many hours per year testing signs and maintaining records. Instead, the Town Board should adopt a sign-replacement policy.

Mr. Stoeckel commented that the Township has \$1,000 in the budget for sign replacement and maintenance in 2020 and 2021. Those budgeted amounts will provide for replacing approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of the Township's signs during the next two years. Mr. Whitcomb added that the bid he had received from M-R Signs was for replacing all signs. If the Township were to purchase signs in smaller quantities (1, 2, etc.) the cost per sign would increase significantly.

Mr. Stoeckel called for a second to Mr. Wilhelm's motion. Motion failed for lack of second.

Mr. Duden moved to allocate the \$1,000 in the current year's budget to replace signs that currently need replacement. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb.

Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes

Bids for Legal Services

Mr. Dahl reported that two law firms submitted bids:

Couri and Ruppe: \$210/hour direct; \$230/hour pass-through.

Kennedy and Graven: \$185/hour.

Mr. Stoeckel noted that our current rate with Rinke Noonan is just under \$300/hour. Mr. Stoeckel and Mr. Whitcomb both noted positive interaction with both firms. Mr. Duden asked which firm would like be more helpful in continuing the forensic work conducted on the Township's computer at the end of 2019. Mr. Whitcomb responded that either would be reliable for that continuing work.

Mr. Whitcomb suggested taking the lower of the two bids based on the amount of legal work the Township is likely to need. Also, neither firm requires a contract; both have worked extensively with the Minnesota Association of Townships.

Mr. Duden moved to engage Kennedy and Graven as the Township's legal counsel. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes

Postpone Annual Clean-up Day

The postponement is being considered in light of the COVID19 restrictions imposed by the Governor.

Mr. Hiller moved to postpone the Annual Clean-up Day until the Governor lifts the stay-at-home order, then re-schedule. Seconded by Mr. Duden. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes
Motion carried.

Motion to Adjourn

Mr. Whitcomb moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Stoeckel. Mr. Stoeckel called the roll:

Mr. Duden – Yes; Mr. Hiller – Yes; Mr. Stoeckel – Yes; Mr. Whitcomb – Yes; Mr. Wilhelm – Yes
Motion carried.

Attendees

Scott Richards, Todd McLouth, Michael Trunk, Andrea Gerrard, Jesse Jondahl, Joss Jondahl, Craig Wensmann, Ron Gensler, Nancy Moan, Jackie Hansen, Joel Minks, Marcia Anderson, Katie Brabant, plus 10 unidentified callers.