

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Planning Commission Meeting

Monday, July 12, 2021

Minutes

Regular Meeting

At 6:30 p.m., Chair David Persing called the regular monthly meeting to order.

Commission members present: Cyndi MacDonald, David Persing, Steve Pflieger, Cheryl Schimming, Kathy Stoeckel, Carol Whitcomb

Staff attending: Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Andrea Gerrard; Mille Lacs County Land Services Director Chris Berg

Public in-person attendees: Eldon Johnson, Joel Minks, Scott Moller, Bill Whitcomb

All participants recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approve Agenda

Cyndi MacDonald moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Carol Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Open Forum

Cyndi MacDonald raised the question of a horse being kept on a property near Silver Lake. Mr. Richards replied that stabling a horse is legal on the subject property.

Approve Minutes of June 7, 2021 Meeting

Carol Whitcomb moved to approve the minutes of the June 7 meeting. Seconded by Steve Pflieger. Motion carried.

Section 27 & 34 Land Use and Zoning Study

The commissioners continued their discussion of Scott Moller's plan for a subdivision in Section 27 on County Road 1/75th Avenue. Approval of the subdivision would require amending the Comprehensive Plan and re-zoning the section to Residential/R-1.

Chris Berg, Mille Lacs County Land Services Director, was invited to the meeting to address the question of small-lot (1.25-acre) development. He noted that the County is generally less restrictive than Princeton Township in its zoning and subdivision regulations. He addressed the question of risks to wells from septic installations on lots of the size proposed in the Moller sketch plan. He noted that modern drilled wells are much deeper than older sand-point wells, and thus at little risk from septic effluence.

Mr. Moller attended the meeting to answer questions from commissioners. He confirmed that borings had been taken at random locations on the plan site.

Mr. Richards suggested that the Commission could plan to hold a public hearing covering a preliminary plat, changes to the Comprehensive Plan, and zoning changes at the same. Mr. Moller objected to the requirement that he prepare a preliminary plat before the Town Board acts on the zoning changes. He prefers to pursue the changes through the sketch plan, which he believes is sufficient evidence for the Town Board to make its decision. A preliminary plat would add significantly to his costs while not adding new information for the Town Board.

Mr. Richards will continue to work with Mr. Moller on the zoning-change application. No further action was taken on the request.

Zoning District Setback Standards and Accessory Building Sizes

Recent variance requests have prompted the Planning Commission to consider changes to its building setback standards. In addition, the requests have raised the question of size and design regulations for accessory buildings.

Mr. Richards reviewed the newly adopted ordinance from Greenbush Township, noting the differences from Princeton Township. Based on those standards, Mr. Richards suggested that the Commission consider revising principle-building setbacks in various districts as follows:

- R1 — front yard remains at 70 feet; side yard reduced from 35 to 15 feet; rear yard reduced from 50 to 35 feet.
- R2, RR, AC, and C/I — front yard remains at 70 feet; side yard reduced from 35 to 20 feet; rear yard reduced from 50 to 35 feet.

Mr. Richards noted that the Township does not have standards in its ordinance covering accessory buildings. He suggested that the Commission consider adopting language that would define an accessory building and establish regulations for size, style, use, and position on the lot.

Zoning Ordinance Items: Electronic Signs

The Commission discussed electronic signs and billboard regulations generally, but took no action.

Adjournment

Cheryl Schimming moved to adjourn. Seconded by Steve Pflieger. Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl
Clerk/Treasurer