

**Princeton Township
Mille Lacs County, Minnesota**

Township Board Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Minutes

The September 21 monthly meeting of the Princeton Township Board was called to order by Chairman Gene Stoeckel at 7:30 p.m. Supervisors attended the meeting in person at Township Hall. The meeting was open to in-person attendance, plus remote participation via GoToMeeting.

Supervisors present: Thomas Duden, Dan Hiller, Gene Stoeckel, Bill Whitcomb, John Wilhelm

Staff present: Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Andrea Gerrard, Township Zoning Administrator Scott Richards, Township Engineer Todd McLouth, Township Attorney Jason Hill

Public in-person attendees:, Casey Alferness, Jason Alferness, Rebecca Barnes, Bert Borst, Tom Braun, Shannon Brekke, Austin Dahlheimer, Joe Gerold, Liz Gerold, Susan Gerold, Emily Hanson, Doug Henchen, Bart Kendall, Marcia Kendall, Mary Kramer, Jim Kusler, Steven Long, Joel Minks, Nancy Moan, Scott Moller, Dave Persing, Cindy Pohlkamp, Barry Ramage, Jeff Roundsville, John Roxbury, Casey Stearns, Kathy Stoeckel, Deputy Vogl #5118, plus others whose signatures were not readable.

Online Attendees: Unidentified callers.

All attendees recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing

Background: A neighbor of Shannon Brekke, 10082 55th Street, Long Siding, had brought a complaint to the Township about code violations he had observed on the subject property. Zoning Administrator Scott Richards and Building Inspector Todd Geske inspected the property, confirming several potential nuisance-code violations that required abatement.

Mr. Richards sent a letter to property owner Brett Borst and to property occupant Shannon Brekke on August 12 specifying the violations. On August 26 Ms. Brekke delivered a letter to the Township requesting a hearing before the Town Board.

Violations fall into three categories:

- 1) Accumulation of junk conducive to harboring rats, mice, snakes, other vermin, or vegetation that can create a fire, health, or safety hazard.
- 2) Depositing garbage on a public right-of-way.
- 3) Abandoned or junk vehicles as defined by Minnesota statute.

Mr. Richards presented photographs showing the violations. He also noted that when he spoke with Ms. Brekke on August 25, she indicated she had started to clean up the property.

Ms. Brekke stated that she did not know the road adjacent to her property was a public cartway. Also, she noted that she had acquired insurance and a license for the vehicle in question.

Mr. Duden stated that he had visited the property recently and noted that Ms. Brekke was making progress in cleaning it up.

Mr. Richards advised the Board that they had two matters to consider:

- 1) Whether the nuisance exists under the Township ordinance.
- 2) The timeline for abatement.

Those matters would be taken up under the regular agenda.

Approve Meeting Agenda

Mr. Duden moved to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried

Approve Meeting Minutes

Mr. Whitcomb noted an error in the August 17 meeting minutes draft: Ditch mowing quote from Tom Lundeen read \$41/mile x 62 miles = \$2,542.00 total. Numbers were reversed. Corrected: \$62/mile x 41 miles = \$2,542.00. Mr. Duden moved to approve the minutes with the correction. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

Open Forum

Township resident Cindy Pohlkamp, 4301 85th Avenue, addressed Open Forum about a situation that occurred along the north side of her property on 45th Street: manure had been spread along the road, some of it encroaching on four-wheel cart paths that approached the road from her property. She discovered that the manure had come from the Reiman/Duden property. She asked Mr. Duden to clean up the manure. He made an effort to do so, but Ms. Pohlkamp was not satisfied. She asked if the Board had authorized Mr. Duden's action. The Board responded that it had not. The complaint would remain a private matter to be resolved between the two parties.

A group of residents and non-residents addressed Open Forum about the Township's Traffic Sign Policy adopted in June 2020. They questioned how the policy was developed and how decisions to remove particular signs were made. Township Engineer Todd McLouth explained that the policy was adopted after an extensive review of the Township's traffic signs following the Minnesota Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MnMUTCD). The MnMUTCD emphasizes the need for road authorities to maintain uniformity in their traffic-sign practices, and to eliminate unnecessary signs as a way to reduce costs for sign maintenance and replacement.

In general, attendees continued to object to the sign policy. They asked how they could have signs replaced that were removed under the policy. They were advised that they could request return of a sign in writing to the Board. The Township Engineer and Road Supervisor would then review the request to determine if the sign is warranted under MnMUTCD.

Non-resident Emily Hanson raised other issues, including an apparent discrepancy in the Township's cash control statements for December 2020 and January 2021. Her calculations showed a 2020 ending balance of \$447,170.31 and a 2021 beginning balance of \$315,375.18 for an apparent loss of \$131,795.13. [Township Clerk-Treasurer Doug Dahl investigated the question after the meeting. He discovered that the ending balance cited for 2020 included all Township funds while the beginning balance for 2021 included only the total of the General

Fund plus Road & Bridge. In fact, the total beginning balance for 2021 was \$447,170.31, as it should have been. The 2021 beginning balances for General and Road & Bridge were identical to the 2020 ending balances.]

Clerk-Treasurer Report

Cash control statement:

General Fund beginning balance for August:	\$92,439.31
Receipts	\$ 8,044.16
Disbursements	<u>\$14,940.55</u>
Ending balance	\$85,542.92
Road & Bridge Fund beginning balance for August:	\$254,674.45
Receipts:	\$ 98,451.40
Disbursements	<u>\$ 47,394.06</u>
Ending balance	\$305,731.79

Mr. Duden moved to approve the August cash control statement. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Payroll:

August net payroll: 3,518.80

Mr. Duden moved to approve the August payroll. Seconded by Hiller. Motion carried.

Claims for Approval:

Total claims through September 20, 2021: \$89,489.41

Mr. Hiller moved to approve the September claims. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Mr. Dahl reported that Nate and Jenny Kick had notified the Township of their plans to conduct their Pumpkin Patch activities at Silver Creek Farm again this fall in accordance with their Conditional Use Permit.

Zoning Administrator's Report

Nuisance enforcement for 10082 55th Street:

Mr. Richards stated that the Board's actions must cover two points: 1) If a nuisance exists under the ordinance; 2) timeline for abatement. He recommended giving Ms. Brekke a reasonable amount of time to complete the abatement.

Mr. Hiller moved to direct Ms. Brekke to move the obstructions from the cartway and clean up all rubbish by October 18. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Section 27/County Road 1 Land Use and Zoning Amendment

Badger Creek Holdings/Scott Moller has applied for an amendment to the Princeton Township Comprehensive Plan, Land Map, and Zoning Map to change zoning classifications in the subject area from R2, RR, and AC to R1 to allow for 1.25-acre lot development. The Planning Commission conducted a public hearing on September 7. On that date the Commission

recommended denial of the change on a 4-2 vote. Approval by the Town Board requires a 4/5 affirmative vote.

Mr. Stoeckel moved to deny the application to change the Comprehensive Plan, Land Map, and Zoning classification for the subject area to R1. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. The motion to deny requires a simple majority (3 yes). Motion initially failed: 2 yes, 3 no. Mr. Richards advised that the request, if not denied, would, by Minnesota statute, earn automatic approval after 60 days from the date of the application (August 4). Mr. Hill confirmed the statutory requirement. Upon learning that, Mr. Hiller asked to change his vote.

Mr. Stoeckel called for a new vote. Final vote to deny approval: 3 yes (Hiller, Stoeckel, and Wilhelm); 2 no (Duden and Whitcomb). Motion to deny the application is carried.

Old Business

Kepple escrow status:

No action. Matter is still in discussion with Mr. Kepple.

Annual sign policy review and modifications:

Township resident Joel Minks suggested getting quotes for an engineering study, to be conducted with no participation from Township officers or staff, then presented to the residents at the 2022 Township Annual Meeting.

Mr. Duden moved to request quotes for an engineering study of the Township's sign requirements with a blank slate (no previous sign documentation given to the prospective providers) to be presented at the 2022 Annual Meeting for a vote by the electors. Seconded by Mr. Wilhelm. Motion carried.

Mr. Whitcomb moved to add two statements to the Traffic Sign Policy adopted in June 2020:

To the section on Removal of Excess Signs: "The 2020 engineering study consists of un-compiled material utilizing the following; the 2008 SP 48-070-02 replacement sign plans; a current map showing 2020 removals; a spreadsheet with field notes; field visits; emails and phone calls between the Township Engineer, MN/DOT & the Township; 2020 traffic counts; review of seminar material on traffic control devices, recommendations from the 2018 MN LTAP Best Practices for Traffic Sign Maintenance and Management and the current MN MUTCD – part 5."

To the section on Traffic Sign Reflectivity Management Method: "All signs will be replaced in 12-year intervals per current manufacturers' warranties. Future sign replacement intervals may be extended as warranty times may change in subsequent years."

Motion seconded by Mr. Duden. Motion carried.

Review quotes for replacement signs:

Mr. Wilhelm moved to purchase replacement signs from Earl F. Anderson Company for up to \$5,000.00. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

New Business

Brickton Road Final Payment:

Mr. Whitcomb moved to approve the final payment of \$70,913.05 to Minnesota Paving & Materials for the work on Brickton Road. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried.

Road Report

Mr. Whitcomb summarized current work. Also reported he is working with other townships on shared-road agreements.

Mr. Duden is planning to review roads for ditch-mowing needs to assist in identifying roads that need attention.

Supervisor Reports

Mr. Duden attended a meeting on the proposed \$85 million school district referendum. Representatives will appear at next month's Town Board meeting to explain the proposal.

Mr. Stoeckel reported that the County has been working to reduce its proposed levy increase. It is now down to less than 10% increase.

Mr. Stoeckel reported that the Airport Commission has established a new Joint Airport Planning Board consisting of 10 members: 2 each from Princeton City, Princeton Township, Baldwin Township, Mille Lacs County, and Sherburne County.

Mr. Wilhelm moved to appoint Gene Stoeckel to the Joint Airport Planning Board. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried. Mr. Hiller moved to appoint Dave Persing as the second Princeton Township representative to the Joint Airport Planning Board. Seconded by Mr. Whitcomb. Motion carried.

Adjourn

Mr. Whitcomb moved to adjourn. Seconded by Mr. Hiller. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 10:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Dahl
Clerk/Treasurer