

# Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Planning Board of Avon Township & the City of Avon

October 30, 2023

**Call to Order:** The Joint Planning Board meeting was called to order by Rich Sanoski at 7:00 P.M. in the Main Chamber of the Town Hall. The meeting, like all Township meetings, was also available via Zoom at the following URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8325486945> (PIN: AvonTown).

**Roll Call:** Those present introduced themselves. **Present:** Rich Sansoki (*Township Supervisor*), Jeff Manthe (*City Mayor; sitting in for Jim Read who was absent*), Mark Schulzetenberge (*City Council*), and Lori Yurczyk (*Township Planning Commission*). **Also present:** Jodi Austing-Traut (*City Administrator*), LeRoy Gondringer (*Township Supervisor*), and Stephen Saupe (*Township Clerk*).

**Election of Officers:** The chair alternates between a representative from the City and Town. Since the previous chair (D. Glatzmaier) was a representative from the City, Yurczyk moved to nominate Sanoski as Chair of the Joint Planning Board. Jeff Manthe second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Minutes:** Yurczyk moved to accept the minutes from the January 20, 2022 meeting as presented. Schulzetenberge second. All in favor. Motion carried.

**Agenda:** The Joint Planning Board (JPB) is authorized by the MOU to meet on the second Monday of April. Since there was no business and everyone was busy at that time, the meeting was postponed until this evening. There were no specific action items on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

**Business:** Lacking specific business, JPB members shared updates about activities in their respective jurisdictions. These include:

1. **Solar Projects in the Joint Powers Area** – the Township recently received an inquiry about the possibility of developing a solar garden in the Joint Powers area. The caller was informed that the Township has a one-year moratorium on commercial solar projects until August 2024, which means that no projects can occur until the moratorium expires, or the Avon Township Supervisors cancel the moratorium. The Supervisors are now in the process of determining whether a permanent moratorium should be enacted. The JPB discussed how an IUP for a solar garden would be handled if a moratorium was not in effect. The City/Town MOU (*Attachment 1, #2*) states that the JPB would be responsible for holding a public hearing, conducting a site inspection, and issuing the Interim Use Permit (IUP). The general consensus was that both the City Council and Township Board of Supervisors would be the ultimate authorities for the approval of any IUP.
2. **Joint Powers Agreement Renewal** – the Orderly Annexation Agreement (OAA) was renewed in 2015 for 10 years. It will expire December 31, 2025. The consensus was to have a meeting Fall 2024 (*likely October*), to begin discussions of the renewal process. This would provide the start for further discussions in 2025 leading to a final decision prior to the OAA expiration date.
3. **Fire Hall Expansion** – Austing-Traut reported that the project has gone out for bids/quotes and that they are due November 9. Gohman Inc., the construction management team, will summarize the results and make recommendations to the City Council. Once the estimated project cost is known,

The City will issue a bond. Austing-Traut said that the City sent a contract to both townships to lock in fire services for the lifetime of the bond payments. The contract also provides some release from liability for the townships. She said that if the Townships do not sign the contract the City Council will need to decide whether to continue with the expansion project because the City couldn't afford, nor would they need, to build an expansion without Township participation.

Gondringer stated that the Avon FD has given excellent service and he assumes that the Township would continue its relationship with the Avon FD forever. He said that one concern is that the townships have no control over any decisions, including how funds are spent. The City Council makes all decisions. A joint fire district was discussed years ago. The townships would like more "ownership" and input into decisions, especially now that City wants the townships to commit to a 20-year payment.

Manthe asked what sort of input the townships would want. He said that the City might be open to changes, especially to keep pace with changes in the role of the FD (*i.e.*, more health-related calls). He also said that the City values the partnership with the townships and that there may be ways to increase cooperation. He cited the fire hall expansion planning committee that developed a well-designed, cost effective and far-reaching plan, as an example of this cooperation. Manthe also said that property ownership of the FD would likely not change, but control on how decisions are made possibly could. He asked what this might look like from the township perspective.

Manthe said that purchasing decisions for equipment, etc. often comes from the FD itself and that the FD then comes to the City for approval. Gondringer suggested that perhaps the City and township have some sort of veto power.

Yurczyk suggested that the FD should make a priority of attending the Annual Meeting to provide an overview of actions and decision being made. Town residents have always voted in favor of FD concerns, but would feel more comfortable knowing in increasing levy having a better understanding of FD needs.

Manthe said that there are impending retirements but that they are doing well in recruiting replacement fire fighters. When asked if residents are charged for FD services unless the call is the result of an inappropriate behavior (*i.e.*, no burning permit). Manthe said that the City gets monthly updates from the FD. The township requested them as well.

Saupe asked if what happens if the bids / quotes for the project are too high, and who will make decisions on what might get cut? Manthe said that Gohman has been working to ensure project comes is at budget and that it appears likely, especially because some contractors have expressed wanting to provide favorable numbers for the project (*i.e.*, Wells Concrete).

If any donations for the project are received, Manthe said it would lower the cost across the board for the City and townships. They are currently receiving donations but fundraising will get serious in December once the final bid/quote numbers have been received

4. **Church Lot** – the City is looking to lease from the Church the parking area near the ballfield to make some improvements. They want to have cars enter past Casey's to avoid the low wet area. It is

complicated because the area is partially owned by the Church, Casey's and the City. One motivation is that in 2025 Avon will host the amateur state baseball tournament.

5. **LRIP Support** – Gondringer reported that the Township fully supports the City project to upgrade 1<sup>st</sup> Street SE, but didn't write a letter in support of the City's LRIP grant proposal for fear that it might reduce the odds of the Township receiving funding for our Queens road LRIP proposal.
  
6. **Noise Barrier** – The City was alerted that some Avon Township residents are interested in having a noise barrier installed on the south side of I-94, opposite the existing wall. Manthe said that the City required three consecutive applications before they were approved for funding. Upper Spunk Lake Road residents said noise levels increased after installation of the barrier on the north side. Prior to construction, MNDOT told the City that noise levels wouldn't change because the barrier would deaden the sound. A MNDOT study suggested that there was minimal increase in noise on the south side after installation of the wall. The neighborhood group has approached the Supervisors to support their request, though they were told the Township would not provide financial support. Manthe said that City residents were partially assessed for the cost and that the amount was based on their distance from the barrier.

**Announcement of Next Meeting:** Because the second Monday in April is the day of a total solar eclipse (April 8, 2024), the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 15, 2024, which is the third Monday.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Jeff Manthe to adjourn at about 8:30 PM. Second by Mark Schulzetenberge. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk  
Avon Township  
16881 Queens Road  
Avon, MN 56310