

Minutes of the Meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission

October 27, 2021

Avon Township Hall (16881 Queens Road, Avon)

Call to Order: Chair Lori Yurczyk called to order the meeting of the Avon Township Planning Commission at 7:00 PM in the Main Chamber of the Town Hall. The meeting was also available online at the following URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88599868967>.

Pledge: The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present – Craig Blonigen, LeRoy Gondringer, Stephen Saupe, and Lori Yurczyk. Absent: Rich Sanoski. Also present: Kelly Martini.

Approval of Agenda: Gondringer moved to approve the agenda with the inclusion of a discussion of ARPA funding. Blonigen second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Minutes: The word ‘authorize’ was changed to ‘recommend to’ in the second to last line of item #3 (*Parking Pad Policy*). Gondringer moved to approve the minutes from the September 29, 2021 meeting as amended. Blonigen second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Hearings: *none scheduled*

Business:

1. **Town Hall Use Policy** – The Supervisors authorized the PC to review the current policy to see if changes or modifications should be considered. This was, in part, motivated by a request to use the Hall for yoga sessions. The current policy is to allow use by non-profit, youth organizations (*i.e.*, Girl Scouts). In addition, a few other groups have been approved to use the Hall including the Avon Hills Lions Club. An approximately 90 minute-long conversation followed. Many items were addressed including:
 - (a) The Town should avoid taking business from local venues;
 - (b) There are limited venues for residents to use in the area;
 - (c) This is a tax-funded building so it should have greater use as a Community Center;
 - (d) The original purpose of the building was not as a community center but primarily for consolidation of Town Records, storage for equipment, and voting;
 - (e) Security of Town Hall equipment, like the AV system and computer, is a concern with more usage;
 - (f) Staff time is required to book the facility, open it up, ensure that there was no damage to the Hall, etc.;
 - (g) Social events, even by non-profit groups, have not been approved in the past;
 - (h) We should allow use for special circumstances (*i.e.*, family needing a space for legal meeting);
 - (i) We need to be fair in who is permitted to use the facility;
 - (j) A fee should be charged to all groups;
 - (k) Are all non-profits acceptable? (*i.e.*, what about those that make money?);
 - (l) “Local” groups would be permitted, though it is not clear what is meant by local (*i.e.*, does a Town resident need to be a member? Should the organization be headquartered within 25 miles? other);
 - (m) Potential damage to the Hall is a concern (*i.e.*, stains to the carpet, damage to electronic equipment);
 - (n) There was a general agreement that meetings are a reasonable use of the Hall. There was no consensus for whether the Hall should be used for social events (*i.e.*, weddings, baby showers);
 - (o) There was a concern that the Hall should not be available to outside groups during Covid considering the need to increase cleaning/disinfection;
 - (p) How much of the cost of opening the Hall (*i.e.*, heating cost, electricity) should the Town underwrite,

- and do we include it in the rental fee?;
- (q) If the Hall is opened to a wider audience, an electronic key access might be required to provide access to users;
- (r) There was a suggestion to hire a part-time person who could serve as Zoning Administrator (to reclaim CSP’s from the County), clean the building and book the Hall;
- (s) Some thought a damage deposit should be mandatory, while others thought that user groups would take ownership and want to maintain the building making a damage deposit unnecessary. Also, groups understand that if they damage the building they would never be permitted to use it again;
- (t) The application form should be clarified to include a fee/damage deposit, whether or not it is charged to the user;
- (u) If we expand use, are there additional liability concerns/issues?

Blonigen moved to recommend to the Supervisors to open the Hall to a wider group of local non-profits that would be involved primarily with meetings and not socializing. There was no second for the motion. The discussion continued but there was no general consensus or final recommendation from the PC. There was no recommendation/consensus concerning the yoga group.

2. **ARPA Funding** – L Gondringer will be listed on the minutes of the recent ARPA subcommittee as a “guest.” We have made contact with MidCo and AlbanyTel about expanding broadband service though there has been no response yet. CenturyLink also offers broadband in the Town and should be included. An alternate approach is to request proposals from providers to expand broadband in the Township. Martini contacted MAT official Jeff Krueger about ARPA and learned that his Town is using funding derived from the calculator for roadwork, and that we should not be in a hurry to spend the funds because there might be changes in the spending restrictions in the future. The County wants to work with the Town regarding broadband; if so, Mr. Krueger suggested that we have a written contract and involve our lawyer. Martini reported that during a MAT call they suggested that money from the Towns that didn’t apply for ARPA funding would go back into the pot that may be redistributed to other Towns.

Reports/Announcements

1. There will be a County Hearing on October 28, 2021 to consider a request by LeRoy & Marion Gondringer for a variance from a feedlot.

Other Meetings: The next PC meeting is November 24, 2021 at 7:00 PM (*available via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88599868967>*). The next Supervisor’s Meeting is November 4, 2021 (*also available at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83387278851>*).

Adjournment: Gondringer moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:47 PM. Blonigen second. All in favor. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen G. Saupe, Clerk

Signature: _____

date: October 31, 2021

Approval:

Lori Yurczyk, Planning Commission Chair – signature

date: _____