



AVON TOWNSHIP NEWSLETTER

<http://avontownship.org>

Summer 2022

Greetings from the Avon Township Supervisors

We hope you find this issue of the newsletter enjoyable and informative. If you have any questions, please contact us. We encourage you to attend a monthly meeting. For more information about the Township, visit our website (<http://avontownship.org>). We hope you can join us for our Open House on September 12th.

Do I Need a Permit To . . . ?

This is a frequent question we receive from residents. The most common permits residents require are: Construction Site, Driveway, Burning, Conditional Use, and Interim Use permits. Other common needs include a Certificate of Compliance and Variance. To determine which type of permit you might need, contact Stearns County Environmental Services (320.656.3613) or the Town Clerk. For more details visit the Township website (<http://avontownship.org/forms-permits/>).

If you build a new structure, add to or modify an existing one, build a deck, change the square footage of a building, or make structural changes, you will need a Construction Site Permit (CSP), or building permit. You do not need a CSP if you replace roofing, windows or siding. Contact Environmental Services for a CSP.

A driveway permit is required if any work on a new or existing driveway impacts or touches a Township road. The Township issues these permits. Contact the Town Clerk.

You can be assessed a fine if you begin work on a project prior to acquiring the proper permit. A quick call to Stearns County or the Town Clerk will get you started toward obtaining the proper permit and help you avoid a fine.

Avon Compost Site

The Avon Compost Facility, located at the end of Angelfish Avenue, is open for use by Avon Township residents MWF 8AM-7PM and Saturday (9 AM-4PM). Residents are permitted to dump grass clippings, leaves, and small brush. **Nothing else is accepted.** Put your items in the appropriate piles. Do not drop off any construction materials or other refuse! If other foreign items keep finding their way into the site the City will close the gates immediately without notice.

Use of the Town Hall

The Town Hall is available for use by non-profit and similar organizations. For example, the Hall is the “home” for the Avon Hills Lions Club. The Hall is not available for private events and parties because the Township does not want to compete with local venues and we don’t have staff to monitor these events. More information and an application are available on the Town website.

AVON TOWNSHIP OPEN HOUSE!!
There will be an ice cream social Open House at the Avon Township Hall on Monday, September 12 from 5-7 PM. Come meet Township staff, enjoy some ice cream, explore the Town Hall and Maintenance Shop, and check out the native plant areas and equipment. Have you ever sat in a snow plow? Also, learn more about how our township government works. The Open House celebrates the 12th anniversary of our Town Hall that was constructed without raising taxes.

Township Roads – LeRoy Gondringer, Supervisor

The Supervisors conduct their yearly road inspection in April to identify roads in need of repair. With this information, and with considerations for cost estimates and funds allocated in the budget,

we prioritize roads most in need of repair for this year and future years.

The cost to overlay a road with new asphalt has almost doubled in recent years, to around \$200,000 per mile. A major ingredient of asphalt is oil. As the price of oil and gasoline goes up, so does the cost of asphalt. This year the Township will focus available funds to reconfiguring two cul-de-sacs on Parkwood Circle and overlaying part of that road.

We also mow ditches, trim brush, and spray for noxious weeds in the road right-of-way. You may opt out of weed spraying by contacting the Township Clerk; however, it will then be your responsibility to control brush and noxious weeds in the road right-of-way. Typically, the Township Road easement, or right-of-way, is 66 ft wide. Or in other words, the right-of-way extends 33 ft from the center of the road. The Township has the right and obligation to maintain this area in order to provide the community with safe and passable roads.

Avon Township received more than \$260,000 from the Federal Government through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), a program designed to help government entities deal with the financial stress caused by the Covid pandemic. With some of these funds Avon Township purchased a New Holland tractor to run the ditch mower purchased several years ago. This releases the township from the need to rent a tractor for ditch mowing. We will also use some of the ARPA funds to partner with Stearns County and AlbanyTel to bring high speed internet to some of the under-served areas of the Township.

AVON TOWNSHIP AT A GLANCE

Town Hall Address: 16881 Queens Road; Avon, MN 56310

Web Site: <http://avontownship.org>

Board of Supervisors: (meets the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM)

Maintenance: Joe Koopmeiners

Richard Bresnahan LeRoy Gondringer (*Chair*) Rich Sanoski

Treasurer: Kelly Martini

Clerk: Stephen Saupe (320) 248 – 8036

Deputy Treasurer – Paul Buttweiler

Deputy Clerk – Marion Gondringer

Planning Commission: (meets the last Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM)

Craig Blonigen Rich Sanoski Stephen Saupe Andrew Wensmann Lori Yurczyk (*Chair*)

Township Information

The Township website, <http://avontownship.org>, provides a portal to Township information. Visit the site to find copies of minutes, forms, news, and links to other sites. If you have comments, contributions, or suggestions about the website, contact the Clerk. Legal notices are published in the *Star-Post*, posted on the bulletin boards outside the Town Hall and *The Store* in St. Anna, and are also posted in the Town website.

ARPA Funding – Kelly Martini, Treasurer

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) into law. ARPA provides stimulus to individuals, businesses and government entities to assist in their respective COVID-19 responses. Avon Township received \$131,160.20 in August (2021) and \$135,455.33 in July (2022). The Supervisors appointed a committee to help make decisions where to spend the money. The Supervisors decided to work with the County to improve broadband in the area, and to buy a tractor to mow ditches. A couple of other items are on the list, with the rest left over for roads.

Elections

This is an election year! The Primary Election was held in early August and the General Election will be Tuesday, November 8th from 7AM-8PM. The election of Township officials is always held on the second Tuesday in March from 2-8PM. Mark your calendar to vote in the General and Township elections. If you would like to serve as an election judge, contact the Clerk.

Snow Removal

Snow removal is one of the main responsibilities of the Township. We do our best to quickly and efficiently clear the roads without damaging lawns and mailboxes. We have to keep the road wide enough to permit traffic flow as snow accumulates. If you experience any damage from plowing, contact one of the Supervisors. The Township is responsible for damage to a mailbox if the plow physically hits it. However, mailboxes are more commonly damaged from snow that is thrown up, and this is the reason why residents should install a break-away mailbox post. In fact, they are the only post approved by the USPS. The mailbox and posts will not be damaged if hit by snow or a plow because they will swing out of the way and then spring back into place. Some vendors are listed on our website at <http://avontownship.org/roads/>.

(Snow continued)

Residents are reminded that it is a **misdemeanor to plow snow onto or across public roads**. When snow is pushed across the road it leaves ridges, which can freeze and if hit by a plow or vehicle can throw the vehicle across the road. Please do not push snow across the road. Township residents are also reminded to remove parked vehicles from Township roads to assist in snow removal. Finally, contact a Supervisor if you would like to join the Township snowplow-driver team.

News from the Assessor's Office – Kathy Korte

Some residents have been surprised to find that their property taxes have increased. One reason for this is that increased home values have resulted in phasing out the homestead tax exclusion. The homestead exclusion is a reduction in your estimated market value that is subjected to taxation. The maximum home value eligible for the 40% exclusion is \$76,000 and the home value at which the exclusion is fully phased out is \$413,800. In addition, the residential tax rates increase from 1% to 1.25%, when the value is over \$500,000. If you have questions about your tax bill, contact the Stearns County Assessor's Office (320-656-3688).

Be Kind

We have received reports of residents being impolite to contractors and others doing work for the Township. As a reminder, the Township road right-of-way can extend up to 33 feet from the center-of-the-road. This means that the Township can legally do work in this area. Any brush smaller than 6 inches in diameter can be cut without homeowner approval, while larger stems require the Town to first contact the resident. That said, the Township always wants to work with the support of residents to keep everyone happy. We want to maintain the health and safety of the Township and keep open lines of communication.

Storm Damage – Rich Sanoski, Supervisor

There was significant storm damage from the heavy rainfall we received in May. We had to replace several culverts, clear debris from roads, and fix washouts. Thanks to the long hours by our maintenance staff and help from local contractors, most roads were back into shape within several days. The estimated damage throughout the Township was about \$38,000, which we hope can be reimbursed by FEMA.