

*State of Minnesota*

*County of Rice, Town of Bridgewater*

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**MINUTES**

**BRIDGEWATER TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR WORK SESSION**

Item considered was a potential Orderly Annexation Agreement with the City of Dundas

February 6, 2004 – 4:00 PM  
 Bridgewater Town Hall  
 500 Railway Street South, Dundas, MN 55019

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 PM by Supervisor-Chair Leif Knecht. Chair Knecht invited all present to pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States.

**B. LIST OF ATTENDEES**

The following is a partial list of attendees: David Salene, Consultant; Gary Ebling, Bridgewater Supervisor; Leif Knecht, Bridgewater Supervisor-Chair; Paul Liebenstein, Bridgewater Supervisor; and Mike Piper, Bridgewater Clerk.

**C. MEETING DISCUSSION**

- Knecht stated that the purpose of the meeting was to firm-up Bridgewater's negotiating position with Dundas.
- Knecht distributed a set of ground rules for the meeting, attached. Knecht emphasized that there would be provision for comments/questions by residents attending.
- The following are comments by Salene:
- From his readings of the Supervisors' "visions," the following list of priorities emerged: transportation, an orderly annexation agreement, the preservation of the township's rural character, planning and zoning, housing, coping with change, and the impact on the budget.
- A strong orderly annexation agreement is the best investment for achieving the town's objectives.
- If the township wants good development that is fair and equal, it must have planning and zoning authority. Otherwise, the town can't enforce its objectives.
- "You must be able to do it, else it doesn't matter."
- Without planning and zoning, there are no equal powers.
- A developer is driven nuts by undefined or ambiguous development criteria. That is, government must not be arbitrary in the interpretation of these criteria.
- The annexation agreement will allow influence or control.

- Membership on a planning commission will permit only influence unless the town has its own planning and zoning.
- Bridgewater should go to Rice County and say that we want to do our own planning and zoning.
- In a “perfect world,” the planning commission would do planning and zoning for Bridgewater and Dundas. The objective should be the “whole area” because it is the “whole area.” The commission should consist of 7 to 9 members.
- Consider the cost of planning and zoning. It takes time, money, work, and spent political capital. But that is how the town gets control, which seems what the Supervisors want.
- No planning and zoning, no control and no joint powers.
- The documentation for planning and zoning must be revised and updated periodically. They are “living documents.”
- As to the necessity for planning and zoning for an orderly annexation agreement – with planning and zoning, the town can define, influence, and control housing and industrial development. (?)
- Knecht said that larger developments are best served by connected public utilities of municipalities.
- Knecht noted that the town has scattered rural development; he stated that he doesn’t want urban style residential, commercial, and industrial development in the township.
- In response to Knecht’s question as to how the town could stop that, Salene observed the town needs authority. (That is, planning and zoning.)
- Salene noted again that the town’s choice is influence or control. Control must be specific, not arbitrary. Generalized, philosophical “warm fuzzies” are not enforceable.
- Control requires a planning and zoning plan, a comprehensive plan, and a land use plan.
- As to Ebling’s question whether an orderly annexation agreement could contain planning and zoning elements without a planning and zoning capability, Salene responded “no.” You can’t get the results of planning and zoning without doing planning and zoning. Town members on a planning commission can be easily outvoted.
- The town has a decision to make: do we want to influence (if so, 2 out of 5 is better than 2 out of 7), or do we want control.
- Ebling observed that Bridgewater’s comprehensive plan could mirror that of Dundas.
- Zoning codes and ordinances would be required.
- Specific types of development can be defined in the annexation agreement.
- Knecht said that the primary objective is to get an orderly annexation agreement. Doing planning and zoning is a back-up position.
- The position then is either a good annexation agreement, or the performance of planning and zoning. That said, the town must be prepared to do planning and zoning.
- The pace of development could be determined by available sewer and water capacity.
- Knecht reiterated his objective to “leap-frogging.” Salene referred to “bar bell developments.”
- Land can’t be annexed by petition unless it’s touching.

- Knecht stated his objectives: willing land owners, a development plan, and contiguous configuration.
- Salene said that it is difficult to collect on a letter of credit.
- Knecht observed that planning and zoning is an alternate strategy. We would need the county's OK to be less restrictive.
- That said, a less restrictive approach would be a good negotiating tool.
- Salene said that growth will go on; our choice is influence or control.
- Salene repeated that Bridgewater could have an annexation agreement with either influence or control. Control requires planning and zoning. Supervisors are elected to have a voice.
- Salene estimated that the cost of planning and zoning would be \$10,000 to \$15,000 to set it up, and \$5,000 to \$6,000 to clean it up.
- The Supervisors agreed to continue working on the language of an orderly annexation agreement, and if all else fails, to do our own planning and zoning.
- The Supervisors asked Salene to assist in this process.

**D. MOTION TO ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectively submitted,

*Mike Piper*

Mike Piper, Clerk

Leif Knecht, Supervisor-Chair