

# **Town of Crystal Bay**

## **Regular Meeting of the PLANNING COMMISSION**

Clair Nelson Community Center  
6866 Cramer Road Finland, MN 55603

### **Minutes**

July 14th, 2025

- I. Attendance:** Lise Abazs, Stacy Breden, Honor Schauland, Nancy Olson
  - A. Chair Breden called the Planning Commission Meeting to order at 5:03 pm with the Pledge of allegiance.
  - B. MOTION: To approve 7/14/25 Agenda. Motioned by board member Abazs, Seconded by Chair Breden, Passed by unanimous consent.
  - C. MOTION to approve July 7th meeting minutes: Motioned by board member Abazs, Seconded by Chair Breden, Passed by unanimous consent.
- II. Old Business Updating Comprehensive Plan**
  - A. Infrastructure: Housing & Wastewater
  - B. Appendix A Review
  - C. Infrastructure
  - D. Infrastructure: Energy
  - E. Infrastructure: Roads
  - F. Infrastructure: Trails & Recreation
    - 1. MOTION: to move ARDC(Arrowhead Regional development commission) Study on Trails that was done for the Township 2012-2015 time frame. To the Appendix for future work. Add Clair Nelson Center to #4. Correct Spelling (wise to wide) and add back in County Road 6 to the shoulder widening portion on #6. Also check the spelling of the Trail System. Motioned by board member Abazs, seconded by Chair Breden, passed by unanimous consent
  - G. Infrastructure: Communications
- III. New Business: Updating Comprehensive Plan**
  - A. Planning Commission and public discussion re: "Natural Resources"
    - 1. MOTION to accept the following changes to the 2015 "Natural Resources" GOAL: Crystal Bay Township will manage its resources in a balanced way so as to protect them. Recognizing the vast area of large ownership of public and wild land in the north and central part of the Township (180 square miles) and recognizing that land as a vital part of the ruralness of Crystal Bay Township, Crystal Bay Township will support and emphasize management, development, and activities that protect resources and keep the area wild so as to achieve the following:
      - o It is a major contributor to the sustainable forest resources in the Township.
      - o It provides an area for trails, hunting, bird watching, camping, and canoeing in areas that still remain undeveloped/wild.
      - o A small amount of housing has been developed in the area, most of which is self

~~supporting in terms of infrastructure requirements.~~

Instead adding the following language and moving it to Housing B1 #3  
o Housing in the Northern part of the Township should be self supporting in terms of infrastructure requirements.

o Wetlands are an integral part of the ecosystem and remain intact for future Generations The most prominent features of Crystal Bay Township, its streams, lakes, forests, wildlife, and hills and valleys will be managed in a balanced way and continue to flourish and represent Crystal Bay Township's sense of place so as to achieve the following:  
o Views are still unobstructed and uninterrupted by humans.  
o Water quality in streams, lakes, and drinking water is of the highest quality  
o Housing, roads, and trails in Crystal Bay Township has been done in a manner that minimizes run-off and reduces the amount of impervious surfaces.  
o Habitat endures for wildlife species that have been natural inhabitants of Crystal Bay Township. The stars and the Aurora Borealis are still vibrantly visible throughout Crystal Bay Township as a result of maintaining guidelines for lighting and minimizing light pollution. Crystal Bay Township has wisely used and sustained its natural resources including lakes and streams, forests, and gravel resources.  
o Crystal Bay Township has protected its water resources through assuring that the sewage treatment systems are well designed and complying while meeting user needs -- from individual onsite systems to alternative sewage systems and sewer districts where warranted.

Motioned by board member Abazs, Seconded by Chair Breden, passed by unanimous consent

B. Planning Commission and public discussion re: "Natural Resources- Development"

MOTION to accept the following changes to the 2015 "Natural Resources- Development"

~~\* The Township will conduct a natural resources inventory in partnership with other groups (ex: DNR data, the Superior National Forest EIS) to help the Board identify sensitive areas.~~

~~\* The Township will partner with other government and non-profit entities to gather information such as data collected by the State and Federal fish and wildlife managers, the Minnesota County Biological Survey, regional educational institutions and others to establish a biological inventory to compliment previous and concurrent GIS efforts as a means to protect sensitive, vulnerable, protected, endangered, or threatened species and their habitat.~~

~~\* Once the Township has conducted the inventory, they~~ With this information the township will:

- identify and prioritize important habitat, natural areas, and viewsheds in the Township.
- develop sensitive areas overlays,
- inform their recommendations to other decision makers such as the Lake County Planning and Zoning
- to educate community residents about resources in the Township.

~~\* The Township will work with the County to rezone the Township in ways which match the Crystal Bay comprehensive plan. At present there are three main zoning issues:~~  
Some current issues that have been identified include; 1) inflexible septic ordinances in

relation to residential housing development in a rural setting; 2) the rezone areas around inner lakes to make the zoning there consistent with the surrounding areas; 3) to work with local business owners and residents to identify a downtown commercial district; and 4) to explore the creation of a 40 acre minimum lot size for use in identified areas of the five northern township blocks to help preserve the area for forestry and other natural environment uses and access.

\* The Township will work with Lake County to urge them to work on developing ridgeline ordinances and to provide education to the public about this. (For example: to have construction projects to fit into or be below the tree line to blend into the mountain.)

\* The Town Board will encourage the use of sustainable practices and planning in any developments in the Township. ~~The University of Wisconsin's Siting Rural Development handout includes a series of recommendations including thoughtful planning, using tools to protect lakes and streams, and minimizing pollutant sources and pollutant delivery.~~

\* The Township, will support efforts to ~~working with others, will create an education program/process~~ promote conservation easements and educate residents about development pressures, their consequences, and alternatives, to help promote open space design and best management practices, to explain the issues of impervious surfaces and stormwater run-off, to teach about sensitive areas, and the consequences of introducing exotic species and the benefits of using native Lake Superior Highland species.

\* The Township will encourage the preservation or protection of areas unsuitable for development due to environmental, economic, or community restraints. Work with Lake County, the Nature Conservancy, and other government and non-governmental agencies in these efforts. One way to do this could be to support legislation that provides local governments with tax incentives (payments in lieu of taxes) from the state for protection of sensitive areas with conservation easements.

\* The Township will seek to limit impervious surfaces and encourage the management of stormwater from new developments.

\* The Township will work with Lake County to adopt a stormwater or hydrology ordinance that inclusively addresses stormwater erosion, sedimentation, wetlands, and vegetative management.\* The Township will partner with a land trust to hold and manage conservation easements

and property titles.Motioned by board member Abazs , Seconded by Chair Breden , passed by unanimous consent

C. Planning Commission and public discussion re: "Natural Resources- Forest Resources"

MOTION to accept the following changes to the 2015 "Natural Resources- Forest Resources" The Township will work closely with County, State, and Federal land managers to ensure that forests under their jurisdiction found within the Township are managed using an appropriate forestry certification program. The Township will encourage private landowners managing forests for timber harvest to adopt sound forest stewardship practices such as those found in the Minnesota Forest Resource Council guidelines for private woodlot owners or other sustainable forestry certification program. The Township will work with the County to consider enrolling property administered by the County and the Township that is designated for timber harvest into sustainable

forestry certification programs. The Township will encourage home owners to do forest stewardship plans (partner with other government and not-for-profits to provide education and incentives for this)

The Township will ~~partner~~ support with other organizations and loggers to offer training on safe and sustainable logging practices. The Township will continue to offer trees to residents to help replant forests with native, and climate adapted species.

Motioned by board member Abazs , Seconded by Chair Breden , passed by unanimous consent

D. Planning Commission and public discussion re: "Natural Resources- Aggregate Mining"

MOTION to accept the following changes to the 2015 "Natural Resources- Aggregate Mining" The Township will encourage efforts which seek to build roads in such a way as to minimize the need for new gravel pits (for example by using recyclables and local waste products such as tailings (if they are safe) in road beds.) The Township will review and ~~enforce~~ adhere to existing State laws regulating aggregate mining ~~while using resources such as the Minnesota Aggregate Mining Task Force Final Report and the State of Wisconsin model reclamation ordinance to draft and adopt additional Township provisions~~ while protecting the environment and residents from the adverse impacts of this activity. Working with Lake County, requires restoration of aggregate pits and putting into place systems to ensure the reclamation. The Township will also encourage maintaining the sites as they are mined to keep them as kept up as possible. The Town Board will monitor aggregate pits, as part of their annual road tour, so that they do not become dumping grounds and so that they are restored.

Motioned by board member Abazs , Seconded by Chair Breden , passed by unanimous consent

E. Planning Commission and public discussion re: "Natural Resources- Enforcement"

MOTION to accept the following changes to the 2015 "Natural Resources- Enforcement" The Township will work with Lake County to promote better enforcement in all areas of development including setbacks, enforcement of future ridgeline ordinances, wetland preservation, and angles of driveway limits.

~~The Township will encourage and work towards the use clear obvious signage (for example: big pink signs with project and contact and government contact information on it) to let the public know projects which are being proposed and worked on.~~

~~The Township will work with Lake County to develop small handouts/business cards with contact numbers to make it easier for people to know who to call and when.~~

~~To ensure that existing laws are followed by all private and public landowners, Town Board members will perform site visits in all planned construction areas before and after completion and notify appropriate enforcement personnel of violations.~~

The Township will help connect residents with appropriate authorities in relation to land use issues. Motioned by board member Abazs , Seconded by Chair Breden , passed by unanimous consent.

F. Planning Commission and public discussion re: "Natural Resources- Other"

MOTION to accept the following changes to the 2015 "Natural Resources- Other"

The Township will work with Lake County and Cooperative Light and Power to implement the

County's lighting ordinances. If this is not sufficient, the Township will consider the International Dark Skies Association model lighting ordinance to protect Crystal Bay

Township residents from nuisance glare and stray lighting ensuring continued access to dark skies. Town Board members will work with Lake County to develop and promote a noise ordinance to protect Crystal Bay Township residents and sensitive wildlife from industrial noise sources such as gravel mining operations, timber harvest and motorized trail use. The Town Board will adopt and promote landscaping approaches that rely on native plants and enhance watershed functions. The Town Board will support the County's existing signage ordinances so that there are no bill boards in Crystal Bay Township. Further, the Town Board will promote the use of beautiful locally made signage that fits into the cultural and historic feel of the Township.

Motioned by board member Abazs , Seconded by Chair Breden , passed by unanimous consent

G. Planning Commission and public discussion re: "Economy"

MOTION to accept the following changes to the 2015 "Economy"

C. ECONOMY

GOAL: Crystal Bay Township will balance economic diversity and a strong local job base. Specifically, it will have a diversified economy where residents continue to work in ~~traditional~~ established sectors that have been such as established such as logging, tourism and environmental education.

The diverse economy will also be bolstered by good paying online jobs in high tech enterprises. ~~and the Lake County Broadband Project.~~

Because of this diverse and prospering economy, there are jobs available making it viable for younger people to remain in the community. The Town Board will support efforts that balance the importance of tourism and other economic development with the needs and values of local residents. Once the Township designates the area along Highway 1 in downtown Finland ~~districts~~ as

a commercial district, ~~it~~ that may slowly expand and meet the needs of local residents as well as provides goods and services for tourists who recreate in and around Crystal Bay Township so as to achieve the following: Most of the new developments are locally based and benefit the local economy. All the commercial developments are well integrated into the community's natural resource based environment and blend into the scale associated with the town. Since space is limited along its commercial district, the commercial developments have focused on utilizing space efficiently and densely. The downtown area has developed in a manner consistent with its small town beginnings.

Crystal Bay Township's home based businesses and occupations will grow; a long standing tradition in the community. The environmental education sector in Crystal Bay Township will increase and continue to provide jobs. Tourism in the Township will remain in keeping with Crystal Bay's ruralness and its natural resources. It has not expanded to where it overrides the rural, small community feeling that has abounded in the Township. A diverse tourism trade in Crystal Bay Township will be maintained:

- o Motorized and quiet activities continue to be supported by local businesses catering to them such as the hospitality industry as well as sales and services.
- o ~~Once Crystal Bay Township has developed~~ A connected trail system exists between ~~with~~ "Downtown Finland", Lax Lake, Silver Bay, Beaver Bay and the North Shore, "Downtown Finland" will be a resource for all trail users. ~~become the heart of a loop trail off the Superior Hiking~~

~~Trail and the North Shore Biking trail. Hiking / biking in Crystal Bay Township will give new meaning to the “Sawtooth Mountains”.~~

~~o As part of the home-based business / occupations, there will be a segment in tourism which provides for educational opportunities as well as opportunities to stay in B&B's – connecting with residents and sharing in a rural living experience.~~

\* The Township will center commercial development in existing commercial areas and identify prohibited commercial uses that would be in opposition to the traditional quality of life. The Township will work with local businesses and residents to identify the area of a downtown commercial district and, if advantageous, partner with Lake County to make the required zoning changes.

The Township will use and encourage the use of local goods and services as a way of supporting the local business economy and resources which promotes the community's sustainability. As a part of this, the Town Board will help to maintain the prominence of the Finland Co-op as they continue its tradition of providing for the needs of its residents. The Township will explore ways of encouraging the development of value added products, those which are based upon local natural resources from the area, but are processed in some way so as to add to their value before selling them elsewhere.

~~\*The Township should look into the needs of local businesses and see how they can support them. The Township could have a Local Business Award to a home business or corporate business that meets certain criteria, for instance, serving local needs, recycling nature both in terms of resources and financial dealings, enhances the quality of life of the family or the community, achieves the “northwoods” feel in their operation, etc.... The award could be given out by the town through a small group, including past Recipients. (MOVE THIS SECTION TO APPENDIX )~~

The Town board will set clear and specific conditions for commercial development, limiting “theme” franchises (buffering the road and residential land uses). The Township or a design review committee will recommend design standards for commercial development while still allowing individual expression. The Township shall establish a Corporate Personhood Elimination and Democratic Self-Government Ordinance to eliminate corporate claims to civil and constitutional privileges.

The Township has ~~will~~ established a ~~living wage ordinance~~ Compensation Policy and Procurement Policy as well as follows the State Mandated Contractors and Bidders Laws for its laborers and contracts to promote social equality and requires ~~in addition to establishing minimum wage standards, this model ordinance also requires~~ that local expertise and labor sources be used whenever possible. Town board members will promote sustainable tourism which recognizes that tourism decisions be ecosystem based, recognizing the cumulative and synergistic effects of all actions on the ecological integrity of a community and region. Impacts of tourism related decisions should be assessed on other sectors, regions and communities.

~~\*Town board members will look into the commercial needs of the Township and try to design an economic plan accordingly. They will begin by surveying existing local businesses on their needs and goals. They will also provide education on sustainable economic choices on an individual, business, and community level. (MOVE THIS SECTION TO THE APPENDIX)~~

Motioned by board member Abazs , Seconded by Chair Breden , passed by unanimous consent

**VI. CLOSE MEETING:** MOTION: to adjourn at 6:37 pm until our next scheduled meeting on Monday July 21st, 2025 at 5:00pm at the Clair Nelson Community Center. Motioned by board member Abazs , Seconded by Chair Breden , Passed by unanimous consent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Stacy Breden- Board Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lise Abazs- Board Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Roger Peterson- Board Member

Attested to this 21st day of July, 2025

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Stacy Breden - Town Clerk