

PRINCETON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

May 4, 2026

In Attendance: Town Board Liaison David Patten, Chairman Dave Persing, Dave Hagstrom (Via Zoom), Steve Pflieghaar, Cheryl Schimming, Kathy Stoeckel, Jim Kusler, and Amanda Hayford

Public Hearings

- None

Regular Meeting

- Call Regular Meeting to Order at 6 pm, Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Approval

- Motion by Steve Pflieghaar, Second by Cheryl Schimming to approve the agenda as presented
 - Roll Call: Hagstrom Aye, Schimming Aye, Pflieghaar Aye, Persing Aye, Hayford Aye, Stoeckel Aye, Kusler Aye

Open Forum

No members of the public requested to speak during the open forum.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- Meeting minutes from the January 5 meeting were approved at the April 13 meeting.
- Motion by Steve Pflieghaar, Second by Kathy Stoeckel to approve the April 13 minutes.
 - Roll Call: Hagstrom Aye, Schimming Aye, Pflieghaar Aye, Persing Aye, Hayford Aye, Stoeckel Aye, Kusler Aye

Final Plat Application: Running Bear Pines

The main agenda item was the consideration of a final plat application by **Doug and Janis Astle** for a **four-lot subdivision** named *Running Bear Pines*, located on **County Road 1 and 76th Avenue in Section 27**. The lots are intended for single-family homes, with a new cul-de-sac extending 76th Avenue approximately **650 feet** (well under the 1,400-foot maximum).

Key Details:

1. The property was rezoned to **R1 (single-family residential)** in August 2025.
2. The **preliminary plat** was approved by the Town Board on October 21, 2025.
3. No public hearing is required for final plats.
4. The final plat has been reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission and will be forwarded to the Town Board for consideration at their **May 19th meeting**.
5. The site previously had a house and outbuildings, which have been removed.
6. **Two septic system drain fields** are designated per lot; all septic systems must comply with **Mille Lacs County** regulations.
7. **Park dedication fee: \$4,920**, which is allocated to the future development of the **North-South Trail along Highway 169**, as outlined in the Comprehensive Plan.
8. Utilities: Applications for **gas (CenterPoint Energy)** and **electric service (Princeton Public Utilities)** have been submitted.
9. **Township engineer Todd McLouth** reviewed the plans (letters dated April 15–16) and raised only minor issues related to easements and swales, which were addressed by the project engineer from Wenck.
10. A **development agreement** is being drafted by the township attorney, and escrows for the street extension are under review.

Discussion and Questions

11. **Permit timing:** It was questioned whether building permits could be issued before the road is constructed. The chair noted this would require coordination with the engineer and no decision was made.
12. **Park dedication fees:** A commissioner raised the idea of allowing developers to use park fees for on-site amenities (e.g., a small playground). While the Town Board could consider such proposals, there are concerns about **long-term maintenance costs and liability**, especially for small townships.
13. **Accessory buildings:** In the R1 district, **pole barns are not permitted on lots under 3.5 acres**. On larger lots, a **conditional use permit** is required. Stick-built sheds or garages are allowed if setbacks are met.
14. **Utility service:** The area is served by **Princeton Public Utilities for electricity**. East Central Energy (ECE) currently serves nearby areas, but **only the Cook property phase** may transition to ECE in the future. Residents south of Moonshine are on Princeton Public Utilities, despite some confusion.

Motion and Vote

Motion by Steve Pflieghaar, Second Dave Hagstrom to approve the final plat application for *Running Bear Pines* with the conditions outlined in the planning report.

- Roll Call: Hagstrom Aye, Schimming Aye, Pflieghaar Aye, Persing Aye, Hayford Aye, Stoeckel Aye, Kusler Aye

Adjournment

Motion by Kathy Stoeckel, Second by Cheryl Schimming to adjourn.

- Roll Call: Hagstrom Aye, Schimming Aye, Pflieghaar Aye, Persing Aye, Hayford Aye, Stoeckel Aye, Kusler Aye

The meeting concluded at 6:25 pm.