

MINUTES
Eagles Nest Township
Board of Supervisors Special Meeting
August 30, 2023

Chair Floyd called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Supervisor Richard Floyd, Supervisor Kurt Soderberg, Supervisor Frank Sherman, Supervisor David Chiabotti, and Supervisor Monahan-Junek were in attendance.

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Supervisor Chiabotti, second by Supervisor Soderberg to approve the agenda. Ayes – all. Motion carried.

Discussion – upcoming sound study for the proposed ATV trail through the township

Supervisor Floyd stated the meeting was called regarding a sound study.

Ren Graham, Eagles Nest Township property owner, spoke to the Board:

“Eagles Nest Township is concerned with the impact of noise and traffic from Designated ATV Trails through our community. The stresses of noise and traffic near Designated Trail 4 has caused many owners to avoid their properties since it was built in 2021. The sound of machines traveling across the lakes disrupts the peace and quietude of living here.

I speak tonight to provide information leading up to the ATV Sound Study scheduled 9/12 and 13 in Eagles Nest Township. This study, proposed by Commissioner McDonald and Ron Potter, was developed without asking for input from our township. They received funding approval last Monday, Aug 21 by the NRAJPB, a Joint Powers board to coordinate ATV trail networks throughout Northeastern Minnesota. The board is made up of commissioners from St. Louis, Koochiching, and Lake counties.

In March, Commissioner McDonald convened a meeting with representatives from St. Louis County, Eagles Nest Township, and Prospector Club for the purpose of discussing ATV route within Eagles Nest township limits. He opened the meeting stating his purpose to work in cooperative agreement and compromise between the three groups present.

The meeting in March concluded with next steps for trail planning before meeting again. Two action steps agreed upon before a sound study would be considered were:

1. township and county to agree on acceptable sound and resonance limits for quietude in Eagles Nest community,
2. review sound studies already conducted to determine whether additional study is needed.

To date, Commissioner McDonald has not coordinated agreement on sound and resonance, nor followed through on sharing results from a sound study conducted in Babbitt. Neither St. Louis County staff or commissioner shared information that a sound study in Eagles Nest is scheduled for September or details such as study map, method of testing with sound meters, data recorders, or test ATV machines including number and models, speed and acceleration rates, or recording distances.

OHV Acoustics, LLC is contracted to run the study. The company is owned by Alex Bub. Their services provide “expert witness” on sound issues based on Alex’s 33 years of experience in the motorized

industry including 15 years at Harley Davidson. OHV Acoustics is a company Ron Potter has worked with before. There is also a Bub family business, Wisconsin Off Road Adventures, offering classes for ATV, UTV, and Supermoto dirt bike riding.

In 2021, OHV Acoustics ran a sound study for the Houston OHV Trail System group in Houston, MN. The preliminary study results presented to the Houston City Council were shared with me by a contact in Houston. A final report was never submitted. In reviewing this study, the company did not follow state statutes for conducting a noise study such as:

- recording weather conditions wind velocity, temperature, humidity
- sound meters were not placed in adjacent properties to the trail or parking area
- no map of meters and recorders, or where and number of machines ridden
- machines ridden at slow speeds away from meters.

The sound study resulted in non-verifiable data and was not accepted by the Houston city council. Even one of the ORV club members expected the test to be redone.

In conclusion, I recommend the Board write a letter to Commissioner McDonald requesting the cancellation of the contract with OHV Acoustics for the purpose of sound study in Eagles Nest Township.”

Supervisor Floyd stated he has researched Alex Bub and stated he is not sure Bub is neutral and not unbiased.

Greg Juneke, Eagles Nest Township resident, reported that he has tried multiple times to schedule a time to walk the proposed north trail with Ronald Potter, but has been unable to set a date/time with Potter. Walking the proposed north trail with Potter was an action item from the March 2023 meeting (referenced by Ren Graham).

There was discussion by the board and comments from the audience regarding: identifying an alternative to the proposal from Bub, the need for a sound study, what is the purpose of the sound study, the steps agreed to at the March 2023 meeting referenced by Ren Graham, and to follow the process agreed to at the March 2023 meeting.

Supervisor Monahan-Junek said in anticipation for this meeting she drafted a letter from the township Board to Commissioner McDonald for the Board’s consideration to use or revise as they feel appropriate. She read the letter aloud.

Supervisor Floyd recessed the meeting at 6:00 p.m. for 15 minutes so he could revise the draft letter. The Board reconvened at 6:15 p.m. Supervisor Monahan-Junek read the revised letter aloud.

Motion by Supervisor Floyd, second by Supervisor Monahan-Junek to approve the revised letter be sent from Supervisor/Chairperson Floyd to Commissioner McDonald. Ayes – all. Motion carried.

Adjourn

Motion by Supervisor Soderberg, second by Supervisor Chiabotti to adjourn the meeting. Ayes – all. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:28 p.m.