

Oronoco Town Board  
Monthly Meeting Minutes  
April 13, 2026

Minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of the Oronoco Town Board held on **Monday, April 13, 2026** at 5:30pm at the Oronoco Community Center, located at 115 Second Street SW, Oronoco, Minnesota.

Supervisor Ken Mergen called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**The agenda was accepted with a change to move the River Corridor Ordinance to the bottom of the agenda topics.**

**Lake Zumbro Park Phase 2 – Olmsted County Conditional Use Permit and Shoreland Variance**

The packet for Lake Zumbro Park Phase 2, was presented by Ethan Kaske, TCPA.

**Parcel IDs:** 841111040157 and 841112039715

Northeast Quarter of Section 11, T108N R14W, Oronoco Township. Located at 9 Fisherman Drive NW, Oronoco, MN 55960, on the west shore of Lake Zumbro.

**Background:**

Olmsted County Parks and Trails is completing Phase 2 of improvements to Lake Zumbro Park, a county-owned public park located on a peninsula along the west shore of Lake Zumbro. The Phase 2 work includes removal of existing parking and structures from the floodplain, construction of a new parking area and accessible walkways, a two-stall vault restroom, a fishing pier and boarding dock, and a new open-air group picnic shelter. The overall project results in a net reduction of 7,073 square feet of impervious surface and is consistent with the adopted Olmsted County Lake Zumbro Master Plan.

The property is zoned Recreational Commercial under the Oronoco Township Zoning Ordinance. Based on prior staff determination, public park and recreational use is permitted within that district and does not require a conditional use permit at the township level.

**Variance Request:**

The variance request before Olmsted County pertains to the proposed picnic shelter. Under Section 6.07 C of the Olmsted County Floodplain and Shoreland Ordinance (Chapter 3750), water-oriented accessory structures (picnic shelter) are limited to a maximum height of 10 feet and a maximum area of 250 square feet. The proposed shelter substantially exceeds both standards — it is approximately 75 feet wide and taller than 10 feet.

Olmsted County Planning Department has confirmed a variance to Section 6.07 C.1 is required for the shelter's size and height.

The shelter is proposed on an existing level pad at the site of a former building — a previously disturbed location. The applicant evaluated alternative locations during site design and determined that moving the shelter was not feasible without eliminating the proposed parking layout, creating ADA route conflicts, or causing negative impacts to the adjacent residential property.

**Role of the Town Board Letter:**

Olmsted County requires a Letter of Town Board Action from the host township as part of the shoreland variance application. This letter is not for the Oronoco Township Board to approve or deny the variance — that authority rests with Olmsted County following a public hearing — but to voice support or opposition. The Board's position will be included in the record considered by Olmsted County. Staff has no objection to the Board providing a letter of support.

**This information was taken from the TCPA packet and is only a portion of the document. The entire document can be found at TCPA or the Oronoco Township Clerk, Jody Schroeder.**

Supervisor Johanningmeier expressed concern about signing the Town Board's letter of support for the variance without first receiving input from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). It was noted that the proposed shelter is located well within the required 100-foot setback. A public hearing on this matter is scheduled to take place at the County level on May 7, 2026.

Olmsted County Parks Administrator, Karlin Ziegler stated that the DNR has made comment about the shelter being within the 100' shoreland setback. Olmsted County Planning is looking into this to gather more information.

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Johanningmeier to table signing the letter of Town Board Action for the variance to conditional use permit for Lake Zumbro Park Phase 2-Olmsted County, until the May 11, 2026 meeting, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**OTMB-25-06, Nellis**

The packet for OTMB-25-06, Nellis was presented by Ethan Kaske, TCPA.

**Owner:** Timothy Nellis Estate Applicant: Linda Sparby (Owner's Representative)

**Location:** Parcel IDs: 840534039633, 840534039634, & 840812080525 Zoning: A-2 (Agricultural Protection District)

**Background:**

On December 8, 2025, the Oronoco Township Board approved a metes and bounds subdivision (OTMB-25-06) for the Timothy Nellis Estate. The approval authorized several boundary

adjustments across Sections 5 and 8, Township 108N, Range 14W, with the purpose of settling the estate.

As part of that approval, a small parcel of approximately five acres located in the north portion of the SW1/4 SE1/4 Section 5 was designated non-buildable. This determination was made because the parcel, as configured at that time, did not contain sufficient non-prime agricultural soils with a Crop Equivalent Rating (CER) of 55 or less to qualify as a buildable non-farm lot under Section 5.02(C)(2) of the Oronoco Township Zoning Ordinance. The applicant communicated at that time that the intent was to transfer this parcel to the neighboring property owner to the north.

Following the December 2025 approval, the estate's buyers backed out of the purchase. The applicant is now returning to the board with a revised configuration for that parcel, increasing its area from approximately five acres to approximately ten acres, and requesting that the board review and approve it as a buildable non-farm lot.

### **Staff Review and Analysis:**

#### **Staff comments in italics**

**1.** No more than one non farm lot per quarter-quarter section. Should a quarter-quarter section contain a buildable non farm lot, no additional dwelling shall be permitted.

*There are currently no non-farm sized parcels in the SW 1/4 of SE 1/4 of section 5. This criterion is met*

**2.** Any non farm lot shall contain at least one (1) acre of non prime agricultural soils with a crop equivalent rating of 55 or less. When a dwelling, which is not a mobile home, existed in its present location prior to April 16, 1983, this standard shall not apply.

*The proposed 10 acre parcel will contain over an acre of 55 cer soil. This criterion is met.*

**3.** No non farm dwelling shall be permitted in areas identified as wetlands or flood plain.

*There is a small area of mapped hydric soil on the far north side of the proposed parcel. There is room to build outside of that area. There are no mapped floodplain on this property. This criterion is met.*

**4.** No non farm dwelling shall be located within one-fourth (1/4) mile of an animal feedlot or manure storage facility not located on the same non farm lot

*There are no feedlots within a 1/4 mile of the proposed property. This criterion is met.*

**Residual Parcel:** *Since this will be the non-farm within the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of section 5 the residual on the east side of 44th street would not be buildable in that quarter-quarter section.*

**Access:** *The applicant must work with Oronoco Township as the Road Authority to establish access to the new parcel.*

**Conclusion: Staff recommends approval of the proposed subdivision(s) based on the following conditions;**

1. Owner/applicant provide a certificate of the proposed 10 acre parcel that meets the Oronoco Township Ordinance with regard to lot width, size, access and soils.
2. The applicant work with Oronoco Township as to establish access to the parcel
3. All provisions of the Oronoco Township Zoning Ordinance shall be met.

**This information was taken from the TCPA packet and is only a portion of the document. The entire document can be found at TCPA or the Oronoco Township Clerk, Jody Schroeder.**

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Johanningmeier to approve OTMB-25-06, Nellis, with the following conditions to be met, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**OTMB-26-02, Kuehn**

OTMB-26-02, Kuehn, has been tabled until May 11, 2026 meeting as it was learned not all requirements are met to proceed. Ethan Kaske, TCPA will work with the applicant to ensure proper requirements are met.

**Road Report**

Schumacher stated that new signs were installed on 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. Street sweeping is complete.

**Mail Box Damage**

Ordinance 2023-01, Section 5(d), states that the Township is not responsible for damage to mailboxes or posts resulting from maintenance or snowplowing within the right-of-way. All mailbox supports must comply with Federal Highway Administration and United States Postal Service guidelines. Stone, masonry, or other non-breakaway mailbox supports are prohibited within the Township right-of-way.

Supervisor Mergen will serve as the designated contact person for all mailbox-related questions and damage reports.

Supervisor Mergen will contact a resident on King's Dr to discuss this ordinance.

**Hyland Court**

George Pehler, 10404 Hyland Court, contacted Scott Schumacher to inquire about when the cul-de-sac would be swept and to express concern about sand being pushed onto his lawn. There was discussion regarding the possibility of discontinuing sanding in the Hyland Court cul-de-sac. However, Scott Schumacher and Josh Roberson both advised that sanding must continue, as discontinuing the practice could result in hazardous icy conditions. The cul-de-sac will be swept, and accumulated sand will be removed.

Supervisor Mergen received a call from Bill Perkins of Evergreen Drive, who expressed interest in maintaining the right-of-way in that area. Mr. Perkins indicated that the homeowner's association (HOA) would compensate him for this work. Supervisor Mergen will contact the HOA President to discuss liability considerations and ensure the arrangement is properly documented in the HOA meeting minutes.

### **Acceptance of Quotes**

All quotes received are posted on the township's website.

Clerk Schroeder received quotes from Scott Schumacher, Schumacher Excavating and Josh Roberson, Roberson Lime & Rock Inc. before the opening of the meeting.

Chloride: Quality Propane

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Johanningmeier to accept the quote from Quality Propane for chloride, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Tree Service: Arrow Tree works and Arborists of Rochester

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Johanningmeier to accept all tree service quotes, naming Arborists of Rochester the primary tree service company, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Weed spraying: North Star Companies

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to accept the quote for weed spraying, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.**

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to authorize \$6,500 in weed spraying, done by North Star Companies, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Class 5, summer rock only: Milestone Materials, Olmsted Aggregate, and Roberson Lime & Rock.

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to accept all rock quotes, naming Roberson Lime & Rock the primary summer rock supplier, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Winter prepay for Icy Road treatment: Roberson Lime & Rock

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to approve the winter pre-pay for Roberson Lime and Rock, \$8,000, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.**

Road maintenance, including as needed road maintenance, icy roads treatment and occasional road projects: Schumacher Excavating.

**There was a motion by Supervisor Mergen to accept Schumacher's Road maintenance quote, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.**

### **LZFI Land Transfer**

Oronoco Township transferred the King's Park property to Lake Zumbro Forever, Inc. (LZFI) via a Quit Claim Deed in 2025. As specified in the governing contracts, the transfer was subject to deed restrictions, and LZFI fulfilled all contractual and legal requirements necessary to complete the transaction.

The State has since requested that LZFI reconvey the property back to Oronoco Township via quit claim deed. Following this reconveyance, discussions will take place regarding a potential lease agreement with LZFI and Oronoco Township.

Supervisor Matzke will begin working with Attorney Ruppe to facilitate the transfer of the property back to Oronoco Township. Once the transfer is complete, further discussion will occur regarding possible reimbursement of fees to LZFI.

### **River Ridge Outlot B**

Special Projects Administrator, Lynn Koenig noted that there is a CUP violation that needs to be addressed at OTPAC. Outlot B is designated by an open space. This will be discussed at the OTPAC meeting on Monday, April 20, 2026.

### **Dukart Properties**

Supervisor Matzke noted that the applicant must coordinate with TCPA regarding the special district language. The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) specifies that access to the property will be from 50th Avenue, not County Road 112. The Town Board did not sign a letter of support since the CUP requirements were not being met in the proposal.

### **River Corridor Overlay District**

The Olmsted County Board of Commissioners formally denied Oronoco Township's proposed River Corridor Overlay District (RCOD) on March 17, 2026. The denial was based on recommendations from County staff and legal counsel, who concluded that the RCOD did not meet two statutory requirements for township administration of shoreland controls: consistency and effective administration.

The proposed RCOD sought to extend regulated shoreland to 2,500 feet from the ordinary high-water level, significantly exceeding the County's standards of 300 feet for rivers and 1,000 feet

for lakes. This expansion was determined to be inconsistent and lacking sufficient evidence-based justification. It would have more than doubled the number of regulated parcels, adding approximately 426 new parcels, including land currently zoned A-2 Agricultural.

The County also cited inconsistencies in permitted land uses, noting that the ordinance would prohibit certain uses currently allowed under County regulations, while allowing a less restrictive impervious surface standard in the 1,000- to 2,500-foot range, which was also found to be inconsistent with state statute.

The County determined that the Township did not sufficiently demonstrate that its administration and enforcement of the RCOD would be at least as effective as County implementation. Concerns were raised regarding the significant administrative burden associated with regulating thousands of additional acres of shoreland.

Supervisor Tammy Matzke noted that the Township must now decide whether to approve or deny the RCOD. The Oronoco Township Planning Advisory Commission (OTPAC) has already recommended approval, public hearings have been conducted, and the Township has consulted with its attorney regarding risk assessment in proceeding with the RCOD.

Further discussion will take place at the April 20, 2026 OTPAC meeting, and the item will be placed on the agenda for the May 11, 2026 Town Board meeting.

### **Gopher to Badger Transmission Line Project**

Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that Dale Thomforde, New Haven Township Supervisor, has drafted a resolution in support of considering an alternate routing for the Gopher to Badger Link Project. This resolution moves to abandon the east route.

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Matzke to adopt Resolution 2026-02 in support of considering an alternate routing for the Gopher to Badger Link Project, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.**

### **Minutes Approval**

**March 9, 2026**

**There was a motion by Supervisor Mergen to approve the minutes for Monday, March 9, 2026, seconded by Supervisor Matze. The motion was carried unanimously.**

### **Annual Meeting Minutes**

**There was a motion by Supervisor Matzke to approve the Annual Meeting Minutes for Monday, March 9, 2026, seconded by Supervisor Mergen. The motion was carried unanimously.**

### **Treasurer's Report-Brandi Lind**

The YTD Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances as of April 13, 2026, shows: receipts \$500,366.68, disbursements \$213,761.20 an ending balance of \$995,473.51.

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to approve the treasurers report for April 13, 2026, in written form, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.**

### **Misapplied Funds**

Treasurer Lind was contacted by Janna Monosmith of Olmsted County Property Records and Licensing regarding a special assessment payment in the amount of \$2,779.36 made in September 2025. The payment, issued by Ohly Law Firm, was sent to Oronoco Township and was intended for dredging costs assessed by Olmsted County. The payment was subsequently cashed by Oronoco Township. Payment needs to be returned to Olmsted County.

A question was raised regarding the proper procedure for returning the funds. Clerk Schroeder contacted MAT Attorney Graham Berg-Moberg, who advised that if both parties agree on the appropriate recipient, Oronoco Township may issue payment back to Olmsted County.

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to return \$2,779.36, misapplied funds for the dredging project, back to Olmsted County, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously.**

### **Approval to pay payroll and claims including electronic transfer**

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to approve the payroll and claims, including electronic transfers for April 13, 2026, seconded by Supervisor Johanningmeier. The motion was carried unanimously.**

### **Clerk Notes**

#### **Demarino Driveway**

Supervisor Mergen reviewed Demarino driveway. He will contact Mr. Demarino and let him know it has been approved by the Township.

### **PFML**

Clerk Schroeder has been working with Michele Mayo of Hemann and Grover, as well as Mark Albarado of the Office of the State Auditor (Minnesota), to address discrepancies related to Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML).

Currently, the records maintained by Clerk Schroeder and Treasurer Lind are not aligning with the PFML reports provided by Hemann and Grover. These discrepancies have persisted since the beginning of the year.

Mark Albarado indicated that a forthcoming update to CTAS is expected to allow for necessary adjustments to PFML records.

### **Debit Cards**

Treasurer Lind has received debit cards from Eagle Rock Bank for use by Clerk Schroeder and herself for the purchase of necessary township supplies.

The Town Board approved Resolution 2026-03, Credit/Debit Card Policy, at the Reorganizational Meeting to establish and ensure strict guidelines for the appropriate use of township credit and debit cards.

**Board Member Comments**

Supervisor Johanningmeier raised concerns at the March 2026, OCTOA meeting that one of the reasons for denial of the River Corridor Overlay Ordinance was that TCPA requested \$300,000 from the County.

Supervisor Johanningmeier stated that the Olmsted County Dangerous Dog Ordinance was enacted in February 2026.

Supervisor Matzke noted that the Pine Island Fire Department has received air packs and purchased a decontamination chamber. The next Pine Island Fire Department meeting will be June 8, 2026, at 5:30pm.

Supervisor Matzke has been working with Special Project Administrator Lynn Koenig to draft a letter documenting unfinished work on MN Avenue related to the City of Oronoco Wastewater Treatment Plant project. The purpose of this letter is to ensure that MN Avenue is restored to its original condition prior to the commencement of Phase 2 of the Oronoco Wastewater Treatment Facility.

**Adjourn**

**There was a motion made by Supervisor Mergen to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Supervisor Matzke. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:12pm.**

Respectfully Submitted:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk Jody Schroeder

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tammy Matzke

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Mergen

\_\_\_\_\_  
Joel Johanningmeier