

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
 May 22, 2018

The regular meeting of the Robinson Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:30 PM at the Robinson Township Hall.

Present	Absent
Shawn Martinie	None
Travis Vugteveen	
Bill Maschewske	
Tom TenBroeke	
George Schippers	
Steve Young	
Rich Sibley	

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje and Zoning Administrator Brian Werschem. There were no members of the public present and no attendance sheet is included.

Chairperson Martinie stated that Rich Sibley was re-appointed to the Planning Commission to fill a vacancy.

A motion was made by Tom TenBroeke and seconded by George Schippers to approve the agenda without changes.
 The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom TenBroeke and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to approve the February 27, 2018 Planning Commission minutes as written.
 The motion carried unanimously.

Non-Commission Member Inquiries -- None

Reports and Communications

Travis Vugteveen reported the following from the Township Board covering four meetings.

1. A moratorium was approved regarding applications for solar farms and gardens.
2. Junk in yards is an issue with several homes in the Township.
3. The personnel policy is being reviewed.
4. Improvements are being made to the Township Park.
5. The Top Grade mining site will be monitored monthly.

Announcements – None

Old Business

A draft amendment to the Zoning Ordinance regarding Signs with draft date of May 9, 2018 was reviewed and discussed.

Bill Maschewske – Suggested that the sign requirements be summarized in a chart similar to the charts in Chapter 30 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Chairperson Martinie questioned Section 4.44 (D) in that it seemed to exempt all signs from any requirements. Following discussion, it was agreed that paragraphs 7 and 10 of Section 4.44 (D) needed to be revised.

Township Attorney Bultje – Noted that the interpretation of the Reed v. Gilbert court decision excludes commercial signs.

It was agreed that the definition of “identifying sign” may need to be refined.

Section 4.44 (D) (7) needs revision to include the RR Zoning District. Following discussion, it was agreed that A-1 and RR Zoning Districts should be allowed a maximum of 32 square feet of identifying sign, R-1 and R-2 should have 12 square feet maximum, and A-2, B-1, B-2, I-1 and I-2 should remain 100 square feet maximum and also include the M-1 Zoning District.

Section 4.44 (B) (1) (b) is to be revised to add the word “view” after the word “elevation” to clarify what is requested. It was also agreed to delete the words “building wall intended to accommodate a”.

Section 4.45 BILLBOARDS was reviewed and the 10 ft. minimum setback requirement is to be deleted.

Township Attorney Bultje agreed to have revised text for the next meeting in addition to a summary chart to simplify the requirements and make them easier to understand.

At 8:55 PM., the draft Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment regarding Solar Energy with draft date of May 3, 2018 was reviewed and discussed.

Chairperson Martinie – Do we need to consider adding properties in other zoning districts besides M-1, I-1, and I-2?

Following a lengthy discussion, it was decided that other properties should not be included at this time.

Chairperson Martinie – Is solar energy a special use in all zoning districts?

Township Attorney Bultje – Yes.

Township Attorney Bultje – Read from his notes taken at a Robinson Township Board meeting that there is reportedly interest in up to 1200 acres of solar farms in Robinson Township.

Chairperson Martinie – Suggested there may be merit to meeting with a solar energy representative to learn more about solar energy and the needs of the industry.

Bill Maschewske – Suggested contacting the Ottawa County Planning Commission for a County-wide presentation on the subject of solar energy since this is an issue affecting all townships in Ottawa County.

Township Attorney Bultje – Stated that an inventory of how much land could be available for solar farms under the draft ordinance would be helpful. Zoning Administrator Werschem will prepare the inventory of I-1, I-2, and M-1 available land that is not covered with water.

Township Attorney Bultje – Stated that more information has recently become available since the draft amendment date and that he will have a revised draft ordinance for Planning Commission review for the next meeting.

New Business – None

A motion was made by George Schippers and seconded by Rich Sibley to pay salaries for the month of May 2018 (one meeting).

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Tom TenBroeke to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:47 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission