

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION

June 22, 2021

The regular meeting of the Robinson Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:03 PM at the Robinson Township Hall.

Present

Shawn Martinie
Travis Vugteveen
Bill Maschewske
Michelle Gillespie
Steve Young

Absent

George Schippers
Lydia Brown

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, Zoning Administrator Brian Werschem, Supervisor Frank Johnson, Deputy Supervisor Ernie Martin, Annette Munroe, and Greg and Charity Kobrzycki. The attendance sheet is attached.

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Steve Young to approve the agenda as written.

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to approve as written the Planning Commission minutes of the May 25, 2021 meeting.

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

Non-Commission Inquiries and Questions -- None

Reports and Communications

Travis Vugteveen reported the following from the June 9, 2021 Township Board meeting.

1. A motion was approved to not move forward on the foreclosure list received by the Township. This means the Township would not pursue purchasing any of the foreclosed properties.

Announcements

Chairperson Martinie reported that he talked with George Schippers and that George will be resigning following this meeting for health reasons. A card was circulated to sign and Zoning Administrator Werschem suggested the Township Board pass a resolution in honor of George's many years of service.

Old Business

As scheduled, the public hearing for a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to revise the allowable sizes of accessory buildings in the R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts was held. An introduction was given by Chairperson Martinie and the public hearing notice was read by Secretary Maschewske. The rules of procedure were reviewed by Chairperson Martinie and the public hearing was declared open.

Chairperson Martinie summarized the draft amendments which proposed a sliding scale of accessory building sizes in the R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts dependent upon lot size. Chairperson Martinie then called for comments from the public.

Greg and Charity Kobrzycki – Stated they own 4 to 4.5 acres of recently purchased land in the R-1 Zoning District and are ready to apply for a building permit for an accessory building larger than what is currently allowed.

Chairperson Martinie – Any questions from the Planning Commission.

Supervisor Johnson – What about detached garages? He is concerned because a detached garage counts towards the total allowable accessory building square footage on a parcel and an attached garage does not.

A discussion was held regarding attached vs. detached garages. A problem with not making a distinction between attached and detached garages regarding allowable sizes is that it requires continued verification that a detached garage is actually being used as a garage and not for other purposes. An attached garage is considered part of the house.

Bill Maschewske – Stated that a problem does arise, generally in the case of older dwellings, in which the architecture and lot layout may make having an attached garage difficult or prohibitively expensive.

Township Attorney Bultje, Zoning Administrator Werschem, and Bill Maschewske discussed these cases going to the Zoning Board of Appeals. The practical difficulty could be considered the architecture of the dwelling and the lot configuration and would not necessarily be a self-inflicted hardship.

There were no further comments from the Planning Commission or the public.

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to close the public hearing.

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

Greg Kobrzycki – Asked when will this amendment to the Zoning Ordinance become effective?

Township Attorney Bultje -- Reviewed the timetable for approval of the amendment and estimated mid- August as an effective date.

A motion was made by Steve Young and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to recommend to the Township Board approval of the draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment with draft date of May 4, 2021 regarding the allowable sizes of accessory buildings in the R-1 and R-2 Zoning Districts. A roll call vote was taken.

Michelle Gillespie – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Young – Yes

Travis Vugteveen – Yes

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

At 7:35 PM., the issue of amending the Zoning Ordinance regarding Private Roads was continued from last month.

Per last month's discussion, Zoning Administrator Werschem was to discuss the recommended drivable road width for all Private Roads with the Fire Chief. Zoning Administrator Werschem reported that the Fire Chief wants 24 feet of road surface with 2 feet of shoulder on each side as a safe roadway, even for Private Roads serving less than 5 parcels. The proposed location of Private Roads was agreed upon at the last Planning Commission meeting and was worded as follows:

“A Private Road Right-of-Way should either be on the lot line if both parcels are served by it or 14 ft. setback from the property line.” This amount of setback would still allow a parcel that is 330 ft. wide to possibly be split if the parcel were large enough and eliminates the creation of Corner Lots because of the Private Road.

Zoning Administrator Werschem showed several examples of existing Private Roads on the overhead projector.

The maximum allowable length of Private Roads was discussed. Zoning Administrator Werschem stated that the Fire Chief has no concerns about a maximum length, however, the Ottawa County Road Commission has a maximum length for a public street that dead ends and that is where the maximum length is derived from in the Township Private Road Ordinance.

Chairperson Martinie – Discussed the 14 foot setback issue proposed for Private Roads and questioned the Through Lot issue. He noted that the setback solves the Corner Lot issue (The creation of a Private Road on a property line currently causes the adjacent parcel to become a Corner Lot if the parcel also fronts on a public street).

Zoning Administrator Werschem – Stated that one issue we have not addressed that is a concern to him in his job is the allowable 20 ft. wide private easement to access a single parcel and the requirement of 250 ft. of frontage on the easement. He suggested perhaps allowing flag lots by Special Use permit.

Annette Munroe – Asked what is the possibility of the flag poles of flag lots being turned into Private Roads?

Township Attorney Bultje – Stated that from a land use basis, owning the flagpole does not solve anything. The 250 foot frontage requirement limits the number of those lots.

Bill Maschewske – Suggested initiating implementation of the amendments to the Private Road sections of the Zoning Ordinance now. The flag lot problem is not really a Private Road issue and may take considerable time to resolve.

Chairperson Martinie – Requested the Zoning Administrator to report when flag lot easement requests occur. He also suggested that we could limit a parcel to only one ingress/egress easement.

Township Attorney Bultje – Suggested that he will review the draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment for Private Roads after the Zoning Administrator creates the draft. He also suggested that the Zoning Administrator should think about the ramifications of a limitation of one lot, one ingress/egress easement. He also suggests that the definition of Corner Lot be revised to limit it to streets and not include Private Roads.

New Business – None

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to pay Planning Commission salaries for the month of June 2021 (5 members present, 2 members absent). The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

Any and All Other Business

The public workshops associated with the preparation of the updated Master Land Use Plan were discussed. The dates of the workshops will be included in the tax mailings which must be sent by July 1, 2021. Chairperson Martinie presented a letter from the contracted Planner, Gregory Ransford, stating that Planning Commissioners and Township Board members should not attend or participate in these workshops. The Chairperson should introduce each workshop and then leave.

Michelle Gillespie – Asked if Gregory Ransford would talk to individuals on the Planning Commission and Township Board as residents since we are also citizens of the Township?

Chairperson Martinie – No

Supervisor Johnson – When does he, Supervisor Johnson, get to present his vision for the Township to the Planning Commission?

Township Attorney Bultje – Outlined the updated Master Land Use Plan approval process and noted that the Township Board has final approval of the document.

Bill Maschewske – Stated he did not feel comfortable with having no participation in the workshops but would do whatever the consensus of the Planning Commission agreed upon.

The final consensus was to let Gregory Ransford of Fresh Coast Planning conduct the workshops with no Township participation.

It was noted that the Robinson Baptist Church has been reserved for the workshops if needed.

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:03 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission



SIGN IN SHEET
Planning Commission Meeting
June 22, 2021 - 7:00 pm

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

Greg + Charity Kobrzycki

Frank Johnson

Annette Munroe