

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
August 22, 2023

The regular meeting of the Robinson Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:00 PM at the Robinson Township Hall.

Present

Shawn Martinie
Bill Maschewske
Travis Vugteveen
Lydia Brown
Steve Young
Michelle Gillespie

Absent

Anne Goede

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, and Doug Marshall of the public.
The attendance sheet is attached.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Lydia Brown to approve the meeting agenda as written.
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Steve Young to approve as written the minutes of the July 25, 2023 Planning Commission meeting.
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Non-Commission member Inquiries and Questions -- None

Reports and Communications

Travis Vugteveen reported that the Township Board is investigating fee schedules.

Announcements

Chairperson Martinie reported the following.

1. Planning Commissioner Anne Goede has indicated her intent to resign from the Planning Commission for health reasons.
2. Zoning Administrator Julie Lovelace, Supervisor Frank Johnson, and Chairperson Martinie approved a minor amendment to the Site plan for the Pigeon Creek Event Center

per Section 31.11 of the Zoning Ordinance. The change involves paving the parking area that was originally planned to be gravel.

3. Citizen Planner Classes for Planning Commissioners are being offered at the Ottawa County Filmore St. Complex. Grant money is available to cover the costs for any wishing to attend.

Old Business

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to untable the Smeenge Zoning Ordinance text amendment application.

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Chairperson Martinie – Stated his opinion that he is basically OK with the idea of condominium storage/living spaces.

Travis Vugteveen – Agreed with the addition that he is concerned about parking, especially regarding emergency vehicle access.

Bill Maschewske – Inquired what the consensus is regarding the current limit of 4 residences per dwelling. The Site Plan of the applicant that submitted the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment application has proposed 6 units in one building.

A discussion followed and the consensus was to maintain the current limit of 4 dwelling units per building.

Steve Young – Expressed concern about additional people staying on boats and overtaxing the well and septic facilities.

It was noted that while this may actually happen, it would be seasonal and probably limited to weekends, so the impact to well and septic facilities may not be as great as suspected.

Township Attorney Bultje – Suggested that an additional Special Use could be added to the B-2 Zoning District that would include storage building/residence use when waterfront and dock facilities are included. The maximum number of dwelling units per building could remain at four. Note that this would be a Special Use.

Further discussion on the Zoning Text Amendment request was delayed until later in the meeting.

New Business

At 7:45 PM., the 8/22/23 draft of a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment prepared by Zoning Administrator Julie Lovelace at the request of the Planning Commission at the last meeting regarding Accessory Structures and Separation Distance was considered. The reason for the proposed draft amendment resulted from residents proposing to build Gazebos and child play structures. Under the current Zoning Ordinance, these structures are sometimes considered

Accessory Buildings, depending upon the requested structure, and therefore the square footage of these structures counts as part of the allowable square footage of accessory buildings permitted on a parcel. Additionally, the draft Text Amendment included a revision to Section 4.3(C) of the Zoning Ordinance to include an omission from a previous Zoning Ordinance Text amendment which changed the separation distance between Accessory Buildings from 20 ft. to 10 ft.

There was a discussion regarding the proposed 144 sq. ft. limit on Gazebos. It was finally agreed that this did not limit Gazebos to 144 sq. ft. but merely exempted those 144 sq. ft. and smaller from counting as part of the allowable Accessory Building square footage allowed on a parcel. The current text was determined to be acceptable.

The discussion changed temporarily to combined Storage Buildings/Residences.

Doug Marshall – Stated he owns a condominium storage unit in Norton Shores. His unit has a half bath but no one is allowed to live in the units and no one does to his knowledge. He has storage, a work area, and an office. He does not feel most people would be willing to rent out the living space of a combined storage unit/residence because the renters would then have access to the items the owner has stored in the storage portion of the unit.

Discussion returned to the proposed draft Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment regarding Accessory Structures and Separation Distances. The consensus of the Planning Commission was in favor of the content of the proposed amendment as written.

Steve Young – Are Gazebos defined?

Township Attorney Bultje – Stated he will work with the Zoning Administrator to review and revise the draft of the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to prepare it for public hearing given the consensus of the Planning Commission is in favor of the current intent. Any definitions deemed necessary will be added and the new draft Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment will be given to the Planning Commission for final review and to schedule a public hearing.

At 8:05PM., Short Term Rentals (STR) were discussed. The Planning Commission was directed by the Township Board at their June 14, 2023 meeting to look at Short Term Rentals. Township Attorney Bultje, prior to the meeting, made available copies of ordinances from Casco, Grand Haven, Laketown, and Spring Lake Townships for review. It was noted that all four Ordinances only permitted STR in single family residences.

Chairperson Martinie – Inquired of Township Attorney Bultje what the map looked like for the STR Overlay District for Grand Haven Township.

Township Attorney Bultje – It goes on a per parcel basis and is not necessarily contiguous. The criteria for the overlay district are the parcel must either be on the water or have waterfront access, is already used as a STR, and it has minimal impact on the neighborhood and a residential appearance. There is a strong requirement for the STR to look residential.

Following a lengthy discussion, the consensus of the Planning Commission was the Spring Lake Township Ordinance seemed most appropriate for Robinson Township, particularly with the limit of 12 persons maximum occupancy. The consensus of Planning Commissioners also liked that it limited STR to 12 weeks per year, which would limit investors from purchasing property exclusively for STR purposes and also help maintain a residential appearance.

Township Attorney Bultje – It is acceptable to restrict STR specifically to single family residences.

In response, the Planning Commission agreed to limit STR to single family residences.

The Planning Commission discussed having Township Attorney Bultje begin a draft ordinance incorporating the above and be similar to the Spring Lake Township Ordinance but then rejected the idea in favor of preparing a report to the Township Board with these findings prior to spending money to have a draft ordinance prepared. The report would include the rules of operation, the fact that both a Zoning Ordinance Amendment was needed in addition to a Police Power Ordinance written by the Township Board, and that enforcement would be required. Chairperson Martinie agreed to write the report with assistance from Travis Vugteveen.

At 8:45 PM, discussion returned to storage unit/residences in the B-2 Zoning District. The Planning Commission consensus was to have Township Attorney Bultje prepare a draft Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment, permitting storage units/residences as a Special Use in the B-2 Zoning District only if the parcel has waterfront frontage/access and boat dockage and with a maximum of four dwelling units per building.

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to pay Planning Commission salaries for the August 22, 2023 meeting (six members present, one member absent).

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Any and All Other Business That May Come Before the Board

The pending amendments to the Planning Commission Rules of Procedure were reviewed and discussed. The document was reviewed and comments were provided at a previous meeting and Township Attorney Bultje had made revisions accordingly.

Chairperson Martinie – Questioned Article VI, Section 1(A) in which a special meeting could be called under specific conditions with 18 hours prior notice.

Township Attorney Bultje – Explained that the provision allows this, but does not obligate the Planning Commission and is not restrictive. The Chairperson has the right to say “No”.

Bill Maschewske – Stated that most of the changes requested were by him and that he felt they were all successfully completed in the June 1, 2023 draft.

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Lydia Brown to adopt the revised Rules of Procedure for the Planning Commission with draft date of 6/1/2023.

A roll call vote was taken.

Michelle Gillespie – Yes

Lydia Brown – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Young – Yes

Travis Vugteveen – Yes

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Steve Young to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:02 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachment: Sign- In Sheet for Planning Commission August 22, 2023 meeting.



SIGNATURE

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