

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
February 21, 2024

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  
Steve Young  
Lydia Brown  
Phil Crum

Absent

Michelle Gillespie

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, Zoning Administrator Julie Lovelace, Joel Smeenge representing the Smeenge Site Plan and Special Use Application, Mr. Dresen representing the Dresen Class A Earth Change Application, and Steve King. The attendance sheet is not attached as it included no signatures.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to approve the meeting agenda as amended by moving the Dresen Class A Earth Change Application from Old Business to New Business and adding the approval of a regular meeting schedule for the Planning Commission for 2024 – 2025 to New Business.  
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Lydia Brown to approve as written the minutes of the January 23, 2024 Planning Commission meeting.  
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Non-Commission Member Inquiries and Questions

Zoning Administrator Lovelace introduced Steve King who is interested in purchasing the Joe Walsh property (formerly part of the Clark Farm Earth Change Site) on North Cedar St. for a marine construction and repair location.

The subject property is currently for sale and includes 161 acres. A portion of the acreage is zoned R-1 and the remainder is zoned I-2. Mr. King is interested in locating a marine construction and repair facility on the site. The only building constructed would be a small

office and restroom facility. All construction material storage would be outside. Currently, marine construction and repair is not a permitted or allowable Special Use in the I-2 Zoning District.

Travis Vugteveen – Are there any buildings on the site?

Steve King – No. They propose to do marine construction and ship repair. They have applied under the current owner for a permit to dredge the lagoon.

Chairperson Martinie – It is a unique site.

Steve King – Noted they have already worked with Nederveld regarding the design of the proposed facility.

A variance vs. a Zoning Ordinance amendment was discussed. As a use variance, it would not meet the criteria for approval since the property has other uses. A Zoning Ordinance Amendment was discussed.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that the proposed use would be more compatible with adjacent properties by using lots of screening.

Steve King – Stated that there is already lots of screening because of the wetlands and floodplain along the river. The only high ground is on the South end of the property. There currently exists a berm along North Cedar St.

Chairperson Martinie – Feels that as a Zoning Ordinance Amendment, a lot of conditions and screening would be required.

Steve King – Noted he would purchase the entire 161- acre parcel and use only part of it right now. He would decide how to use the residential portion later.

Steve King – How long would the Zoning Amendment process take?

Chairperson Martinie – 3 to 4 months.

### Reports and Communications

Travis Vugteveen reported from the Township Board that the Lyons Class A Earth Change application had been approved.

### Announcements – None

### Old Business

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Shawn Martinie to untangle the Smeenge Special Use and Site Plan review.

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Chairperson Martinie noted that the Smeenge Site Plan drawings submitted last week and hand delivered by him to Planning Commissioners on February 23, 2024 were not correct. A new set of drawings for the existing 50 ft. by 80 ft. building was submitted at this time.

Chairperson Martinie – Noted that one storage/dwelling unit does not have a dock.

Joel Smeenge – Stated that the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy limits the number of docks. They have tried to get one more dock but were unsuccessful.

Bill Maschewske – Questioned if this was acceptable per the recent Zoning Ordinance amendment to the B-2 Zoning District.

The Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment was reviewed and the number of docks was acceptable.

Chairperson Martinie – Noted that drawing C-1 for the existing building still shows a patio in the required side yard setback.

Joel Smeenge – Noted it was incorrect on C-1 but was shown correctly on sheet C-2.

Bill Maschewske – Had several questions regarding the Special Use Application and Site Plan.

1. Special Use Application, Paragraph B -- The size of the storage/dwelling units stated is not correct for all three buildings. The applicant agreed the size of the storage/dwelling units would be deleted in this paragraph.
2. Special Use Application, Section E, 2, c – The response from the applicant does not address the question. The applicant agreed to state “Will meet Township Ordinances”.
3. Site Plans in General – Some of the floor plan options have a very high percentage of the entire unit devoted to dwelling space. The intent of permitting dwelling space within the storage units was that the dwelling space was to be secondary or accessory to the storage space. Some options designate most of the floor area for dwelling use and very little for storage. With this floor plan, these units are really multi-family dwellings and belong in an area that is zoned multi-family.

Travis Vugteveen – Explained living space as defined in the Michigan Residential Code.

Joel Smeenge – Is ok with a limitation on the amount of living space permitted.

Township Attorney Ron Bultje – Each building must be primarily self-storage units with up to 4 dwelling units allowed as an auxiliary use. The Township has discretion. If there is too much space devoted to residential use, it does not meet the intent of the Special Use in the B-2 Zoning District. We can put a condition on the first application and then amend the Zoning Ordinance.

Doug Marshal – Stated that the more mezzanine area a storage unit has, the more impaired the unit is for actual storage because of reduced overhead height.

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to table the Smeenge Special Use and Site Plan application review until the next meeting.  
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

At 8:10 PM., the date of the next Special Planning Commission meeting was discussed. Comments were received regarding the draft updated Master Land Use Plan and need to be reviewed. The next meeting was set for March 14, 2024 at 7:00 PM to review draft Master Land Use Plan comments and to continue review of the Smeenge Special Use and Site Plan applications.

Joel Smeenge – Noted he has received Ottawa County Health Department well and septic approval.

The next topic to be discussed was Short Term Rentals (STR).

Zoning Administrator Lovelace noted that Fresh Coast Planning (the firm she is contracted from by the Township) has Survey Monkey available to conduct a citizen survey regarding STR. She had previously distributed a list of sample questions for Planning Commissioners to review.

Bill Maschewske – Suggested deleting “River” from question 6, b since making more than one selection for an answer was possible and covered this option.

Travis Vugteveen – We should consider and include many properties.

Chairperson Martinie – Requested response 6, b to state “Bayou/Lake properties”.

Bill Maschewske – Suggested adding question 10 which would ask respondents “Would they be in favor of their neighbors listing their property as a STR”.

This question was dismissed since most people would respond “No”.

Travis Vugteveen – Delete the parenthesis following the third response for Question 5.

A discussion followed regarding how to reach the most residents of the Township. A mailed post card with a QR code included and mailed to each residence in the Township will be investigated by the Zoning Administrator.

Travis Vugteveen – Suggested spelling out Short Term Rental in all cases in the survey rather than using STR.

### New Business

At 8:45 PM., the Dresen Class A Earth Change application was considered.

Chairperson Martinie – Is the specified 100 ft. x 200 ft. x 6 ft. deep the dimensions of the water or the excavation?

Mr. Dresen – It is the water.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that including the excavation to get to the water table, the volume of earth change is larger than the 5000 cubic yards limit for a Class A Earth Change permit.

Mr. Dresen – Stated he had drawn out the excavation on CAD and it was about 5000 cubic yards. They are eventually going to use the fill to construct a home.

Bill Maschewske – Stated that a better description needs to be given of where the excavated material is going to be deposited. The current proposed excavation is 6865 cubic yards using the Alberta Pond Calculator. To put this in perspective, that would be 127 loads of fill using a 55-yard dump truck.

Chairperson Martinie – We need a top view showing the dimensions of the excavation, the dimensions of the water area, an accurate calculation of the volume of material removed, and a topographic map before and after the soil is deposited.

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Lydia Brown to table the Dresen Class A Earth Change application review until complete information is received. The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

At 9:02 PM., the draft Annual Report and Budget were discussed. Under “Zoning Ordinance Text and Map Amendments”, bullet one, the word “all” is to be deleted.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that “Preparation of proposed Zoning Ordinance and Police Power regulations for Short Term Rentals” should be added to Pending Business on the last page.

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Bill Maschewske to approve the 2023 – 2024 Annual Report and 2024 – 2025 Budget of the Planning Commission. The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

As required, the annual Election of Officers of the Planning Commission was held.

Chairperson Martinie inquired if anyone other than the existing officers was interested in a position. There were no responses.

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to re-elect the current officers consisting of Shawn Martinie Chairperson, Steve Young Vice-Chairperson, and Bill Maschewske Secretary. The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

As required, a regular meeting schedule for 2024 – 2025 for the Planning Commission was discussed.

A motion was made by Chairperson Martinie and seconded by Travis Vugteveen to set the following dates as regular meetings for the Planning Commission for the following year.

March 26, 2024  
April 23, 2024  
May 28, 2024  
June 25, 2024  
July 23, 2024  
August 27, 2024  
September 24, 2024  
October 22, 2024  
November 26, 2024  
January 28, 2025  
February 25, 2025

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

#### Any and All Other Business That May Come Before the Board

Zoning Administrator Lovelace noted that the Zoning Ordinance does not specify a maximum height for a ground mounted sign in Section 4.44 or 4.44A or the Lake Michigan Drive Commercial Overlay District. She noted that she has a sign application pending.

It was agreed that information for this type of sign from other Zoning Ordinances would be helpful for reference in establishing a proposed maximum height.

See attached Memorandum from Zoning Administrator Lovelace attached.

#### Pay Bills

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Lydia Brown to pay salaries for the February 21, 2024 Planning Commission meeting (Six members present, one member absent). The motion carried unanimously.

#### Adjournment

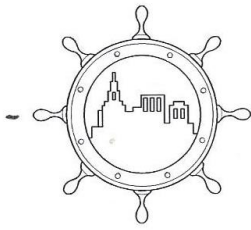
A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Steve Young to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 10:13 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary  
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachment:

Memorandum dated February 13, 2024 regarding Signs Ordinance from Zoning Administrator Lovelace.



## Fresh Coast Planning

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## MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission  
From: Julie Lovelace  
Date: February 13, 2024  
Re: Signs Ordinance

It was recently noted that there is no maximum ground sign height listed in Sections 4.44 and 4.44A. Additionally, while there are specific sign standards in the LSOD chapter, there are no sign standards in the LMDCOD chapter. The LMDCOD district is not specifically mentioned in Section 4.44A either.

In the LSOD chapter, freestanding signs are restricted to maximum of six feet. Business development signs are restricted to a maximum of eight feet.

The Planning Commission should discuss appropriate sign heights for Sections 4.44 and 4.44A as well as the LMDCOD chapter.

JL  
Planner