

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
January 28, 2025

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
Steve Young
Lydia Brown
Phil Crum
Steve Ambrose

Absent

Michelle Gillespie

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, Zoning Administrator Julie Lovelace, Doug Marshall, Rex and Janice Pease, Greg Kobrzycki, and two additional members of the public. The attendance sheet is attached.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Steve Young to approve the agenda of the January 28, 2025 meeting as written.
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Shawn Martinie to approve as written the minutes of the January 9, 2025 Planning Commission meeting.
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Non-Commission Member Inquiries and Questions -- None

Reports and Communications -- None

Announcements

Chairperson Martinie announced that this would be Steve Young's last meeting as he did not wish to be re-appointed. All members thanked Steve Young for his years of service to the Township.

Old Business

Re-review of the Pease Special Use and Site Plan Application

The Pease Special Use and Site Plan application requested an oversize and over-height accessory building in the R-1 Zoning District. At the September 24, 2024 meeting, the Planning Commission recommended to the Township Board approval of the subject Special Use and Site Plan with conditions. At the November 13, 2024 meeting, the Township Board held the required Public Hearing for the Special Use application. At that hearing, there was a citizen complaint that the Planning Commission condition that the trees in the 31 ft. between the East end of the proposed oversize building and the East property line remain intact as a buffer were removed. There was also concern expressed that a business may be registered at this address and the proposed building would be used for commercial purposes. Considering the findings from the public hearing, the Township Board voted to return the Special Use and Site Plan application to the Planning Commission for further consideration.

Chairperson Martinie requested to view the electronic version of the page in the application that allegedly showed the location of water lines, well, and the location of a proposed hydrant next to the building.

The electronic copy was also unreadable and Mr. Pease showed the Planning Commission where the water well was located and where the lines would be run to the proposed building and the location of the hydrant.

Chairperson Martinie – Requested when the trees were taken down in the buffer the Planning Commission made a condition of approval.

Janice Pease – The builder took the trees down to have enough room to use his equipment after the Planning Commission made their preservation a condition of approval.

Mr. Pease – Noted he plans to plant cedars and white pine to replace the trees removed in the buffer area.

Chairperson Martinie – Is a commercial business being conducted at the site?

Mr. Pease noted he stopped the business in 2021.

Chairperson Martinie noted that the application now includes a newer aerial photograph showing the house on the second lot to the East of the Pease property.

Greg Kobrzycki – Stated he is the neighbor on the second parcel to the East of the Pease property. His first concern was that the parcel created by Mr. and Mrs. Pease did not meet the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

Zoning Administrator Lovelace – While not relevant to the Special Use or Site Plan Application, she noted that the property sold by Mr. Pease was not a lot split but a lot line adjustment which did not make the Pease property non-conforming and reduced the non-conformity of the parcel to which the land was annexed.

Mr. Kobrzycki – Noted the parcel which gained land includes a derelict vacant house.

Chairperson Martinie – Noted this issue was not relevant to the Special Use or Site Plan review which only pertains to the increased square footage and extra height of the proposed building. He also noted that the applicant could, without any Special Use or Site Plan approval, construct a building of 5200 square feet in size and 18 feet tall 20 feet from the East property line.

Lydia Brown – Noted that the previous Planning Commission recommendation of approval of the 26 ft. height was based on trees being in the 31 ft. between the proposed building and the East property line.

Chairperson Martinie – The Planning Commission needs a landscaping plan from the applicant as a commitment regarding the adequacy of the replacement trees that will be required to replace the trees removed.

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Phil Crum to re-recommend to the Township Board approval of the Pease Special Use request for an oversized and over height Accessory building at 13353 Green St. based upon the findings of the Planning Commission in reviewing the Standards for Site Plan Review in Section 31.8 of the Zoning Ordinance and the General Standards for Considering Special Uses in Section 32.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. (The Planning Commission agrees with the findings of the Zoning Administrator regarding the review of the Special Use Standards in Section 32.5 of the Zoning Ordinance). The approval recommendation is conditioned upon:

1. Compliance with all Federal, State, County, and Township Ordinances.
2. Compliance with the representations of the applicant in the minutes.
3. The following information must be submitted by the applicant prior to re-review by the Township Board.

Site Plan Requirements

- a. Section 31.7(C) – Electrical details need to be shown.
 - b. Section 31.7(I) – Electric and water wells need to be shown. Submission is not legible.
 - c. Section 31.7(Q) – Location and type of existing and proposed exterior lighting must be shown.
 - d. A landscape plan for the East side of the proposed building showing trees after construction is complete. The plan should include the number, spacing, minimum size and species of trees to be planted. The size of the plantings must provide adequate screening. The landscaping must also be maintained.
4. Compliance with the application. Reference the Zoning Administrator Memorandum dated January 14, 2025 for the items included in the Site Plan. (Copy attached)

5. Compliance with the requirements in the Zoning Administrator Memorandums dated January 14, 2025 (copy attached) and August 13, 2024.
6. The applicant shall submit a recorded deed restriction at the Ottawa County Register of Deeds per Section 4.2(G) of the Zoning Ordinance.
7. Compliance with Section 4.2(E) of the Zoning Ordinance requiring the use of the Accessory building to be compliant with the applicable Zoning District. The building shall not be used for any commercial purposes.
8. Potable water hook-up is to be approved by the Ottawa County Health Department.
9. Exterior lighting on the outside of the proposed building must be shielded downward and may not extend onto neighboring lots per Section 4.34A of the Zoning Ordinance.

A roll call vote was taken.

Phil Crum – Yes
Lydia Brown – Yes
Bill Maschewske – Yes
Shawn Martinie – Yes
Steve Young – Yes
Steve Ambrose – Yes

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Draft Short Term Rental Legislation Discussion

The discussion of Short- Term Rentals (STR) was continued from the last regular meeting. Based on input from the Planning Commission, revised draft Zoning and Police Power Ordinances had been distributed with draft dates of 10/28/2024 and 12/18/2024, respectively. Chairperson Martinie requested comments regarding the documents.

Bill Maschewske – Stated a map was still need showing those areas of the Township where STR are allowed.

A discussion was held regarding the administrative costs involved with either Granicus or Iworks. It appears their base administrative fees are approximately \$5000 up front. It was noted the administrative costs, which are passed on by the Township to applicants, was an issue in Spring Lake Village.

Chairperson Martinie – Requested Township Board representative Steve Ambrose to take the issue of costs to the Township Board for input.

Phil Crum – Expressed concern about the safety of STR users operating watercraft on Stearns Bayou.

Bill Maschewske – Inquired if the map will be an overlay zone.

Lydia Brown – Noted there could be demand for STR in other places in the Township besides along the waterfront. She cited the event center at the Pigeon Creek Golf Course.

Doug Marshall – Noted that the proposal could include too small of an area and too few locations for STR. Performance will drive successful operations.

Greg Kobrzycki – He does not like the 500 ft. isolation distance between STR's. The density and number of STR's will be too low.

Doug Marshall – Inquired if the Planning Commission considered the seasonality of rentals.

Steve Ambrose – Inquired about limiting the number of STR. Is there a watchdog on the rentals?

Zoning Administrator Lovelace is to prepare the map based upon the previously agreed boundaries for allowing STR. It is unclear at this time whether it will be an overlay district or an area described with streets as boundaries.

Village of Robinson

The next topic discussed was the request from the Zoning Board of Appeals to review the Zoning Ordinance for possible revisions to address the number of Variance requests from property owners in the Village of Robinson. Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment wording was provided by the Zoning Administrator with the assistance of the Township Attorney and provided relief to Yard Setback Requirements. The proposal involved reducing the Setback requirements to 80% of those in the 1949 Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission reviewed the draft text at the November regular meeting and requested some amendments which were addressed in a draft dated 12/17/2024 which was distributed to Planning Commissioners in advance of this meeting.

Bill Maschewske inquired if a lot conforms to Section 4.24(A), does Section 4.31 still apply regarding expansion of residential use or are these lots considered conforming non-standard lots? With the proposed amendments, are Village of Robinson lots treated equally with lots that conform to Section 4.24(A) now?

Attorney Bultje responded that the lot would still be non-standard but the use would be conforming since Residential use is allowed in RR and R-1 Zoning. The proposed amendment would treat Village of Robinson lots equally with the exception that they would be subject to lesser setback requirements.

Bill Maschewske had the following additional comments.

1. The dimensional data in proposed Section 4.31(G) should be in Chapter 30 or at least be cross-referenced since it would be difficult to find here in General Provisions.

Following discussion, the Planning Commission agreed to reference Section 4.22(B) in Section 30.2, footnote (f).

2. The requirements in Section 4.22(B) conflict with Section 30.2(f). The reduction in Front Yard Setback for a corner lot on specific Village of Robinson Streets should be included as an exception in Section 30.2(f).

It was agreed to reference Section 4.22(B) in Section 30.2(f).

Zoning Administrator Lovelace will update the draft Zoning Ordinance amendment with the above changes.

New Business

Election of Officers

The annual Election of Planning Commission officers was held as required.

Steve Young nominated Shawn Martinie as Chairperson, Lydia Brown as Vice-Chairperson, and Bill Maschewske as Secretary of the Planning Commission. The nomination was seconded by Shawn Martinie.

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Any and All Other Business That May Come Before the Board-- None

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Shawn Martinie to pay salaries for the January 28, 2025 meeting (one meeting, 6 members present, 1 member absent).

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Steve Young to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:27 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachments: January 28, 2025 Planning Commission Sign-in Sheet

