

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
January 9, 2025

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

Present	Absent
Shawn Martinie Bill Maschewske Steve Ambrose Lydia Brown Phil Crum Michelle Gillespie	Steve Young

Also present was contracted Township Planner Gregory Ransford of Fresh Coast Planning. There were no members of the public present. The attendance sheet is not included as it contained no signatures.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to approve the agenda of the January 9, 2025 meeting as written. The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Lydia Brown to approve as written the minutes of the November 26, 2024 Planning Commission meeting. The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

New Business

The specific purpose of this special meeting was to review changes to the Zoning Ordinance proposed by Greg Ransford, the Township contracted Planner and Principal from Fresh Coast Planning, following the recent adoption by Robinson Township of a new Master Land Use Plan. The proposed changes are primarily the result of Strategies that were identified and approved in the new Master Land Use Plan and now need to be included in the Zoning Ordinance for implementation. The complete memorandum, dated November 11, 2024, from Gregory Ransford is attached. **Only those Strategies and Section numbers in which changes were made to the recommendations in the memorandum are included below.**

Agricultural Strategies

Strategy: Adopt or enhance appropriate ordinances to preserve natural features

Chapter 4, Page 44 - Section 4.49(F)(2)(e) – The proposed change was accepted by the Planning Commission.

Strategy: Investigate ordinance language to support wedding venues or similar ancillary uses of existing agricultural operations

Existing Section 6.3D – Before deleting the existing paragraph 6.3D, Planner Ransford will check to make sure the Township is not still trying to enforce this provision.

New Section 6.3D – A definition of “Agritourism” is needed. It should be accessory to a valid farming operation, involve no new buildings (wedding venue in particular), and be allowed only by Special Use.

Strategy: Reduce or investigate the minimum setback for all farm buildings, so as to protect the greatest amount of open space and or farmland as possible, while avoiding conflict with adjacent uses

Chapter 4, Page 39 – Section 4.48 – Additional Setback Requirements – The Planning Commission agrees with the proposed changes.

Chapter 30, Page 1 – Decision is to make no changes to existing required setbacks.

Strategy: Encourage the preservation of any trees within the right-of-way and within 30 feet of the right of way, so as to protect the natural vegetation (any naturally deceased trees may be removed) and drainage system

In General – Should residential developments be permitted in the A-1 Zoning District? Greg Ransford to discuss this with Township Attorney Ron Bultje.

Chapter 4, Page 44 – Section 4.49(F)(2)(d) – The Planning Commission agrees with the proposed changes.

Chapter 20, Page 15, paragraph (J) – The Planning Commission does not agree with the proposed change.

Chapter 21, Page 5 – Section 21.4(D)(6) - Add per Memorandum, but do site condominium or other residential developments belong in the A-1 Zoning District? See General comment above.

Chapter 30.2 – Do not add wording to “encourage” property owners to preserve trees.

Strategy: Strengthen ordinance language to prohibit private roads in the Agricultural Zoning District or on prime farmland

Chapter 4, Pages 9 and 10 – Revise “prime” in both Sections 4.9B (A)(8) and (B)(8) to “prime or unique”.

Strategy: Investigate a millage or alternative Township program for land acquisition to provide for the preservation of rural character and or open space in perpetuity

This is a Township Board issue and was not discussed further.

Strategy: Limit development within the Aquifer Recharge Area identified by Ottawa County's Groundwater Sustainability Initiative, which development would negatively impact the Recharge Area

Chapter 4, Page 71- Section 4.58 – Add Section 4.58 as revised to change “or” to “and” between Planning Commission and Township Board, thus requiring approvals from both.

Memorandum Additional Provisions

Items are listed numerically to match the attached Memorandum and include the Zoning Ordinance Section number followed by the Planning Commission consensus. Refer to the attached Memorandum for complete details.

1. Section 3.1(M) – Rules Applying to the Text -- Good suggestion. Revise per Township Attorney recommendation.
2. Section 3.13(A) – Bed and Breakfast Operation -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
3. Section 3.14 – Bedroom -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
4. Section 3.25(C) –Decommissioning -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
5. Section 3.45 – Floor Area -- Strike proposed changes.
6. Section 3.49 – Greenbelt -- Accept the proposed changes.
7. Section 3.73 – Lot Line, Front -- Delete the last sentence of the original definition.
8. Section 3.79 – Mobile Home -- Accept the recommendations in the Memorandum.
9. Section 3.81 – Motel – Allow cooking facilities in both Motel and Hotel definitions.
10. Section 3.84 – Nursery -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
11. Section 3.97 – Roadside Stand – Get Township Attorney input.
12. Section 3.98 – Directional Sign -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
13. Section 4.6(D)(1) – Animals, The Keeping Of -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.

14. Section 4.47 – Non- Grandfathered and Non- Conforming Uses – Acceptable to delete if no open enforcement issues and approved by Township Attorney.
15. Section 4.49(D)(2)(f) – Application – Replace “locations” with “location(s)”.
16. Section 4.49(D)(5) – Application -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
17. Section 4.49(F)(14) – Private Roads -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
18. Section 4.49(G)(2)(b)(ii) – Amendments to an Approved Site Plan -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
19. Current Section 6.3(D) – Uses Requiring Special Approval – Limit new wording to just “Agritourism Operations”. The remaining issues need to be addressed in the definition of “Agritourism”.
20. Section 7.3(H) – Same response as Number 14 above.
21. Section 8.3(F) – Same response as above.
22. Section 10.3(L) – Same response as above.
23. Section 11.3(C) – Same response as above.
24. Section 20.2(A)(6) – Planned Unit Development Permitted Uses -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes.
25. General Punctuation Issues -- The Planning Commission accepts the changes in concept.

Memorandum General Observations

1. Table of Contents -- Unused Chapter numbers for future use – The Planning Commission wishes to retain these.
2. Section 1.1 -Title -The Planning Commission accepts the recommendations.
3. Section 3.42 - Farm - Following discussion, it was agreed to retain the 5- acre minimum.
4. Section 3.63 - Lot – Need Township Attorney review on this issue in addition to Section 7.3.

5. Section 3.11- Yard, Front – The consensus of the Planning Commission was to make no changes to this Section in the Zoning Ordinance.
6. Section 4.42 – Sod Farms – Make Sod Farms a Special Use.
7. Section 4.53 – Landscaping Requirements for the LSOD and the LMDCOD – The Planning Commission consensus was to add references to Section 4.53 regarding Landscaping in both Chapters 17 and 18.
8. Section 4.55 – Access Management for the LSOD and the LMDCOD - The Planning Commission consensus was to add references to Section 4.55 regarding Landscaping in both Chapters 17 and 18.
9. Section 5.2 – Zoning Map – The Zoning Map needs to be revised to show the underlying zoning district for contract zoned parcels.

Planning Commission Considerations

With the exception of “Additional Questions of the Planning Commission”, these issues have been addressed.

Additional Questions of the Planning Commission

1. Section 3.98 – Sign and Billboard- The Township has already updated this section as a result of Reed v. Gilbert.
2. Section 4.49(F)(8) – Lot Width – The feasibility has not been verified and it has also not been challenged. It was decided to not verify at this time.
3. Chapter 30 – District Regulations – The Planning Commission elected to leave Chapter 30 unchanged.
4. The Planning Commission elected to adopt the updates to the Zoning Ordinance all at once as a complete Restated Zoning Ordinance.
5. The use of the Oxford comma should be reviewed with the Township Attorney.

Note that all references to contacting the Township Attorney for input or review will be performed by Planner Ransford.

Chairperson Martinie inquired when Fresh Coast Planning would have the next installment of proposed Zoning Ordinance revisions ready for Planning Commission review.

Planner Ransford responded that he will try to have materials ready for a February 13, 2025 Planning Commission Special meeting.

Chairperson Martinie noted the next Planning Commission meeting would be a Regular meeting on January 28, 2025.

Old Business – None

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Lydia Brown to pay salaries for the January 9, 2025 Planning Commission meeting (six members present, one absent).

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Shawn Martinie to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:43 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachment: Memorandum from Gregory Ransford, MPA, of Fresh Coast Planning dated November 11, 2024 regarding Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Regarding Agricultural Strategies, General Provisions Recommendations