

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
March 26, 2025

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

Present	Absent
Shawn Martinie	None
Bill Maschewske	
Kathy Kuck	
Lydia Brown	
Phil Crum	
Steve Ambrose	
Michelle Gillespie	

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, Zoning Administrator Julie Lovelace, Mark Sloothaak, and nine additional members of the public. The attendance sheet is attached.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to approve the agenda of the March 26, 2025 meeting as written.  
The motion carried unanimously.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Lydia Brown to approve as written the minutes of the March 13, 2025 Planning Commission meeting.  
The motion carried unanimously.

Non-Commission Member Inquiries and Questions -- None

Reports and Communications

Bill Maschewske reported briefly on the Ottawa County Water Quality Forum attended on March 21, 2025. Of particular note was a presentation that provided evidence that the quantity of rain that was historically considered the 100-year rainfall event has essentially become the 50-year rainfall event. The amount of rainfall representing the current actual 100-year rainfall event is significantly greater than the number historically used.

Announcements—None

## New Business

### Novakoski Special Use and Site Plan

As scheduled, the Novakoski Special Use public hearing was declared open. Mr. Novakoski has submitted a Special Use application and a Site Plan, as required, for two over-height accessory buildings in the Rural Residential Zoning District. The property was previously contract rezoned from R-1 to RR for the purpose of permitting larger accessory buildings than permitted in the R-1 Zoning District.

As requested by Chairperson Martinie, Mr. Novakoski gave a presentation describing the circumstances of his Special Use request. He stated he already has a dwelling and a riding arena for horses on the parcel and would now like to construct a barn for additional storage of items needed for the care of the horses and would also like to construct a pool house. The nearest building to a property line would be the proposed pool house that would be approximately 140 ft. from the East property line and approximately 1200 ft. from the road. He noted the pool accessory building has a second story. They do not board horses for others. He further noted that the height of the proposed buildings is less than the existing arena.

Bill Maschewske – By less height, do you mean height to the peak rather than as the Zoning Ordinance defines building height.

Mr. Novakoski – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Will either building be equipped to be a dwelling?

Mr. Novakoski – There will be no dwelling in either building. He also noted that the building height is driven by the need for a 14 ft. high door opening to permit the entry of horse trailers combined with a roof pitch to match other buildings already on site.

Steve Jameson – (The neighbor to the East of the Novakoski property) Noted that Mr. Novakoski already addressed a question he had about the building height. His only remaining concern would be noise from parties going on late into the night.

Mr. Novakoski – Noted he already has a house on Pottawattomie Bayou and entertains there also and has never had a complaint from the neighbors even though the setbacks are much less to adjacent dwellings. He stated he will be respectful of the privacy of the neighbors so they can appreciate their secluded location.

There were no other comments or questions from either the Planning Commission or the public.

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Kathy Kuck to close the public hearing at 7:15 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Martini requested comments regarding the content of the Site Plan relative to the requirements in Section 31.7 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Bill Maschewske – Section 31.7(E) -- Is the partial object on Sheet C-2 of the Site Plan the Jameson house?

Mr. Novakoski – Yes.

Hearing no more comments, it was determined that the requirements of Section 31.7 of the Zoning Ordinance were met.

Next to be reviewed were the Standards for Site Plan Review in Section 31.8 of the Zoning Ordinance.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that under Section 31.8(G), the preservation of as many trees as possible East of the disturbed area should be a condition of approval. This was not a deficiency in meeting the criteria.

It was determined that all the criteria of Section 31.8 of the Zoning Ordinance were met.

The Section 32.5, General Standards for Considering Special Uses, were considered next. It was agreed to accept the responses of Zoning Administrator Lovelace in her Memorandum dated March 12, 2025 titled “13665 Green Street Special Use – Accessory Building Height “(copy attached) with the addition that there was no public opposition to the Special Use request except a concern regarding noise which was addressed satisfactorily by the applicant.

It was determined that the standards in Section 32.5 of the Zoning Ordinance were met.

A motion was made by Kathy Kuck and seconded by Phil Crum to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Novakoski Special Use Application for two over-height buildings per Section 4.2(D)(1) of the Zoning Ordinance. The Planning Commission finds the application meets the Site Plan Standards for Approval in Section 31.8 and the Standards for Special Use Approval in Section 32.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. The materials submitted are included in the list on page 5 of the Zoning Administrator Memorandum dated March 12, 2025. The following conditions apply to the approval.

1. All trees between the proposed building sites and the east property line shall be retained to every extent possible.
2. The Applicant shall submit a statement recorded at the Ottawa County Register of Deeds per Section 4.2(G) Building, Accessory.
3. Approvals from the Ottawa County Health Department shall be obtained for well and septic.
4. Compliance with the application and all representations of the applicant recorded in the minutes.
5. Compliance with all Federal, State, County, and Township ordinances and laws.

Mr. Wedeven, contractor for Mr. Novakoski, questioned the well and septic permit requirement.

Mr. Novakoski noted he had submitted the applications today.

A roll call vote was taken.

Phil Crum – Yes

Michelle Gillespie – Yes

Bill Maschewske -- Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Ambrose -- Yes

Kathy Kuck – Yes

Lydia Brown -- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

#### Smith Class A Earth Change Application

The next item on the agenda was the Smith Class A Earth Change Application to create a pond on parcel no 70-08-35-200-018. The request would create a private pond on private property.

Chairperson Martinie – Questioned the depth to the water table. Does anyone have a pond near you?

Applicant Randy Smith – Yes, across the street. He noted the water table numbers in the application are from the septic system installation last fall. The septic system is located on higher elevation ground.

Upon investigation, it was revealed that the septic system location was an elevation three ft. higher than the proposed pond location.

Bill Maschewske – Is the subsoil being removed?

Randy Smith---Yes. The contractor is taking the subsoil in exchange for digging the pond.

Bill Maschewske – What will be done with the topsoil after the pond is created?

Chairperson Martinie – It will be used for reclaiming the banks of the pond.

Chairperson Martinie inquired if everyone felt the application was complete compared to the requirements of the Earth Change Ordinance for a Class A Permit.

Bill Maschewske – Per the Earth Change Ordinance, Article IV, Section 1.

(E)(2) –The topographic map does not go the required 300 ft. beyond the perimeter of the property boundaries. In response, the applicant noted the area is relatively flat.

(F) – No statement regarding the type of equipment to be used. It was also noted that the permit is only good for 180 days.

Mr. Smith did not know what equipment would be used.

(L) – Inquired how close adjacent houses were and were children present in the area.

Zoning Administrator Lovelace responded the nearest houses were approximately 280 ft. to the West and 290 ft. to the East.

The following Factors in Considering Applications for Permits from Article V, Section 3 of the Earth Change Ordinance were reviewed. Planning Commission responses are in *Italics*.

1. The recommendation of the Planning Commission.  
*A recommendation will follow review of the Factors.*
2. The zoning of the proposed site.  
*The parcel is zoned A-1.*
3. Its proposed reclamation in a manner consistent with the Robinson Township Land Use Plan.  
*The proposed reclamation is acceptable.*
4. The character of the person in respect to the person's honesty, integrity, and financial responsibility.  
*Acceptable*
5. The person's ability to comply with this Ordinance and the probable terms and conditions of a permit, if issued.  
*The applicant has the ability to comply with the Ordinance.*
6. The size, nature, and character of the proposed Earth change activity.  
*Compliant with a Class A Earth Change Permit.*
7. The scope and duration of the proposed Earth Change activity.  
*Duration is approximately one year and is dependent upon the contractor's need for fill.*
8. The proximity and effect of the proposed Earth Change activity with respect to adjoining properties and the surrounding neighborhood.  
*Negligible effect.*

9. The relative need or necessity of the proposed Earth Change activity in relation to other possible uses of the property.  
*The applicant desires a personal use pond.*
10. The impact of the proposed Earth Change activity on the environment.  
*No anticipated negative impact.*
11. All pertinent things concerning the health, safety and general welfare, and the preservation of natural and environmental resources and the prevention of nuisances and hazards.  
*No negative impacts are anticipated. Signage will be required.*
12. Shall exercise a reasonable and sound discretion in the premises.  
*Acceptable.*

The Planning Commission finds the Factors are all met.

A copy of the Zoning Administrators Memorandum dated February 17, 2025 regarding “Class A Earth Change Permit Application – Smith” is attached.

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Shawn Martinie to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Smith Class A Earth Change Application for parcel No. 70-08-35-200-018 to excavate per the application to create a pond. The following conditions apply.

1. Compliance with the application and the representations of the applicant recorded in the minutes.
2. Compliance with all Federal, State, County, and Township laws and Ordinances.

A roll call vote was taken.

Phil Crum – Yes

Michelle Gillespie – Yes

Bill Maschewske -- Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Ambrose – Yes

Kathy Kuck – Yes

Lydia Brown -- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

S and M Clark Farm Site Plan

Next to be discussed was the Site Plan submitted by Mark Sloothaak for the construction of a scale office on parcel no. 70-04-34-400-004 as part of his gravel mining operation at the Clark Farm Site. Mr. Sloothaak was present to answer questions.

Chairperson Martinie and Bill Maschewske – Noted that an amended Earth Change application would have been an alternative to submitting a Site Plan.

It was noted by Township Attorney Bultje that this was not a formal Site Plan since it was not required by the Zoning Ordinance but would provide the information needed for review.

In response to several inquiries, Mr. Sloothaak showed on the aerial GIS view of the site on the screen exactly where the Scale Office would be located.

It was determined by the Planning Commission that the application was in good faith compliance with Section 31.8, Standards for Site Plan Review in the Zoning Ordinance. A copy of the Zoning Administrators Memorandum regarding the “Clark Farm Accessory Building/Scale house Site Plan Review Application” dated February 14, 2025 is attached.

A motion was made by Kathy Kuck and seconded by Lydia Brown to recommend to the Township Board approval of the S and M Clark Farm Site Plan for the addition of an 864 square foot scale office per the site plan as presented. Approval is based on compliance with the Standards in Section 31.8 of the Zoning Ordinance and with the following conditions.

1. Ottawa County Health Department approval for the well and septic.
2. The same conditions as exist on the current Earth Change permit for the Clark Farm Site.

A roll call vote was taken.

Phil Crum – Yes

Michelle Gillespie – Yes

Bill Maschewske -- Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Ambrose – Yes

Kathy Kuck – Yes

Lydia Brown -- Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

### Old Business

### Schippers Contract Rezoning Request

The public hearing for the Schippers Contract Rezoning Request was held at the February 25, 2025 Planning Commission meeting, however, the issue was tabled pending discussion with the applicants who were not present. Kurt and Jamison Schippers were now present.

The Zoning Administrators Memorandum dated January 23, 2025 regarding the “Schippers Zoning Map Amendment Request – Contract Rezoning” is attached.

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to untable the Schippers Contract Rezoning Request.  
The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Martinie – Noted there were several issues with the I-1 Zoning District requested by the applicants.

1. Section 14.2 of the Zoning Ordinance states “All uses combined on one (1) parcel shall not employ more than a total of twenty (20) persons.”. The application for rezoning states the business has approximately 40 employees.

Per Township Attorney Ron Bultje, a reasonable interpretation is that the limit of 20 employees refers to the number of employees on the site.

The applicants state that they do not have more than 20 employees on the site. Many show up for work directly at the job site.

2. Section 14.4, Outdoor Storage. It has been noted that the parcel in question has extensive outdoor storage. Section 14.4 of the Zoning Ordinance limits outdoor storage to 20% of the principal building(s) floor area. The existing outdoor storage exceeds this amount. It was noted that licensed vehicles, trailers, and other items that move do not count towards the 20% limit.

Jamison Schippers responded that they do not want or need any more outside storage (approximately 1 acre currently). It was noted the current amount of outside storage is grandfathered.

3. It was noted the building addition, as proposed, does not meet the required setback requirements in the I-1 Zoning District.

The applicants stated they wish the addition to be located as proposed for visual appearance and will be seeking a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The Township Attorney stated the Criteria for Rezoning did not need to be reviewed because the contract rezoning is limited to one specific use.

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Lydia Brown to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Schippers Contract rezoning request based upon the terms of the Contract Rezoning Agreement (copy attached) with draft date of February 6, 2025 (permanent parcel no. 70-08-24-400-017).



A roll call vote was taken.  
Phil Crum – Yes  
Michelle Gillespie – Yes  
Bill Maschewske -- Yes  
Shawn Martinie – Yes  
Steve Ambrose – Yes  
Kathy Kuck – Yes  
Lydia Brown -- Yes  
The motion carried unanimously.

#### Short Term Rentals (STR)

The most recent modifications to the proposed map describing the areas of the Township in which STR's would be permitted was discussed, however, the map has not yet been returned from Ottawa County GIS. This issue is on hold until the map is received. A copy of the Zoning Administrators Memorandum on the subject is attached.

#### Village of Robinson Zoning Text Amendment

Chairperson Martinie inquired if anyone had any comment regarding the latest draft dated February 26, 2025. There were no comments.

Following discussion, it was agreed to schedule both the draft Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment for the Village of Robinson and the draft Zoning Ordinance amendment for STR for public hearings on April 22, 2025. Zoning Administrator Lovelace will prepare the hearing notices.

#### Pay Bills

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Shawn Martinie to pay salaries for the March 26, 2025 Planning Commission meeting (seven members present, no members absent). The motion carried unanimously.

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

Zoning Administrator Lovelace stated her last day working for Robinson Township would be this Friday. She has accepted a new position with the Michigan Municipal League. All Planning Commissioners thanked her for her excellent work and wished her well in her new employment.

Chairperson Martinie noted there would be no special Planning meeting in April and meetings in May would be May 8, 2025 for Planning and May 20, 2025 for a regular meeting.

#### Adjournment

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Kathy Kuck to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:03 PM.  
The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary  
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachments:

Attendance Sheet for the March 26, 2025 Planning Commission meeting.

Memorandum dated March 12, 2025 titled “13665 Green Street Special Use – Accessory Building Height” from Zoning Administrator Lovelace

Zoning Administrators Memorandum regarding “Class A Earth Change Permit Application – Smith” dated February 17, 2025

Zoning Administrators Memorandum regarding the “Clark Farm Accessory Building/Scale House Site Plan Review Application” dated February 14, 2025

Zoning Administrators Memorandum regarding the “Schippers Zoning Map Amendment Request – Contract Rezoning” dated January 23, 2025

Schippers Contract Zoning Agreement with draft date of February 6, 2025

Zoning Administrators Memorandum dated March 12, 2025 regarding Short Term Rentals