

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
April 22, 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 Bill Maschewske Kathy Kuck Lydia Brown Phil Crum Steve Ambrose Michelle Gillespie | None |

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, Zoning Administrator Aaron Bigelow, contracted Township Planner Gregory Ransford, Supervisor Adam MacMillan, John Wood, Frank Johnson, Joel Smeenge, and five additional members 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 agenda of the April 22, 2025 meeting as written.
The motion carried unanimously.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

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

Chairperson Martinie stated he was moving Non-Commission Member Inquiries and Questions to the end of the meeting.

Reports and Communications -- None

Announcements—None

New Business

Public Hearing -- Zoning Ordinance Amendments – Village of Robinson and Short- Term Rentals

With concurrence from Township Attorney Bultje, the Planning Commission held one public hearing for both the proposed Village of Robinson Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment and for the proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment for Short Term Rentals (STR), however, each topic would be discussed separately.

Chairperson Martinie explained the rules of procedure and declared the public hearing open. The first item for discussion was the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment for the Village of Robinson. The Chairperson explained the Zoning Board of Appeals had received recurrent Variance Requests for exceptions to yard requirements in the Village of Robinson due to the small lot sizes resulting from the plat being created about 1870. Per Section 40.6(A)(4) of the Zoning Ordinance, if a variance request is recurrent in nature, it should be remedied with a Zoning Ordinance amendment.

Chairperson Martinie requested comments from the Planning Commission.

Bill Maschewske

1. Section 30.2, footnote (f) –A date needs to be inserted in the text. November 25, 1988 was suggested as it is the same date used for Section 4.24(A), Lot, Non-Standard, Existing. The recommendation was accepted.
2. Section 4.31(G) – Add to the end of the text “and all other requirements are met.” for clarification. This suggestion was accepted.
3. Section 30.2, footnote (f) – Add a reference “See Section 4.22(B)” for a cross-reference. This recommendation was accepted.

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

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Kathy Kuck to close the public hearing portion of the meeting regarding the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment for the Village of Robinson.

The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Lydia Brown to recommend to the Township Board approval of the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment for the Village of Robinson, draft date April 22, 2025 including the amendments accepted above.

A roll call vote was taken.

Phil Crum – Yes

Michelle Gillespie – Yes

Lydia Brown – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Ambrose – Yes

Kathy Kuck – Yes

The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Martinie gave a summary of the background regarding the proposed Zoning Ordinance Amendment regarding Short Term Rentals (STR). He stated that currently STR are prohibited in the Township, however, it is suspected that some exist. The previous Township Board requested the Planning Commission to investigate STR and make a recommendation. A Township Survey was conducted and a draft Zoning Ordinance Amendment, including a map showing permitted areas, was created. The proposed map was shown on the overhead screen. Chairperson Martinie summarized the requirements as follows:

1. Single family dwelling.
2. Limit of 84 rental days per calendar year.
3. No more than two check-ins or check-outs per calendar week.
4. Not permitted in Subdivisions, plats, or PUD developments.
5. Isolation distance of 500 ft. between STR.

Chairperson Martinie also noted there is an accompanying Police Power Ordinance that is not the subject of this public hearing.

The Chairperson requested comments from the Planning Commission.

Bill Maschewske

1. Section 4.58 first paragraph – Change “small town” to “rural”. It was noted this was an approved change in the draft prior to October 2024.
2. Section 4.58(F) – The Map is referred to as Figure 1. This needs to be coordinated with the Zoning Ordinance and labelled accordingly. In addition, the map should be dated and have a title.
3. Section 4.58(F) – The word “bayou” needs to be plural since there is more than one bayou off the Grand River in Robinson Township.

There being no more comments or questions from the Planning Commission, comments and questions were requested from the public.

Frank Johnson – Inquired what “close proximity to the Grand River and its bayou” in Section 4.58(F) means? Mr. Johnson showed where his parcels were on the overhead GIS map and requested to be included in the area for STR.

Chairperson Martinie – Acknowledged that Mr. Johnsons parcels and the Michigreen Nursery property accessed Connor Bayou and will be considered for inclusion in the STR map.

Frank Johnson – Stated that Connor Bayou is really part of the Grand River as river water flows both in and out.

Township Attorney Bultje noted that the map (Figure 1) really defines “proximity”. He also noted that if the Planning Commission really wants to require frontage on either the Grand River or a bayou, then proximity should be changed to “frontage on”.

Kraig Schultz – He understands that STR are not allowed now. If allowed, will a permit be required.

Chairperson Martinie – Yes, a Special Use permit will be required and it will be good for two years.

Kraig Schultz – Why limit the area where STR's can be located?

Chairperson Martinie – That is a fair question. It was decided to limit STR to more desirable recreation areas within the Township.

Kraig Schultz – What about a Bed and Breakfast operation?

Chairperson Martinie and Gregory Ransford – These are currently allowed under specific conditions.

Township Attorney Bultje – Noted that an STR will be specifically defined if an ordinance permitting them is adopted.

John Wood – Lives on Osner Drive. Showed where he lives on the overhead map and inquired if his area is included?

Chairperson Martinie – It is excluded because it is in a subdivision.

John Wood – Stated he is pleased to find he and his neighbors are excluded.

Joel Smeenge – Stated he is at the hearing because he was under the impression that he would be allowed STR's on his commercial property on the Grand River next to Southern Grand Marina.

Chairperson Martinie – Noted that Mr. Smeenge's property is not single family residential and therefore does not qualify.

Bill Maschewske – Read a portion of the minutes of the March 14, 2024 Planning Commission meeting in which Bill Maschewske asked the Planning Commission if the Township should consider excluding STR from the Smeenge property because of the nature of the multi-family storage/residential units. Mr. Smeenge responded that all dwelling units would be owner occupied. Also read were the Planning Commission conditions of the recommendation for approval to the Township Board which limited the dwelling units to being owner occupied as stated by Mr. Smeenge.

Chairperson Martinie – Discussed the use for which Mr. Smeenge's property is zoned.

Mr. Smeenge – Thought his buildings, containing multiple condominium storage/dwelling units, were single family units.

Township Attorney Bultje – Explained the definitions of single family versus multi-family units.

Frank Johnson – If Mr. Smeenge owns the entire building, is it single family residential?

Township Attorney Bultje – No, not if there are multiple dwelling units within the building.

Joel Smeenge – He would like to request Special Use STR consideration for his property.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that Mr. Smeenge had previously stated during his multi-family storage/dwelling unit application process that he would make a statement in the condominium Master Deed excluding rental of the units by the owners. A condition of the approval recommendation was that the Township Attorney review the Master Deed.

Township Attorney Bultje – Did not remember if the Master Deed excluded rental of the units.

There were no more comments from the Planning Commission or the public.

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Shawn Martinie to close the public hearing.

The motion carried unanimously.

Chairperson Martinie summarized the results of the public hearing for STR and noted that some edits were required to the draft text and the map. It was also noted that the single lot on the map on the North side of Albee's Cove needs to be investigated to determine if it should be included or excluded for STR.

Gregory Ransford – Questioned if the 500 ft. separation distance required between STR in Section 4.58(E) was the distance between lot lines or between dwellings?

Following discussion, Township Attorney Bultje stated it should be the distance between lots.

Bill Maschewske – Noted the text should be revised to clearly define where the distance is measured.

Chairperson Martinie – Polled the Planning Commission for a consensus on how the 500 ft. is measured.

The consensus was 500 ft. lot to lot.

Bill Maschewske – Figure 1 probably should be identified differently.

Township Attorney Bultje – It should just be Figure (Blank) for the present.

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Phil Crum to table the issue of STR pending further action.

The motion carried unanimously.

Old Business – None

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Kathy Kuck and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to pay salaries for the April 22, 2025 Planning Commission meeting (all members present).
The motion carried unanimously.

Non-Commission Member Inquiries and Questions

John Depoy of Nederveld and Associates was present representing DK Construction and Steve King. He explained that Mr. King originally thought he could just rezone his property to Commercial to permit a marina and operate his marine construction business. When he discovered that was not the case, he applied for a Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment to permit marine construction in the I-2 Zoning District. A Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment was drafted and approved by the Township, working with Mr. King and his attorney to allow Marine Construction as a Special Use in the I-2 Zoning District and also permit increased outdoor storage because of the nature of the business.

Mr. Depoy inquired if the small office building that was proposed by Mr. King needed to be built before the Marine Construction use could begin. Mr. King would like to get Special Use approval, begin marine construction and outdoor storage, and not construct the building at this time. Mr. Depoy noted a building represents something he does not need at this time and is an expense Mr. King does not currently wish to make. He would like to start the business without the building with the condition that the building would be constructed within a specified period of time.

Chairperson Martinie – Stated he would want to see a Site Plan with the building and the outdoor storage specified. Also, if there are going to be employees on the site, bathroom facilities will be needed and he does not want porta-jons.

Mr. Depoy – Could they get a conditional approval and have up to two years to construct the building?

Township Attorney Bultje – Noted that the Township has sometimes allowed an accessory building before a dwelling (principal building) in Residential Districts by contract.

John Depoy – They would consider two years to construct the building. Also, would a construction trailer be acceptable instead of a building?

Chairperson Martinie – It needs to be a building.

Bill Maschewske – Noted the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment in question was just adopted on November 21, 2024. The Planning Commission spent several meetings working with the applicant and his attorney to create legislation that would satisfy both the Township and the

applicant. Now only five months later, the applicant does not want to comply. This is difficult to understand.

Following discussion, Chairperson Martinie stated the consensus of the Planning Commission was that there should be no use without a building.

Chairperson Martinie noted the next Planning meeting would be May 8, 2025 and a regular meeting would be held on May 20, 2025 with Township Attorney Bultje present.

Gregory Ransford inquired about Section 3.64 of the Zoning Ordinance regarding if an easement could count towards the lot width.

Following discussion, Chairperson Martinie reported the consensus of the Planning Commission was to support the definition in Section 3.64 and not count an easement towards meeting lot width requirements.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Shawn Martinie to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:15 PM.
The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachment:

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



SIGN IN SHEET
Regular Meeting of the
Planning Commission
Tuesday, April 22, 2025 - 7:00 pm

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

John F. Wood

John F. Wood

Kerri Marshall

Kerri Marshall

Adam MacMillan

Adam MacMillan

Frank Johnson

Frank Johnson

KRAIG SCHULTZ

Kraig D. Schultz