

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
November 10, 2020

The special meeting of the Robinson Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:30 PM via Zoom (virtual meeting).

| Present | Absent |
|--|------------------|
| Shawn Martinie Travis Vugteveen Bill Maschewske Lydia Brown Steve Young Rich Sibley | George Schippers |

Also present were Zoning Administrator Brian Werschem and Greg Ransford of Fresh Coast Planning. There were no members of the public present.

A motion was made by Travis Vugteveen and seconded by Rich Sibley to approve the agenda as written.

A roll call vote was taken.

Rich Sibley – Yes

Lydia Brown – Yes

Travis Vugteveen – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Young – Yes

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

A motion was made by Rich Sibley and seconded by Lydia Brown to approve as written the Planning Commission minutes of the September 22, 2020 meeting.

A roll call vote was taken.

Rich Sibley – Yes

Lydia Brown – Yes

Travis Vugteveen – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Young – Yes

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Zoning Administrator Werschem – Noted the meeting was being recorded and would be accessible tomorrow.

Master Planning

Gregory Ransford of Fresh Coast Planning was in attendance for the kickoff meeting of the Master Planning process. Robinson Township is engaged in the process of updating the Master Land Use Plan as required every five years by the Michigan Planning Enabling Act. Mr. Ransford noted that the Agricultural, Residential, and M-231 Overlay District were of primary concern tonight. Mr. Ransford suggested organizing the Master Land Use Plan into Chapters to include goals, recommendations, and strategies for each land use. The goals in particular would be based on the core values derived from the Citizen Survey. The strategies would be the mechanisms needed to implement the goals.

The items to cover at this meeting are the Community Survey, public workshops, the present framework and the new streamlined content, and growth boundaries. The first topic discussed was the community survey.

Community Survey

Chairperson Martinie – What does your existing template look like for questions?

Gregory Ransford – We will show you the questions from the Tallmadge Township survey.

Chairperson Martinie – Where is the survey accessed?

Gregory Ransford – Survey Monkey.

Zoning Administrator Werschem – Noted that a Township newsletter is going out soon with tax bills.

Gregory Ransford – The survey is based online. You can also state where and when to pick up paper copies for those without computers and Fresh Coast would have to input the data electronically.

Bill Maschewske – How many votes per household and how do you prevent someone from voting many times to alter the results.

Gregory Ransford – They usually allow two entries per household on Survey Monkey. Paper copies would be impossible to control.

Chairperson Martinie – We need to get information about the Master Land Use Plan and the survey out on the Township Web Site. Did you look at the questions from our previous survey?

Bill Maschewske – Please look in particular at question 19 from the 1998 survey. It provides a large amount of citizen direction. Additionally, for Commercial development, it should be explained in the survey how much Commercial property is currently planned but not developed.

Gregory Ransford – Development is measured by citizens based on how much they see developed.

Chairperson Martinie – I would like to get the survey questions first for Planning Commission review and would like to ask as many questions as possible from the questions that were asked in 1998. This should provide an interesting comparison of values.
When does the next mailing for taxes go out?

Zoning Administrator Werschem – This needs to be coordinated with Bonnie Hayward and Chris Saddler. A link could be included to the Township Website.

Gregory Ransford – We will get the Planning Commission a copy of the proposed survey questions as soon as possible.

Rich Sibley – Does Survey Monkey allow you to put background detail in front of the question?

Travis Vugteveen – Noted that some people will not take the survey online. What would it cost to mail the survey to each household?

Gregory Ransford – Does not know, but the tabulation would be very expensive.

Zoning Administrator Werschem – An informational postcard could be used.

Chairperson Martinie – Can you track the reply rate with Survey Monkey?

Gregory Ransford – Yes.

Lydia Brown – Noted that if the tax notices go out too early, there is a Township mailing of assessment notices in February.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that for the 1998 Survey, there was only one survey sent per household.

Gregory Ransford – Will check to see if Survey Monkey can detect if multiple responses are received from one source.

Travis Vugteveen – He will notify Bonnie Hayward to include a note in with the tax bills regarding the Master Plan update and the Community Survey. The project link will be Freshcoastplanning.com/Robinson.

Chairperson Martinie – Indicated that water and rural preservation are hot issues and should be included in the community survey.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that we now have a map of the Deep Aquifer Recharge areas for Ottawa County. These areas need to be protected from development to permit the maximum recharge. A copy of the Deep Aquifer Recharge Area Map will be sent to Gregory Ransford.

It was agreed, following discussion, to include Question 1 from the 1998 Survey since it indicated one of six areas within the Township that the respondent resides.

Workshops – Agricultural

The Agricultural workshops are anticipated to be an open house type of setting in which Gregory Ransford would interview four or five stakeholders in the Agricultural District. The list of individuals would need to come from the Planning Commission. Gregory Ransford proposed SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of the discussions.

Chairperson Martinie – What are the options for workshops if six months from now we still cannot get together?

Gregory Ransford – In another community, they did outdoor meetings to get information but still follow safe practices. This would require warm weather.

Workshops – Residential Neighborhoods

Travis Vugteveen – We need to have options regarding water.

Rich Sibley – Paved roads are a big deal for many people.

Chairperson Martinie – What about including social media sites on the Township web page? These could include Facebook, Twitter, and Gmail.

Gregory Ransford – We need to explore the ways to achieve rural character, exclusive of buildings and structures.

Workshops – Commercial (M-231 Overlay District)

Comments were made indicating that there should be good feedback on the M-231 Overlay District requirements using the Merle Boes gas station as a visual example and that this would be an excellent opportunity to find out what the public really wants.

Zoning Administrator Werschem – We really need to find out what kind of businesses the public wants.

Chairperson Martinie – Does the M-231 Overlay District remain a sub-area or a Chapter by itself.

Gregory Ransford – It actually becomes both.

Bill Maschewske – If the M-231 Overlay District is included in the Master Plan without the dimensional requirements, how are the dimensional requirements enforceable until they can be included in the Zoning Ordinance?

Gregory Ransford – Some amendments to the Zoning Ordinance will need to be made concurrently with the adoption of the new Master Plan.

Bill Maschewske – Feels the riverfront may be another hot topic since 165 acres are now for sale (The Joe Walsh property across from the Clark Farm Mining Site).

Chairperson Martinie – Should everything be delayed until the workshops can be held or should we start drafting the chapters and then change the document pending the outcome of the workshops?

Gregory Ransford – We could start drafting and change as necessary.

Chairperson Martinie – What about existing land uses and the census of agriculture?

Bill Maschewske – If you are going to protect agricultural lands, you need to know where they are.

Gregory Ransford – We will look at what is good land and what is being farmed.

Bill Maschewske – The current Agricultural District in the Master Land Use Plan is based upon soils and septic suitability. Most of the soils in the Agricultural District are hydric soils with high water table.

The second meeting on the Master Plan update was scheduled for December 8, 2020 with the following topics to be discussed.

1. Draft of Community Survey Questions.
2. Outline for Workshops.
3. Establish names of Stakeholders for Workshops.

Chairperson Martinie – Since we have no business for the regular meeting in November, we will cancel it.

A motion was made by Rich Sibley and seconded by Steve Young to pay salaries for November 10, 2020 (one meeting, one member absent).

A roll call vote was taken.

Rich Sibley – Yes

Lydia Brown – Yes

Travis Vugteveen – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Young – Yes

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Action Items

1. Can Survey Monkey detect if multiple responses are received from one source – Gregory Ransford.
2. Notify Bonnie Hayward to include a note along with the tax bills regarding the Master Plan update, the upcoming Community Survey, and the project link – Travis Vugteveen.
3. Send a copy of the map of Deep Aquifer Recharge Areas for Ottawa County to Gregory Ransford – Bill Maschewske.
4. Consider four or five individuals as Stakeholders for Agricultural Workshops – Entire Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Rich Sibley and seconded by Lydia Brown to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:50 PM.

A roll call vote was taken.

Rich Sibley – Yes

Lydia Brown – Yes

Bill Maschewske – Yes

Travis Vugteveen – Yes

Shawn Martinie – Yes

Steve Young – Yes

The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission