

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
May 20, 2025

The re-scheduled regular meeting of the Robinson Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:02 PM. at the Robinson Township Hall.

Present

Shawn Martinie
Bill Maschewske
Kathy Kuck
Lydia Brown
Phil Crum
Steve Ambrose

Absent

Michelle Gillespie

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje and Zoning Administrator Andrea Goodell. There were no members of the public present and no attendance sheet is attached.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Shawn Martinie to approve the agenda of the May 20, 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 Kathy Kuck to approve as written the minutes of the May 8, 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 reported Consumers Energy had previously submitted application for a Site Plan minor amendment to construct a concrete pad for a temporary substation on 128th Ave near Ferris Street next to the existing substation. The Site Plan Amendment was approved by the Supervisor, Planning Commission Chairperson, and the Zoning Administrator per the Zoning Ordinance. It was later noted that the amended Site Plan was not being followed and all the trees on the site were removed. Chairperson Martinie contacted Consumers Energy to get a revised Site Plan including re-vegetation of the area clear cut.

Kathy Kuck reported the Master Land Use Plan on the Township website is still not updated due to technical difficulties with the website.

Reports and Communications

Township Board representative Steve Ambrose reported the Novakoski Special Use Application for over-height buildings was approved.

New Business – None

Old Business

As scheduled, the issue of Short-term Rentals (STR) was discussed.

The Chairperson asked if anyone had any comments regarding the changes made to the proposed Zoning Ordinance text as previously directed by the Planning Commission. All agreed the changes were made as requested.

Next to be discussed was the associated STR map, Figure 4.58, that identified areas of the Township where STR's would be allowed by Special Use.

Chairperson Martinie questioned the parcels added to the map on Connor Bayou after the Public Hearing on April 22, 2025. The Bayou did not really connect to the Grand River by navigable means. Including parcels fronting on Connor Bayou would be similar to including any parcel fronting on or including a lake or pond. A discussion followed and all agreed a qualifying parcel should have frontage on a Bayou or the Grand River. Chairperson Martinie additionally noted that, graphically, part of Connor Bayou was missing from the latest map.

Kathy Kuck – Stated she had a discussion with Bonnie Hayward who expressed two concerns.

1. Administration – Does the Township have the staff to administer STR.
2. Eligible properties for STR should be located on the Grand River.

Bill Maschewske – Showed an article from the May 20, 2025 Grand Haven Tribune regarding revisions Spring Lake Township was making to their STR Ordinance. It was noted Spring Lake Township had previously rescinded STR eligibility from some residential and all Agricultural properties and was now limiting STR's to Strawberry Point. Inquiry was made of Township Attorney Bultje regarding pending State legislation regarding STR.

Township Attorney Bultje – The legislation that was pending died with the last session of the legislature and has not been revived.

Bill Maschewske – Suggested the following changes to the draft Zoning Ordinance text.

1. Section 4.58(E) – This section does not make it clear that the 500 ft. spacing of STR is from parcel to parcel. The following revised wording was agreed upon.

“A short- term rental must be located on a parcel fronting on navigable waters of the Grand River or its bayous as defined in Part 329 of Title 33 of the Code of Federal Regulations as amended or restated.”

2. Section 4.58(E), first paragraph – Delete the word “prime”. The revision was accepted.
3. Section 3.97 – Questioned adding “single family” to the definition. The suggestion was rejected and the text is to remain unchanged.
4. Public hearing input
 - a. Inclusion of parcels with frontage on Connor Bayou – Addressed in Item 1 above.
 - b. Joel Smeenge’s request for his parcel next to Southern Grand Marina to be included in the STR area. This request was rejected by the Planning Commission since a specific condition of the approval recommendation for Mr. Smeenge’s development was that STR not be allowed.
 - c. Inclusion of additional areas of the Township as eligible for STR. It was agreed to limit STR to the areas currently defined.
5. What does the Township do about STR that already exist illegally that are not in the designated STR area?

Chairperson Martinie – In response to Item 5 above, stated in the case of the Fox and Hen Winery, the STR is a travel trailer, which definitely does not qualify as it is not a single-family dwelling.

Township Attorney Bultje – The Township needs to adopt regulations first and then decide what to do with STRs that do not comply. This will be a decision for the Township Board.

The STR Map, Figure 4.58, was further discussed. The area where Stearns Creek enters Stearns Bayou was reviewed and it was decided Stearns Creek, upstream from Stearns Creek County Park, was basically not navigable and no map changes were made as a result.

The memorandum from the Zoning Administrator, dated May 1, 2025 (copy attached) was reviewed next. The memorandum included a recommendation that the minimum required lot width be present and maintained abutting the required water frontage. This recommendation was discussed and the consensus was to not make this a requirement.

The question arose whether the Planning Commission should review the Police Power Ordinance that was drafted for recommendation to the Township Board. Chairperson Martinie stated the document, draft date 12/18/24, should be reviewed in advance and discussed at the next regular Planning Commission meeting.

The STR Map, Figure 4.58, was again discussed and it was agreed to leave the red shading to identify subdivisions/condos and remove the six parcels from STR eligibility fronting on Connor Bayou.

Chairperson Martinie requested the Street Centerlines be removed from the Legend of Figure 4.58 and a new date be added.

Bill Maschewske suggested a space be left on the map for a revision block to record future revisions, if any.

Kathy Kuck inquired regarding notification distances in Section 5(E) of the Police Power Ordinance. It was agreed this question would be addressed at the next regular Planning Commission meeting on June 24, 2025.

The next Planning meeting would be held June 12, 2025.

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Kathy Kuck to pay salaries for the May 20, 2025 Planning Commission meeting (six members present, one member absent).
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

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

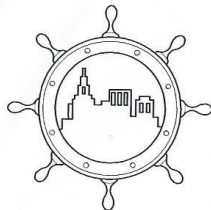
Adjournment

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Kathy Kuck to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 8:33 PM.
The motion carried unanimously with one member absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachment: Zoning Administrator Goodell Memorandum dated May 1, 2025 regarding Short-Term Rentals



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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Andrea Goodell, Planning and Zoning Administrator
Date: May 1, 2025
Re: Short Term Rentals Ordinance

Pursuant to your direction at your April 22, 2025 meeting, we have made some minor changes to the proposed short-term rental provisions. The changes are summarized below, and in full are attached to this document.

Text Changes

- In paragraph one (1), you reiterated your desire to change "small-town" to "rural."
- Under subsection (F) Bayou would now be plural.
- Subsection (E) has been revised and would bar any short-term rental from being within 500 feet of another legal pre-existing short-term rental property as measured lot line to lot line.

In addition to the above, the Planning Commission discussed whether lots eligible for a short-term rental must contain certain water frontage. In that regard, we would suggest the Township require the minimum lot width to be maintained and abut the water for the same width to help reduce or eliminate the possibility of someone cheating the intent.

Map Change

In the attached short-term rental map, you requested that six parcels along N. Cedar Drive were added to the map in Section 70-04-33 to qualify for short-term rentals. In addition, you sought clarification regarding one lot along Green Street and its boundary representation on the map. After consultation with Ottawa County, we have found that parcel should additionally be excluded from short-term rentals, as it is a condominium and similar to that of a subdivision lot. At least, we presume you would exclude it as well. If not, we will be prepared to modify the map as directed.

We believe the map represents your desired direction. That said, it is important to note that the program the County uses required the subdivision and condominium parcels to be colored in dark red instead of outlined as the previous map indicated.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Andrea Goodell
Planner