

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION  
May 14, 2026

The special meeting of the Robinson Township Planning Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM. at the Robinson Township Hall.

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

Also present were Zoning Administrator Gregory Ransford and Luke Petsch. The attendance sheet is not attached as it contained no names.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Lydia Brown to approve the agenda of the May 14, 2026 meeting as written.

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Kathy Kuck to approve as written the minutes of the April 22, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

Non-Commission Member Inquiries and Questions -- None

Reports and Communications -- None

Announcements

Lucas Petsch was introduced by Zoning Administrator Ransford as a new employee of his company, Fresh Coast Planning. Mr. Petsch is in transition to become Robinson Townships new contracted Zoning Administrator.

New Business

The purpose of this special meeting was to review changes to the Zoning Ordinance proposed by Gregory Ransford, the Township contracted Planner and Principal from Fresh Coast Planning, following the adoption by Robinson Township of a new Master Land Use Plan. The proposed changes for this meeting are in response to a General Audit of the Zoning Ordinance in addition to open items from previous Planning meetings. The items were reviewed in approximately the

order they appear in the Memorandum dated April 26, 2026 by Gregory Ransford (copy attached). The following is a list of the Zoning Ordinance sections reviewed and the consensus of the Planning Commission regarding accepting, revising, or rejecting each proposal. If the change is rejected, the proposed Zoning Ordinance text remains unchanged. **Action Items** are in **Bold** text.

Previous Direction

1. Section 4.33 – Accepted.
2. Section 4.46(B)(10) – Accepted.
3. Section 4.56 – Accepted.
4. Section 4.59 – Accepted.
5. Section 9.3(D) – Accepted.
6. Section 3.80 – Accepted.
7. Section 3.73 – Accepted.
- 8. Section 4.37 – Planner Ransford needs to clarify this issue since the Township Attorney communication did not offer a resolution. Section 4.28 also needs to be reviewed.**
9. Section 11A(4)(C) – Accepted.
10. Exclusionary Zoning – Communication from Township Attorney Bultje stated each municipality must provide for all uses.
11. Sections 31.7(A) through 31.7(Q) – Accepted.
- 12. Section 31.7(R) – Add reference to Section 4.44.**
- 13. Section 31.7(S) – Add Dark Sky Compliance and reference to Section 4.34.**
14. Section 31.8(A) through 31.8(P) – Accepted.
- 15. Section 31.8(Q) – Add reference to Section 4.44.**
16. Section 31.8(S) – Accepted.
- 17. Section 31.8(T) – Delete the word “substantially”.**
18. Section 31.8(U) – Accepted.
- 19. Section 31.8(V) – Add “Any permits required from County or State agencies must be submitted before approval is granted”. Conditions of the Planning Commission recommendation should also state that any County or State Agency approvals that revise the Site Plan are subject to re-review by the Planning Commission.**
- 20. “Screening”, as applicable, added as a line item in Section 31.8. Reference Section 4.54.**
- 21. “Lighting” to be added to Section 31.8 and reference Section 4.34.**
- 22. Section 31.8(K) – Add” Pedestrian and Bicycle Accommodations”, reference Section 4.56, and make as applicable.**
- 23. Section 31.7(Q) Add Civic Space.**
24. Section 31.8(S) – After discussion, leave text as proposed by Planner Ransford.  
Accepted.

**Planner Ransford is to reorganize all of Section 31.7 with topics leading each Section similar to Section 31.8.**

## General Audit

1. **Section 3.27 – Delete “or an irrevocable easement running with the land to one or more owners of adjacent properties which provides access to those adjacent properties and which is not dedicated to general public use,” Keep the last sentence.**
2. Section 32.5(C) – Accepted.
3. Section 32.6 – Accepted.
4. **Section 32.6 Last Sentence – Delete “automatically invalidate the permit” and insert “initiate enforcement action”.**
5. Section 33.2 – Accepted.
6. **Section 33.4(B) – Revise to exempt non-commercial towers under 100 ft.**
7. Section 33.4(D)(1) – Accepted.
8. Section 33.7(B)(1) – Accepted.
9. Section 33.7(B)(2) – Accepted.
10. Section 33.7(B)(2)(x) – Accepted.
11. **Section 33.7(B)(7) – Revision rejected. Leave published text unchanged.**
12. **Chapter 34 – Planner Ransford discussed the complications of Public Act 233. Following discussion, the Planning Commission decided to leave this chapter unchanged.**
13. Chapter 35 – Accept all changes but without any additional changes.
14. Section 40.2 – Accepted.
15. Section 40.3 – Accepted.
16. Section 41.3(D) – Accepted.
17. Section 41.3(F) – Accepted.
18. Section 42.4 – Accepted.
19. Section 42.4(A) – Accepted.
20. **Section 42.4(C)(2) – Remove “site” but leave “or condominium”.**
21. Section 42.4(C)(4) – Accepted.
22. **Section 42.4(C)(5) – Accepted. The Township Board needs to be notified upon adoption that they will need to set a fee for this service.**
23. **Section 42.6 – Delete all text and just reference the adopted Building Code.**
24. Section 42.10 – Accepted.
25. Section 42.16 – Accepted.
26. **Data Centers – Planner Ransford noted the State is considering a moratorium on Data Centers. It was agreed an ordinance should be drafted; however, the consensus was to complete the revisions to the Zoning Ordinance first.**
27. **Chapter 4A – Planner Ransford to request the Township Attorney to review.**
28. **Chapter 20 – Review not completed.**

## Additional Items on Lists of Chairperson Martinie and Bill Maschewske

1. **Wedding Venues**
2. **Sewer requirement in MDR District in Master Plan**
3. **Changes to Sections 20.4 and 20.5**

4. **Section 3.64 – Clarify that water bodies do not count as lot area.**
5. **Sections 20.16 and 20.17**
6. **Make LMDCOD ingress/egress requirements MDOT and County compliant.**

Old Business – None

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Kathy Kuck and seconded by Lydia Brown to pay Planning Commission salaries for the May 14, 2026 meeting (five members present, two members absent).

The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

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

Adjournment

A motion was made by Chairperson Martinie and seconded by Phil Crum to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 10:15 PM.

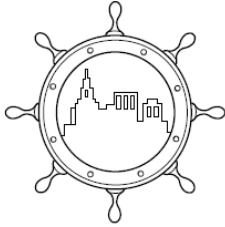
The motion carried unanimously with two members absent.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary  
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachment:

Memorandum from Zoning Administrator Gregory Ransford dated April 26, 2026 regarding Zoning Ordinance Rewrite – General Audit



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## MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission  
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA  
Date: April 26, 2026  
Re: Zoning Ordinance Rewrite – General Audit

Pursuant to your continued direction regarding the Robinson Township Zoning Ordinance (RTZO) Rewrite project, below are the revisions from your February 12, 2026, meeting. In addition, further below are our recommendations related to the general audit. Coupled with those suggested revisions, we raise several items for your review and direction.

### Previous Direction

Prior to outlining our next set of general audit recommendations, below we summarize your most recent direction from the previous meeting.

As you will recall, you directed us to perform the following:

- Section 4.33 – Remove “Building Inspector or” (*See page identifier Chapter 4 – Page 24 of the attached*)
- Section 4.46B10 – Revise to require internal illumination if the sign is illuminated (*See page identifier Chapter 4 – Page 39 of the attached*)
- Section 4.56 – Remove “for uses subject to site plan review the following shall apply” and include the B-1, B-2, I-1, I-2, LSO, and LMDO Zoning Districts in subsection (A) (*See page identifier Chapter 4 – Page 72 of the attached*)
- Section 4.59 – Remove “for uses subject to site plan review the following shall apply” and include the B-1, B-2, I-1, and I-2 Zoning Districts in subsection (A) (*See page identifier Chapter 4 – Page 73 of the attached*)
- Section 9.3(D) – revise for owner’s personal use only and prohibit renting of recreational vehicles (*See page identifier Chapter 9 – Page 3 of the attached*)
- Section 3.80 – Change “parcel” back to “lot” (*See page identifier Chapter 3 – Page 16 of the attached*)
- Section 3.73 – Return last sentence “in the case of a corner lot on two streets either right of way may be...” (*See page identifier Chapter 3 – Page 14 of the attached*)
- Section 4.37 – inquire with the Township Legal Counsel, Mr. Bultje, regarding how the draft is written to allow B-1, B-2, I-1, and I-2 Zoning Districts to contain multiple principal uses and how he feels about houses and the like in the A-1 and A-2 Zoning Districts
  - We contacted Mr. Bultje regarding the above through the following email, to which he responded and we include that response further below.

### *Our Email*

Good morning. The Robinson Township Planning Commission wanted me to ask you about the draft language for Section 4.37 (currently reserved for future use), which is below. The Commission wants to allow multiple principal buildings in the commercial and industrial districts so the language was written with that implication. Subsequent to that, the Commission began to contemplate what

this could do to the A-1 and A-2 Districts in terms of dwellings and barns in the A-1 District, and multiple buildings in the A-2 District.

In other words, does this language as currently written raise concerns that it could inadvertently prevent a farm in the A-1 District from having a dwelling and multiple agricultural buildings (or no dwelling and multiple agricultural buildings), or prevent a business allowed in the A-2 District from having multiple buildings?

*Bultje Reply*

Hi, Greg. I think that language would at least raise questions and create confusion about whether a principal use such as a farm could have multiple principal buildings on one lot. I think further language would have to be added to make sure that we are eliminating the concerns feared by the PC, but not inadvertently prohibiting things the PC doesn't want to prohibit.

*(See page identifier Chapter 4 – Page 27 of the attached)*

- Section 11A.4(C) – Change the second “parcel” to the plural form *(See page identifier Chapter 11A – Page 2 of the attached)*
- Section 31.7 and 31.8 – Create a “clean” version of both sections with the standards discussed to allow for an easier review of the text by the Planning Commission
  - Attached you will find a copy of Section 31.7 and Section 31.8 revised to address general site plan requirements and the standards by which you conduct your review.
  - Additionally listed at the end of the Section 31.7 and Section 31.8 document is a list of provisions from these sections that we recommend are relocated, as noted therein.
- Exclusionary Zoning – Inquire with the Township Legal Counsel whether the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act provides an avenue to “point to” surrounding communities that contain uses, where they are not present in Robinson Township, to prevent any exclusionary zoning claim.
  - As you discussed with Mr. Bultje last month, while the Township could take the stance that a use is provided for in a surrounding community, the defense of such a position would not be strong. If you could like more detail from Mr. Bultje, we are happy to provide it but presume you intend to move forward planning for all uses.

We believe the attached accomplishes your direction.

#### General Audit

Below is our final set of recommended revisions or observations for your consideration as a result of our general audit review. This does not include the items for consideration noted by Chairperson Martinie and Commissioner Maschewske or our final comprehensive review notes.

- Section 3.27 – While the Planning Commission previously reviewed Section 3.27 – Driveways of the draft RTZO, during a zoning administration inquiry in our office, we contemplate the intent of the last half of the first sentence and want to raise it again for your review. It seems the language may have been intended for Planned Unit Developments (PUD) since, until the current draft, the PUD chapter contained “driveway” provisions through the language. That said, as it remains now, we struggle with its intent versus the potential for inappropriate application of the language in a way that was not intended by the text. When we contemplate a commercial or industrial application, shared easements are commonly dedicated to general public use. The only scenario that we can perceive is that a parcel of land cannot establish its driveway within its own frontage abutting the street or private road and therefore needs an

easement from an adjacent parcel. Ultimately, we want to confirm the intent of this language with the Planning Commission and provide clarity to the text, if necessary. *(See page identifier Chapter 3 – Page 8 of the attached)*

- Chapter 32 – Special Uses
  - Section 32.5(C) – we updated reference to the Master Plan *(See page identifier Chapter 32 – Page 2 of the attached)*
  - Section 32.6 – we propose adding a section reference to the standards for site plan review *(See page identifier Chapter 32 – Page 3 of the attached)*
  - Section 32.6 – the last sentence of this section indicates that, “the breach of or noncompliance with any conditions of the special use permit shall automatically invalidate the permit.” This automatic nature of the language is not a typical provision and we have concerns regarding how “harsh” this provision is since it would ultimately render the use inoperable, immediately. Typically, when a violation of a special use permit occurs, we engage in enforcement that can eventually include a hearing to revoke the permit. Prior to conducting suggested revisions in this section, we wanted to discuss the nature of the language and the desire of the Planning Commission. *(See page identifier Chapter 32 – Page 3 of the attached)*
- Chapter 33
  - Section 33.2 – we updated reference to the Master Plan *(See page identifier Chapter 33 – Page 1 of the attached)*
  - Section 33.4(B) – this language exempts towers and antennas under 100 feet in height from the provisions of the chapter. While we have not proposed any modifications, we contemplate why this exemption exists. *(See page identifier Chapter 33 – Page 2 of the attached)*
  - Section 33.4(D)(1) – we updated the language to reference the Michigan Zoning Enabling Act given that the Act contains provisions concerning colocations that preempt local zoning.
    - “Co-location” to “collocation” – also within this section we updated all references to “co-location” as “collocation” to be consistent with other locations of the same within the RTZO and the Zoning Act. *(See page identifier Chapter 33 – Page 2, Page 3 of the attached)*
  - Section 33.7(B)(1) – we updated reference to the Master Plan. We believe the additional proposed revisions are self-explanatory. *(See page identifier Chapter 33 – Page 6 of the attached)*
  - Section 33.7(B)(2)(x) – we believe the proposed revision is self-explanatory. *(See page identifier Chapter 33 – Page 7 and Page 8 of the attached)*
  - Section 33.7(B)(7) – we believe the proposed revision is self-explanatory. *(See page identifier Chapter 33 – Page 11 of the attached)*
- Chapter 34 – while we have no recommended revisions to the Small Scale Solar Energy Collectors and Systems chapter, we wanted to discuss Public Act 233 and the extent of the interest of the Planning Commission to draft language in its regard.
- Chapter 35
  - Section 35.2(A) – we propose adding a section reference to the standards for site plan review *(See page identifier Chapter 35 – Page 1 of the attached)*
  - Section 35.2(G) – we recommend striking the acreage ratio requirement given the continuous improvement of solar technology and the potential for a smaller collection surface for the same amount of energy. Ultimately, we would not want to require more land coverage when such is not necessary for the system related to the storage. *(See page identifier Chapter 35 – Page 2 of the attached)*

- Section 35.3(E) – while we do not have any concerns regarding this screening language we contemplate its purpose since the maximum height of a solar energy system at full tilt is 20 feet. *(See page identifier Chapter 35 – Page 3 of the attached)*
  - Section 35.3(F) – we believe the proposed revisions are self-explanatory *(See page identifier Chapter 35 – Page 3 of the attached)*
- Chapter 40
  - Section 40.2 – we believe the proposed revisions are self-explanatory *(See page identifier Chapter 40 – Page 1 of the attached)*
  - Section 40.3 – we believe the proposed revisions are self-explanatory *(See page identifier Chapter 40 – Page 1 of the attached)*
- Chapter 41
  - Section 41.3(D) – we proposed this deletion as a result of the Ottawa County Planning Commission being dissolved. In addition, the requirement for submission of a proposed amendment to the County remains within the Zoning Act, in the instance the Ottawa County Planning Commission is restored. *(See page identifier Chapter 41 – Page 2 of the attached)*
  - Section 41.3(F) – we recommend this revision in case the section reference within the Zoning Act ever changed in the future *(See page identifier Chapter 41 – Page 2 of the attached)*
- Chapter 42
  - Section 42.4 – we believe the proposed revisions are self-explanatory *(See page identifier Chapter 42 – Page 2 of the attached)*
  - Section 42.4(A) – we recommend the proposed deletion so that the Zoning Administrator is not held to an exact period of time. The current language would be “violated” with a simple week of vacation. Certainly, other unforeseen factors could occur that make this one week time period potentially unreasonable. Ultimately, we do not believe it is appropriate to place the Zoning Administrator in such a position that could violate an ordinance provision. *(See page identifier Chapter 42 – Page 2 of the attached)*
  - Section 42.4(C)(2) – we believe the proposed revisions are self-explanatory *(See page identifier Chapter 42 – Page 2 and Page 3 of the attached)*
  - Section 42.4(C)(4) – we recommend the proposed deletion so that the Building Inspector is not held to an exact period of time. Similar to the Zoning Administrator language of the same noted above, the current language would be “violated” with a simple week of vacation. Certainly, other unforeseen factors could occur that make this one week time period potentially unreasonable. Ultimately, we do not believe it is appropriate to place the building Inspector in such a position that could violate an ordinance provision. *(See page identifier Chapter 42 – Page 3 of the attached)*
  - Section 42.4(C)(5) – we believe the proposed revisions are self-explanatory *(See page identifier Chapter 42 – Page 3 of the attached)*
  - Section 42.6 – while this section could be entirely struck (and default to the Residential Building Code), we find it reasonable to maintain this language. That said, if the Planning Commission would like it removed from the Ordinance, we can do so. *(See page identifier Chapter 42 – Page 3 of the attached)*
  - Section 42.10 & Section 42.16 – we believe the proposed revision is self-explanatory, however, we would prefer to verify the proposed revision with the Township Legal Counsel *(See page identifier Chapter 42 – Page 5 and Page 6 of the attached)*
- Data Centers – we note this item for discussion and will be prepared to provide more detail at your upcoming meeting.

### Remaining Chapters

For the sake of documenting progress, the following items related to RTZO provisions remain:

- Chapter 4A – pending Township Legal Counsel
- Re-review of Chapter 20 with specific regard to public streets and private roads, as well as the relationship between Section 20.4 and Section 20.5
- Incorporation of recent RTZO amendments
- Incorporation of notes from Chairperson Martinie and Commissioner Maschewske
- Incorporation of our comprehensive notes

### Upcoming Meeting

The proposed set of Zoning Ordinance Rewrite recommendations has been scheduled for your May 14, 2026, meeting. If you have any questions, please let me know.

GLR  
Planner

Attachments