

ROBINSON TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
August 26, 2026

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 Phil Crum Kathy Kuck Lydia Brown Steve Ambrose Michelle Gillespie	None

Also present were Township Attorney Ron Bultje, Zoning Administrator Luke Petsch, and ten members of the public. The attendance sheet is attached.

Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Kathy Kuck and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to approve the agenda of the August 26, 2026 meeting as written.
The motion carried unanimously.

Adopting of Previous Minutes

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Shawn Martinie to approve as written the minutes of the July 22, 2026 Planning Commission meeting.
The motion carried unanimously.

Non-Commission Member Inquiries and Questions -- None

Reports and Communications -- None

Announcements -- None

New Business

Preliminary Site Plan for Life Tree Community Church

A Preliminary Sketch Plan was submitted by Life Tree Community Church to construct an addition. Much more detail than required for a Preliminary Sketch Plan was submitted, but

because of several open issues, the plans were submitted and reviewed as a Preliminary Sketch Plan and not a Final Site Plan. A copy of the Memorandum from Zoning Administrator Luke Petsch dated August 6, 2026 regarding this subject is attached.

Four representatives of Life Tree Community Church were present. Alan Brown, in charge of the Building Committee, was selected as the spokesperson.

Chairperson Martinie requested review of the submission regarding the content requirements in Section 31.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. It was determined that the requirements in Sections 31.5 (A), (B), and (C) were satisfied and the Preliminary Sketch Plan submissions were complete.

The applicants were seeking relief from several requirements of the Zoning Ordinance for the Final Site Plan as follows:

1. Section 4.34 Outdoor Lighting -- Sections (C)(4) and (C)(5) require demonstration of outdoor lighting meeting the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and may require a photometric plan.

Chairperson Martinie – Can the light supplier provide the photometric plan for them?

Lorrie Potter of Life Tree Community Church – The photometric plan has already been included in the larger set of drawings submitted this evening.

2. Section 22.2(B) – Off-Street Parking and Loading – The applicants are seeking approval of a waiver from the requirement for the parking area to be paved. They have noted financial implications if paving is required in addition to the stated facts that the use of the proposed parking area will be low volume and infrequent and intermittent.

Chairperson Martinie -- Where is the parking proposed to be expanded?

Lorrie Potter – The parking will be expanded to the North and West.

Steve Ambrose – Was the parking always gravel?

Alan Brown – There is gravel and crushed asphalt.

The consensus of the Planning Commission is not to require paving and the applicants were requested to propose the material to be used for the parking lot in the Final Site Plan.

Chairperson Martinie – What will be the use of the current sanctuary?

Pastor Jeff Elzinga – It will be used for youth group, bible study, and storage of chairs and tables.

3. Section 31.8(B) – Connectivity

Chairperson Martinie – Is there a reason for a sidewalk?

Township Attorney Bultje – The language in the Zoning Ordinance does not permit the Planning Commission to waive this requirement. He noted that some municipalities have standards for when sidewalks would be required.

Chairperson Martinie – He questioned the several recent projects in which sidewalks were not required, notably Schippers Excavating and the machine shop on North Cedar St.

Township Attorney Bultje – Stated there were three options.

- Enforce the Zoning Ordinance and require sidewalks.
- Amend the Zoning Ordinance.
- The applicants may seek approval of a variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

If a Zoning Ordinance Amendment is considered, the options are:

- Make the requirement conditional with criteria.
- Eliminate the requirement for connectivity.
- Decide to make no changes.

Attorney Bultje stated that the applicants seeking a variance makes the most sense and the Planning Commission agreed. It was also agreed that the variance approval should be secured by the applicants prior to the submission of a Final Site Plan.

The remaining two items identified by the Zoning Administrator regarding the Preliminary Site Plan were review by the Ottawa County Water Resources Commission and by the Ottawa County Road Commission. The consensus of the Planning Commission was the appropriate time for the applicant to submit these approvals is with the Final Site Plan.

A motion was made by Lydia Brown and seconded by Michelle Gillespie to approve the Preliminary Sketch Plan from Life Tree Community Church on parcel No. 70-08-23-300-039 to construct an addition to the existing church. One violation of the Zoning Ordinance was noted in regard to Connectivity in Section 31.8(B). It is recommended the applicants resolve the Connectivity issue prior to Final Site Plan submission.

The motion carried unanimously.

Zoning Text Amendment Application from Allison Church

A motion was made by Kathy Kuck and seconded by Lydia Brown to untangle the discussion of the Zoning Text Amendment Application from Allison Church.

The motion carried unanimously.

A copy of the Memorandum and draft Zoning Amendment Text from Contracted Planner Gregory Ransford dated August 10, 2026 regarding the Allison Church (Evermore) Zoning text Amendment Application – Second Revised Draft, is attached.

Bill Maschewske – Noted that revision 2 of the draft text regarding Agritourism needed revision since the requirements for Agritourism and Wedding Venues were the same. It was explained that many of the requirements listed last month that were taken from Michigan Citizen Planner presentations and other Zoning Ordinances were specific to wedding venues as a Special Use in the Agricultural Zoning District. The screenshots from a Citizen Planner presentation were referenced. To apply these requirements to most Agritourism activities would be overly restrictive and in some cases inappropriate.

Chairperson Martinie – Requested the Planning Commission start review with the definition, Section 3.7(A).

A discussion followed with no changes to the draft definition.

Amy Masko – She would like to know what uses other people in the Township would like to do regarding Agritourism.

Chairperson Martinie – Requested if anyone else in public attendance was interested in Agritourism and explain what you want to do and how much farmland you have.

Amy Masko – Explained her Agritourism plans, which included painting and educational classes, growing lavender, possibly yoga classes, ... She has 80 acres but not very much tillable.

Miguel Ochoa – Does a pumpkin patch, sells pumpkins, and gives wagon rides. He has 18 acres.

Chris Markatos – Grows lavender and associated marketing.

Robert Buist—Sells real estate. He had a greenhouse and flower business in Allendale.

Megan Jarvis – She was a previous client of Evermore Estates (Allison Church proposed Agritourism Wedding Venue). She wished to present a letter and explain the business practices of Allison Church.

Chairperson Martinie—Stated the Township is not involved in business practices or complaints.

Chairperson Martinie – We need two sets of standards. One for Agritourism minus wedding venues and one just for wedding venues in the Agricultural District.

The criteria were reviewed.

Bill Maschewske – Challenged Section 6.3(F)(2). Suggested a limit of 25% of lot area dedicated to Agritourism only since the current requirement would mean a lot would have to be at least 75% tillable.

Township Attorney Bultje – Stated that since traditional Agritourism activities have gone on in the Township for many years unregulated and without complaints, he recommended Agritourism not be defined or regulated and that the Planning Commission only focus on regulating Wedding Venues and Event Centers as a Special Use if there was still interest in these uses. He suggested making Section 3.7(A) Agricultural Special Events, which would need to be defined.

The consensus of the Planning Commission was in agreement with the recommendation of the Township Attorney.

Steve Ambrose – Concerned about the safety of some agricultural buildings. Suggested adding a requirement that buildings comply with the standards applicable to the use, which is not Agriculture.

It was agreed to make this one of the conditions.

Additional suggestions included:

- Deleting Section 6.3(F)(11)(c).
- Revise Section 6.3(F)(12) to permit food trucks.
- Section 6.3(F)(14) – Replace the word agritourism” with either “Farm Based Event” or “Agricultural Special Event”.

The consensus of the Planning Commission was to have the Zoning Administrator and the Township Attorney redraft Sections 6.3(F) and 3.7(A) given the above direction for review at the next Planning Commission regular meeting.

Pay Bills

A motion was made by Kathy Kuck and seconded by Shawn Martinie to pay salaries for the August 26, 2026 Planning Commission meeting (all members present).
The motion carried unanimously.

Any and All Other Business That May Come Before the Board

Zoning Administrator Luke Petsch reported the following business coming to the Planning Commission.

1. A rezoning request regarding Emerald Lake. Jack Dykstra Excavating is applying to rezone their additional A-1 Zoned property to the East of the existing M-1 Zoned property to continue mining towards their end use plan.

A Motion was made by Shawn Martinie and seconded by Kathy Kuck to extend the noticing distance from the normal 300 ft to 1320 ft for the public hearing for the Emerald Lake Rezoning request from A-1 to M-1.

The motion carried unanimously.

2. Zoning Ordinance Conflict regarding Site Plan and Special Use extension beyond one year. (This issue was raised by HAM Worldwide regarding their property on North Cedar St.) The Zoning Administrator noted that following approval, the Site Plan requires work to be started within 365 days. The Special Use approval requires construction to be complete within one year. Township Attorney Bultje stated the applicant needs to submit a letter to the Township Board and request renewal of both.

3. Repair/remodeling work on a house in the E-1 Zoning District. To replace windows that were legally installed, the Township Board does not require a permit. However, the dwelling in question wishes to create two new windows that may require a building permit in which case the Zoning Ordinance would require the applicants to get a permit from EGLE. It was agreed this should not require an EGLE permit.

4. A Site Plan submission from Mr. VandenBosch regarding the Commercial property at the South-West corner of 104th Ave. and M-45.

5. Site Plan from Love in Action for the former St. Anthonys Catholic Church.

The next Planning meeting is scheduled for September 10, 2026 and the next regular meeting for September 22, 2026.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Michelle Gillespie and seconded by Lydia Brown to adjourn the Planning Commission meeting at 9:18 PM.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Maschewske, Secretary
Robinson Township Planning Commission

Attachments:

- Attendance Sheet for the August 26, 2026 Planning Commission Meeting
- Memorandum from Zoning Administrator Luke Petsch dated August 6, 2026 Regarding Life Tree Community Church – Preliminary Site Plan
- Memorandum and draft Zoning Amendment Text from Contracted Planner Gregory Ransford dated August 10, 2026 regarding Allison Church (Evermore) Zoning Text Amendment Application – Second Revised Draft



SIGN IN SHEET
Regular Meeting of the
Planning Commission
Wednesday, August 26, 2026 - 7:00 pm

PRINT NAME

SIGNATURE

LORRIE POTTER

Lorrie Potter

Jeff Elzinga

Jeff Elzinga

ALAN BROWN

Alan Brown

Miguel Ochoa

Miguel Ochoa

Allison Church

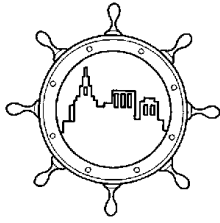
Allison Church

Robert Beisler

Robert Beisler

George Merrill

George Merrill



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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Luke Petsch
Date: August 6, 2026
Re: Life Tree Community Church – Preliminary Site Plan

In accordance with the Robinson Township Zoning Ordinance (RTZO), attached is a site plan for Life Tree Community Church to expand their building at 10933 Lake Michigan Drive, parcel number 70-08-23-300-039, by 5,138 square feet by adding a new sanctuary, classrooms, and sound room to serve their existing church building. The parcel is zoned in the Neighborhood Commercial Zoning District (B-1) and the current and planned use as a church is identified as a use-by-right in B-1 zoning.

Pursuant to the direction of the Chairperson, the application is scheduled for preliminary review at your August 26, 2026, meeting.

Items for Consideration

As a result of the direction of the Chairperson to schedule this application for a preliminary plan review, our memorandum is not structured in its typical format, which would include site plan review standards. That format and review of the standards will be provided during final plan review. Chairperson Martinie directed us to schedule the proposed as a preliminary site plan to allow the Planning Commission to provide guidance to the applicant with particular regard to the proposed parking lot surface and the applicant's contention that it would be used infrequently. Coupled with this, the Planning Commission can address any other outstanding issues before the applicant returns with a final site plan.

The following items are being brought to your attention for preliminary review and direction. Note that text from the RTZO is included in *italics*, and our commentary has been added in normal text. Based on your direction the applicant may need to make changes to the proposed application before returning for additional preliminary review or a final review at a future meeting.

Section 31.4 Planning Commission Review of Preliminary Sketch Plan

As you know, the Planning Commission's review of a Preliminary Site Plan is described in Section 31.4 of the RTZO. We have included the full text below.

Upon receipt of such application and fee, the Township Clerk shall transmit the application and Preliminary Sketch Plan drawing(s) to the Planning Commission prior to its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Planning Commission shall undertake a study of the same and shall, within ninety (90) days from the date of the Planning Commission meeting at which the application is received from the Township Clerk, give its approval or disapproval of the Preliminary Sketch Plan. The Planning Commission shall advise the applicant, in writing, of any violations of this Ordinance found in the Preliminary Sketch Plan that need to be corrected to achieve conformity to the standards specified in this Ordinance.

Pursuant to our direction, the applicant has provided materials above and beyond the requirements for a Preliminary Sketch Plan. While the application is for a preliminary plan

review, we wanted to make sure the site plan was as comprehensive as possible to limit the number of questions between the preliminary and final plans. Related, the applicant is requesting relief from parking lot paving standards which is addressed in detail below and asking for additional guidance from the Planning Commission in other areas. Pending review by the Planning Commission, the applicant may need to make significant changes to the site plan before returning for a final site plan review.

Section 22.2(B) – Off-Street Parking and Loading

The applicant is requesting a waiver from the below standard requiring a paved parking lot and instead seek to install a gravel parking lot comparable to the lot they currently have. Applicant has provided a letter dated 7/21/2026 presenting their case to be considered a low volume, infrequent and intermittent parking area.

All parking areas in support of a multi-family, two-family, commercial, industrial, institutional or governmental use shall be paved with a durable, concrete or bituminous asphalt surface and shall be graded and provided with adequate drainage. The requirement for paving may be waived in total or in part by the Township at the time of site plan approval or as a specific application to the Township when site plan approval by the Township is not otherwise required.

Such waiver may only be granted if it is demonstrated that the use of the parking area will be characterized as low volume, infrequent and intermittent. In granting such waivers, the Township shall stipulate an appropriate substitute surface material.

Upon review of this request, including the letter dated 7/21/2026, and discussion of the standard, the Planning Commission may choose to grant, grant in part, or deny the waiver and provide guidance to the applicant on how to proceed.

Section 4.34(C)4 and Section 4.34(C)5 Commercial Requirements

Applicants have provided an illumination plan of their own design to demonstrate areas of illumination in the parking lot. Also included are details on installation and manufacturer's lighting designs. Applicants have chosen not to submit a photometric plan. The applicant is requesting that the Planning Commission accept the presented materials as sufficient and ask that a photometric plan is not required.

Section 4.34(C)4. Demonstration of Compliance. Compliance with the lighting design criteria shall be demonstrated by the applicant submitting the following information as part of the required site plan:

- a) Lighting plan showing light fixture locations and type designations;*
- b) Lighting equipment specifications and data sheets, including fixture height;*
- c) Manufacturer's cut-sheets and any other materials or information required to convey the intent of the lighting design.*

Section 4.34(C)5. The Township may require a photometric plan to ensure that the intent and requirements of this Section are met. When required, a photometric plan (lighting grid) shall be prepared by an electrical engineer. The photometric plan shall show horizontal luminance levels (footcandles) in a point-by-point format.

Upon review of this request and discussion of the standards, the Planning Commission may choose to accept the applicant's submission, accept the submission with conditions, or require submission of a photometric plan.

Section 31.8(B) Connectivity

Applicants have included space for pedestrian pathways on their site plan along Lake Michigan Drive and expressed an interest in discussing this standard with the Planning Commission. They have noted that there are

no pedestrian pathways on surrounding properties and would like this standard waived or deferred to a later date.

Pathways for bicycles and pedestrians shall be incorporated throughout the development and along all perimeter streets to ensure connectivity between internal uses and with adjacent properties.

Given the use of the word shall in Section 31.8(B) we do not believe the Planning Commission has the authority to waive this requirement however we understand that its historical application has included waiver.

Fire Department Review

The Township Fire Department sees no issues with the proposed addition and did not offer conditions of approval.

Final Review

Pending the Planning Commission's deliberations, guidance should be provided to the applicant regarding the points reviewed in this memorandum. Further, the Planning Commission should provide guidance to the applicant regarding progressing to final site plan review or returning for an additional preliminary review.

Planning Commission Considerations

As the Planning Commission deliberates regarding the preliminary plan submission, we believe the following warrant your review and consideration. They are listed in no particular order.

- The required surface for the off-street parking and loading
- Whether more details are necessary for the proposed lighting on site
- Sidewalk Connectivity
- Whether review by the Ottawa County Road Commission is appropriate prior to final plan review
- Whether review by the Ottawa County Water Resources Commissioner's office is appropriate prior to final plan review

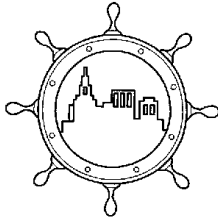
The application has been scheduled for your August 26, 2026, meeting. The applicant is expected to be in attendance.

If you have any questions, please let us know.

Luke Petsch
Planner

Attachments

cc: Adam MacMillan, Supervisor



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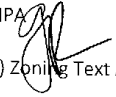
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MEMORANDUM

To: Robinson Township Planning Commission
From: Gregory L. Ransford, MPA 
Date: August 10, 2026
Re: Allison Church (Evermore) Zoning Text Amendment Application – Second Revised Draft

Pursuant to your direction at your June 24, 2026, meeting, attached is the second revised draft to the text amendment proposed by Allison Church to accommodate Agritourism uses in the Agricultural Zoning District. As you will recall, you directed us, along with the Township Legal Counsel, Ron Bultje, to draft the following provisions.

- A maximum of 2,400 square feet of floor area
- A requirement that the property owner must reside on the property devoted to agritourism
- Prohibition of food preparation on site
- Prohibition of parking within the required setbacks
- Screening requirements
- Establishing a maximum attendance for an agritourism event
- Prohibition of overnight accommodations
- A minimum lot width of 600 feet
- A limit to the number of events per year
- A limit to the number of patrons
- Greater setbacks in certain circumstances
- Seventy-five percent of the site shall be used for active agricultural production

While we believe the attached accomplishes your direction, and after discussion with the Chairperson, we did not include a provision to require the owner to live on site since that would be contrary to the intent of the paying applicant. As always, proposed changes are shown in the Track Changes feature of Microsoft Word.

The proposed text amendment has been scheduled as a discussion item at your August 26, 2026, meeting. If you have any questions, please let us know.

GLR
Planner

cc: Adam MacMillan, Supervisor

Attachment

Section 3.7A AGRITOURISM

Agritourism means farm-based activities conducted for educational, entertainment, recreational, cultural, hospitality, or commercial purposes that allow members of the public to experience agricultural operations or activities. Agritourism activities may include, but are not limited to, farm-based weddings and private events, seasonal festivals and celebrations, educational activities and workshops, direct sales, U-pick operations (including fruits, vegetables, Christmas trees) and flower fields, photography sessions, outdoor entertainment activities, tours, tastings, fishing, hunting, animal petting farm, temporary outdoor gatherings, and other similar activities customarily associated with or promoting agricultural operations, ~~including~~ excluding overnight accommodations ~~associated with any of the above activities.~~

Section 6.3(F) AGRITOURISM USES

Agritourism, including associated event spaces, accessory structures, portable restrooms, tents, greenhouses, barns, bonfire areas, and other outdoor gathering areas, shall be permitted as an accessory use to a permitted agricultural operation. Such uses shall remain incidental and subordinate to the principal agricultural use of the property and shall be conducted in accordance with the following.

- (1) Parking areas may utilize a dustless surface including gravel, crushed stone, grass reinforcement system, permeable surface, or similar rural surface materials deemed appropriate by the Township in order to preserve rural character and reduce impervious surface coverage.
- (2) Not less than ~~seventy-five-fifty-one~~ (75) percent of the lot area shall be used for active agricultural production.
- (3) Any building, parking structure, equipment, dumpster, gathering area, temporary erection, or other area used for agritourism use shall be no less than one hundred (100) feet from all lot lines.
- (4) All outdoor lighting shall comply with Section 4.34 of this Ordinance.
- (5) Waste disposal shall comply with Section 4.35 of this Ordinance.
- (6) No signage shall be permitted for agritourism. Only farm signage may be permitted.
- (7) No amplified sound shall occur outside of an enclosed building and any amplified sound shall be contained to the interior of an enclosed building. In any event, noise from agritourism may not exceed sixty-five (65) decibels at any lot line.
- (8) No agritourism use shall be conducted on a lot with less than six hundred (600) feet of width nor less than twenty-five (25) acres in lot area.
- (9) At no time shall the use exceed one hundred (100) persons per twenty-five (25) acres of lot area.
- (10) The total floor area shall not exceed two thousand four hundred (2,400) square feet in one (1) or more buildings.
- (11) No area included in the agritourism use shall be located within two hundred (200) feet of a side or rear lot line. The Township Board may grant a reduced setback to the side or rear lot line, or both, when one (1) or more of the following exist (but in no instance shall any area included in the agritourism use be less than one hundred (100) feet from any side or rear lot line):

- (a) The agritourism area does not include a building or outdoor space intended for the gathering of people (as opposed to people moving through an area);
- (b) All adjoining lots to the side or rear lot line in question are vacant;
- (c) No dwelling is located within one hundred (100) feet of the side or rear lot line in question;
- (d) There is a one hundred (100)-foot landscaped buffer maintained along the side or rear lot line in question, which landscaped buffer contains an eight (8)-foot tall berm with trees planted no more than six (6) feet apart, along the length of the berm; or
- (e) The applicant proposes alternative methods to protect adjoining lands and uses from impacts of the proposed agritourism use, and they are found by the Township Board to be comparable to any of the above options.

(12) No food shall be prepared on site except for crops produced on the property.

(13) Parking is prohibited within any required setback.

(8)(14) An agritourism special use is subject to an annual review by the Planning Commission. Before that review, the special use holder shall provide an annual report to the Planning Commission containing the following information:

- (a) The total number of agritourism events held during the previous calendar year on the lot;
- (b) The total number of attendees at agritourism events on the lot during the previous calendar year;
- (c) The total number of agritourism events planned to be held on the lot during the following calendar year;
- (d) The total number of acres in active agricultural production on the lot at the current time, including crops and animals;
- (e) The lot's total area; and
- (f) Details regarding any complaints received by the Township or law enforcement regarding agricultural events on the lot during the preceding calendar year.

The annual report shall be provided no later than January 31st of each year, for the preceding calendar year. If the Planning Commission is not willing to allow the special use to remain in effect on the basis of the annual report, the special use holder must either cease agritourism operations by the ~~June-December~~ 31 following the year for which the annual report was submitted or else apply for a renewed special use permit, following the procedure in Chapter 32 of this Ordinance.

(9)(15) When considering a special use application for an agritourism use, the Township Board shall process the application in accord with Chapter 32 of this Ordinance, and shall consider the following additional factors:

- (a) The hours of operation, which shall end by or before 11:00 p.m., with all music or amplified sound ending by or before 10:00 p.m.;
- (b) The floor area for the special use;
- (c) The area, height, bulk, and location of any building[s] to be used for the special use and their relationship to neighboring properties and land uses;
- (d) The outdoor storage, display, and screening of goods, inventory, and equipment;
- (e) Motor vehicle and/or pedestrian traffic and its circulation on and off site;
- (f) The amount of off-street parking provided;
- (g) The number of associates, employees, contractors, and assistants involved with the proposed special use;
- (h) Water usage and the adequacy of the water supply;
- (i) Solid and human waste generation and the proposed means and adequacy of treatment, storage, and disposal;
- (j) The number of agritourism events proposed per year;
- (k) The maximum capacity of each building (the capacity of any building shall refer to individuals inside the structure at any given time; the capacity of the building shall not include individuals outside of the structure); and
- (l) Screening and/or buffering for the benefit of adjoining properties.