



**NOTICE OF MEETING
ROBINS ZONING BOARD OF
ADJUSTMENT**

**Monday, May 20th, 2026
7:00 p.m. – Robins City Hall**

(ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL MAY BE ATTENDING VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICE)

AGENDA:

1. Call the Meeting to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
3. Roll Call
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Motion to Approve the Minutes of the December 19th, 2023 Meeting
6. Election of 2026 Officers
 - a. Chairperson
 - b. Vice Chairperson
7. Public Hearing relating to the request of the Hindu Temple Association, 1600 W. Main St. in Robins, Iowa for a variance to the maximum building height limitation of thirty-five (35) feet applicable to property zoned R-1 (Single-Family Residential).
8. Discussion: Resolution 2026-1
9. Resolution No. 2026-1 relating to the request
- 10. MOTION TO ADJOURN MEETING**



ROBINS BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT Minutes of the December 19th, 2023 Meeting

Chairperson Brian Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Robins City Hall on Tuesday, December 19th, 2023. Roll call was taken with Board Members Brian Cohen, Mark Wood, Molly Iverson and Dawn Svenson-Holland present, along with P&Z Administrator Dean Helander, City Clerk/Treasurer Lori Pickart, and 3 guests. Absent was Board Member Dustin Arnold. Svenson-Holland moved to approve the Minutes of the October 24, 2023 meeting, Iverson seconded. On the vote, all voted aye.

Chairperson Cohen opened the Public Hearing to hear comments and concerns relating to the variance request of Dave Olsem, 975 East Main Street to construct a 38' x 50' (1,900 s/f) accessory building on his property at 5:32 p.m. There were no verbal or written comments or concerns received relating to the request; Svenson-Holland moved to approve Resolution No. 2023-7 allowing the variance, Wood seconded and all voted aye.

Iverson moved to adjourn at 5:37 p.m.; Svenson-Holland seconded and all voted aye.

Dean Helander
P&Z Administrator

Brian Cohen
Chairperson

Request for Height Variance for Hindu Temple Dome

Introduction

On April 8, 2026, the City of Robins communicated that the proposed dome for the Hindu temple does not comply with the current zoning requirements, which limit building heights to a maximum of 35 feet.

Reason for Variance Request

The dome is an essential feature of the Hindu temple. It has been fabricated in India and is a fundamental requirement for the temple, similar in significance to a cross on a church building. The design of the dome follows architectural norms established in ancient scriptures, underscoring its cultural and religious importance.

Community Benefits

The temple, along with its cultural center, is open to everyone in the community. Its architecture is not only beautiful but will also serve as an attraction within the City of Robins once completed.

Visual Impact and Site Considerations

It is important to note that the temple grounds are situated approximately 20 feet below the main road level. As a result, the taller dome will not obstruct traffic or create any visual hindrance for drivers.

Conclusion

Given the cultural and religious significance of the dome, its compliance with ancient architectural norms, its location below road level, and the inclusive nature of the temple and cultural center, we sincerely request that the City of Robins grant a waiver to the height limitation for our temple.

Subject: Request for Zoning Variance – Gopuram Height at 1600 West Main Rd, Robins, IA

To

The City of Robins Planning & Zoning Commission

Robins, Iowa

Dear Members of the Commission,

I am writing to formally request a zoning variance to permit the construction of a Gopuram (traditional Hindu temple entrance tower) at 1600 West Main St, Robins, Iowa, with a height exceeding the maximum allowed under current zoning regulations.

All other aspects of the proposed development including site layout, structural engineering, and building code compliance have been met and some in process and in near completion, in accordance with applicable City of Robins and Linn County requirements.

The item requiring consideration is the height of the Gopuram, which is essential to its religious and architectural function.

The “Gopuram” or tower is made on a religious and architectural calculation. It is a defining feature of Hindu temple architecture, governed by traditional canonical texts known as the “Agamas”. These texts prescribe strict proportional relationships between the base, tiers (talas), and total height.

Key principles include:

- The height must follow a fixed proportional ratio relative to the base dimensions
- The structure must rise in progressively diminishing tiers
- The vertical scale symbolizes the spiritual threshold and ascent into sacred space

Reducing the height independently to meet zoning limits would disrupt these proportions and render the structure inconsistent with established religious architectural standards.

Practical Difficulty Unique to the Property:

The need for additional height is not aesthetic but arises from:

- The canonical proportional system required for a Gopuram
- The inability to proportionally compress the structure without compromising its religious function
- The scale of the site at 1600 West Main St, which accommodates appropriate setbacks and spatial distribution

This represents a unique condition associated with religious architecture, rather than a general development preference.

Compatibility with Surroundings:

The proposed Gopuram at this location will be situated on a site with adequate area and setbacks, minimizing visual and spatial impact.

It has been engineered to meet all wind load, snow load, and structural safety requirements

It will not interfere with traffic patterns, utilities, or adjacent properties along West Main St.

it will serve as a cultural and architectural landmark, contributing positively to the community's diversity and identity.

Given these considerations, the requested height increase will not adversely impact neighboring properties or public safety.

In this case, the prescribed height is integral to religious practice and design. Denial of reasonable height accommodation would impose a disproportionate limitation on the ability to construct a compliant temple entrance structure that is a vital part of temple building.

We have made every effort to fully comply with all applicable building and safety codes, design the structure responsibly with licensed professionals. We ensured compatibility with the surrounding environment and community standards.

This request represents a limited and specific deviation necessary to achieve compliance with religious architectural requirements.

For the reasons outlined above, we respectfully request approval of a variance to permit the proposed Gopuram height at 1600 West Main St in Robins. The request is based on documented religious necessity, sound engineering, and minimal community impact.

We appreciate your time and consideration and are happy to provide any additional materials or attend hearings as required.



Sincerely,

Hindu Temple of Eastern Iowa

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Cultural Center, Robins, IA - 52328

**CITY OF ROBINS
ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

ZBA RESOLUTION NO. 2026-1

DECISION AND NOTICE OF DISPOSITION REGARDING:
VARIANCE REQUEST OF HINDU TEMPLE ASSOCIATION,
1600 W. MAIN STREET, ROBINS, IOWA.

WHEREAS, the Hindu Temple Association, has applied for a variance to Chapter 165, Robins Zoning Ordinance, Section 165.24 (3), to allow to allow the addition of an 18' tall structure on top of the building located at 1600 W. Main Street

WHEREAS, the Zoning Board of Adjustment held a public hearing on May 20th, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. to consider said request, and has reviewed said request in terms of the standards of review as set forth in the Code of Iowa and the Robins Zoning Ordinance.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT OF ROBINS, IOWA, AS FOLLOWS:

1. DECISION: The Hindu Temple Association is [] Granted [] Denied a Variance to Section 165.24 (3) to be allowed to exceed the maximum allowable height by 11 feet on their building located at 1600 W. Main St.
2. CONDITIONS:
 - a. Updated building plan and site plan must be submitted to the City and approved by the Building Inspector prior to installation
 - b. Applicable building permits must be obtained from the City of Robins prior to installation.
 - c. This Variance shall apply only to this request as depicted in the site plan.
 - d. The additional structure may, in no way, be illuminated after dark.
 - e. Upon approval of this Variance by the Board of Adjustment, the applicant(s) signature(s) below shall indicate acceptance of the conditions listed on this Resolution. This notarized document shall be recorded with the Linn County Recorder.
3. APPEALS: Decision of the Board of Adjustment may be appealed to District Court within thirty days (30) by anyone objecting to this decision. No approval should be considered completely final until this period has passed.

Signed, this 20th day of May 2026.

, Chairperson

Vance McKinnon III, Planning and Zoning
Administrator

We agree to the above listed conditions. Signed:

, Hindu Temple Association Representative, Requestors
May 20th, 2026