

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday August 29th 2017 - 7:30pm
121 Judd Street – Village Hall

1. Call to Order
2. Pre-Application – Christian and Anne Minich – 280 Cherry Street
 - . CUP Request for Bathroom in Accessory Building
 - . Possible Rear Yard Variance
3. SFU Overlay District Discussion – Set Public Hearing
4. Parking Lot Proposal Review – Christ Lutheran Church – Set Public Hearing
5. Old/New Business
6. Approval of June Minutes
7. Adjournment

The City of Marine on St. Croix Planning Commission regular meeting of August 29, 2017 was called to order by Chairman Mrosla at 7:35pm. Brenner, Hagstrom, Roden, Spisak, and Warren present. Smitten arrived at 7:40pm.

Citizens Present: John Arnason, Christian Minich, Lon Pardun

Pre-Application – Christian and Anne Minich – 280 Cherry Street

Resident Christian Minich was present to discuss his plans for a detached garage with an upstairs office/studio space and bathroom. He said that he had been working with Architect Tod Drescher to avoid the rear yard variance, and therefore has explored options such as a circular or half-circular driveway to stay within zoning requirements. Minich said as a permeable paver installer he would also be doing the work. He said he was open to any changes the plan needed in order to begin the project, as right now he has no place to park and winter is quickly approaching.

Chairman Mrosla started by pointing out that as part of the St. Croix Urban District, the project would need approval from the Minnesota DNR. Hagstrom asked for clarification whether this was two variance issues they were reviewing or one. Minich responded that it started as two with the encroachment on the rear yard setback, but trying to expedite the process, they changed the plans and moved the plan lines in to avoid that variance. He also mentioned the proximity to the septic system being another reason for the circular driveway.

Brenner questioned the need for a Conditional Use Permit since it was only a bathroom. He said it was not an Accessory Apartment but rather a Home Occupation, which is included as an Interim Use in this district. Smitten agreed, adding that the most recent Conditional Use Permit was for a guest space.

Warren explained that as a corner lot, the property has two rear yards, including one against an alley. This creates unfavorable situations where buildings could be 5 feet away from the alley

rather than the 25 foot setback for rear yards. He added that it was a relatively narrow lot—75 feet rather than 100 feet, and crowds the septic tank. Warren told Minich that the timeline for a variance is the same as for a CUP and if a variance is what would work best for the property he should pursue that.

The Commission further discussed there being two front yards and two back yards. Mroska said in his conversation with Zoning Administrator Lynette Peterson she considered Cherry Street to be the front yard. Spisak added that the proposed structure is within the front setback (30 feet) and is behind the house which is good. Roden agreed, adding that the rear yard also complies in its current plan of 25 feet. Smitten clarified that the drawing that is 18 feet from the lot line was preferred by the applicant.

Mroska asked whether Minich would be able to finalize the layout and complete an application by September 6th to allow the DNR 20 days to review before a Public Hearing. However, as there wasn't any Planning Commission members able to write a staff report before then with Labor Day weekend, it was decided to push the Public Hearing until October, and assign Commission Members to visit the site sometime before the September meeting. Commissioners Warren and Brenner were assigned to the case.

The issue of what kind of permit this would be was explored further. Hagstrom asked whether this would be simply reviewing the regulations for garages. The Commission looked under various sections of the code and Mroska concluded that more discussion will be had with Zoning Administrator Peterson.

SFU Overlay District Discussion – Set Public Hearing

Council Member Lon Pardun was present. He said that the discussion for the overlay district has largely already taken place, and would just like the Commission to set a Public Hearing at its next meeting so then Council can approve the overlay. Pardun addressed the concern that some Commission members may have about spot zoning, explaining that it doesn't appear to be to City Attorney Dave Snyder, and that the city is simply adding an additional layer to keep the purpose of the building as a school, as it has been since 1955.

Brenner asked why an overlay was needed as it seems the Zoning Code already covers it. Pardun explained that it reinforces the code, and that as a city they are just trying to limit future uses to those things that are already there (School, Church, and Museum).

The Commission discussed how this overlay might affect the proposed parking lot at Christ Lutheran Church. Warren asked Pardun how Attorney Snyder feels about including it. Pardun said he would check with Snyder but that he believed his intention was the entire property.

*Spisak moved and Smitten seconded to set a Public Hearing for September 26th at 7:35pm in consideration of the SFU Overlay District. **Motion passed unanimously.***

Parking Lot Proposal Review – Christ Lutheran Church – Set Public Hearing

John Arnason was present to answer questions about the parking lot proposal for Christ Lutheran Church. Chairman Mroska began the discussion saying that there was no action required by the Planning Commission, just to set a Public Hearing for neighbors of the property and then advise the City Council.

Brenner raised the issue of screening (Zoning Code 404.3 – General Screening) as it is a requirement when adjacent to a residential district. Mroska asked if a landscaping plan had been completed. Arnason responded that they would be working with Abrahamson's on one and have also be working with the Watershed District and an engineer. Arnason added that this project has been in the works for 20-30 years but is needed more now with the construction at County Road 4 and Oak Street. He said it has already been used as parking lot for a long time and that they are just trying to have it be used more efficiently, such as making it easier to plow.

Hagstrom confirmed that it was in the Single Family Urban District and asked Warren how parking lots in the district would be viewed in the Zoning Code. Warren said that it would be covered as an accessory use, incidental to principal use. Warren referenced City Engineer Ryan Goodman's letter about the project and said that most of the details were being handled engineer to engineer.

Mroska asked about the timeframe for construction, wondering whether September was premature for a Public Hearing with all the details that still need to be finalized, such as the screening and lighting. Arnason said it would just be best to pave this year while all of the equipment is in town. The Commission discussed whether this would require a Public Hearing or more of an informational meeting held by the city or the Church itself. Pardun stated that it would be strange to proceed without some sort of public meeting. Smitten stated that the Planning Commission should have a task if they were to have a Public Hearing, such as to affirm engineering documents. Hagstrom responded that it is the responsibility of the property owner to determine compliance, and that the Planning Commission affirms that compliance and reviews such details as screening. Smitten agreed, adding that the Planning Commission is to review consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.

Brenner referenced Section 405.1 of the Zoning Code addressing Land Reclamation and Land Grading, which would apply to this case and require a Site Plan Review through the Planning Commission (306.2.). The Commission agreed that a Site Plan Review would be appropriate.

Warren concluded with what Arnason needed to provide to complete his application: the Landscape Plan and the engineering questions resolved. Mroska instructed that an application would be needed by September 6th so the materials could be made available to residents. The Commission looked forward to an updated engineer's report before next meeting.

*Brenner moved and Roden seconded to set a Public Hearing for September 26th for a Site Plan Review of the Christ Lutheran Church Parking Lot Proposal. **Motion passed unanimously.***

Old/New Business

Roden asked Chairman Mrolsa about whether the City Council has had time to review the proposed changes the Commission had made to its zoning ordinances. Mrosia said he brought it up at the last Council meeting but the Council has been very busy.

Approval of June Minutes

Warren moved and Spisak seconded to approve the June 27 Planning Commission minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Smitten moved and Brenner seconded to adjourn at 9:22 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Kiersten Young, Assistant City Clerk