

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, January 28, 2020 – 7:30 pm

121 Judd Street – Village Hall

The City of Marine on St. Croix Planning Commission regular meeting of January 28, 2020, was called to order at 7:34 pm. Mrosla, Spisak, Smitten, Brenner and Henry present. Sanderson and Hagstrom absent.

Citizens present: Larry Martin, Dennis Reynolds, John Goodfellow, John Waugh, Larry Roden, Gwen Roden, Nick Judkins (All Energy Solar), Jane Kennedy, Patte Kraske, Mark Kraske, Juli Hagstrom, Gayle Knutson, Jim Maher, Ann Barkley, Doris Petrie, Michael Tibbetts, Phil Anderson, Liz Kelly, Wendy Ward, Nancy Cosgriff.

Public Hearing – Jane Kennedy – Conditional Use Permit Request

Chair Mrosla opened the public hearing at 7:34 pm.

Jane Kennedy, 760 Judd Street, was in attendance regarding her request for a CUP to install a bathroom in an accessory structure used as a bunk house.

Commissioner Smitten reported that she and Commissioner Spisak had visited the site November 10, 2029. The accessory structure is very close to the road, as it was moved to the property before the current setback was established. However, the 8x6-foot bathroom in the existing footprint would not expand the nonconformity. Public Works Lead Jason Crotty had reviewed the site for potential sewer concerns and hadn't found any. However, the owners will need a plumbing permit.

City code allows for bathrooms in accessory structures, provided it is used as an extension of the primary residence. The structure cannot have a kitchen and cannot be leased for rent. Kennedy plans to use the bunk house for visitors.

Commissioner Spisak noted that the main structure has only one bathroom, and that it was evident during the site visit that the building has been used as a bunk house for some time. The city lift station is within feet of the accessory building, so infrastructure is existing to support the additional bathroom.

Reviewing the findings, Commissioner Brenner noted they all seemed to support approval of the permit.

Mrosla asked whether the public wished to comment. No one spoke.

Mrosla closed the public hearing at 7:46 pm.

Brenner moved to recommend approval of the conditional use permit request based on findings one through eight, and subject to conditions A through C. Henry seconded. Motion to recommend approval passed unanimously.

February Planning Commission meeting date

Chair Mroska noted that the regular date for the February would not work because of political party caucuses. A short discussion ensued regarding scheduling.

Spisak moved to set the date for Monday, February 24, 7:30 pm. Brenner seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Larry Whitaker – 625 Pine Cone Trail – Set public hearing: solar panel variance

Nick Judkins of All Energy Solar was in attendance representing the applicant. Commissioner Smitten reported that she and Commissioner Henry visited the site, meeting with Mr. Whitaker and a representative of All Energy Solar regarding a ground-mounted array. Smitten and Henry deemed the application complete, noting they do have questions about the size of eight trees that might be removed. They plan to reach out to Mr. Whitaker before the public hearing.

Spisak moved to set the hearing for 7:30pm February 24. Brenner seconded. Mroska asked whether there were any points for further discussion.

Discussion: Smitten noted that the city code doesn't specifically address solar panels, so they are following the process for an accessory structure.

Mroska called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously.

Planned Unit Development Proposal – 980 Rosabell

John Goodfellow and Dennis Reynolds presented evolving concept plans and to-scale sketches for a PUD, the Mill Stream Cottages, near Rosabell Street. The vision is for up to 28 clustered homes with common greenspace, encouraging a sense of community and protecting wetlands on the property. The group hopes to create housing options for households earning \$50,000 - \$80,000 per year, known as the Missing Middle.

They posed questions for the commission regarding:

- application fees and escrow costs,
- expectations for the application and outline development plan,
- whether duplexes might be allowed,
- whether civil infrastructure could be transferred to the city as was done with Jackson Meadow,
- and expectations for information sessions with neighbors.

Costs: According to Brenner, the city's application fees would not be nearly as much as attorney and engineering fees, but the group would have to provide an escrow for costs to the city associated with the project.

Application: After the current sketch phase, the next step is to submit a final plan in conjunction with a preliminary plat. Goodfellow noted that they are looking for any “fatal flaws” before they start investing more seriously in plans and studies.

Duplexes: Brenner noted that relying on multi-family units might be an area of concern. There was general consensus among commissioners to hear the opinion of the city attorney before exploring the idea as a commission.

Civil Infrastructure: Commissioners advised that specifics such as transfer of infrastructure management to the city would be part of the negotiation process and development agreement. Goodfellow emphasized that the group is not looking to make money from the development, and is exploring the idea of working with a nonprofit developer. They are holding out hope that the development might be considered for city sewer. Smitten advised talking with the city council for some of those answers.

Community Conversations: Goodfellow and commissioners discussed community conversations to bring the public into the discussion before formal plans are drawn. Such meetings should be noticed publicly for a potential quorum of planning commission members.

The commission voiced general support for the project, noting that it is consistent with the comprehensive plan, but pointed out that the group doesn’t own the land yet and is not currently working with a developer for financing. Questions remain about market feasibility. Do people in the missing middle want to live in a development like this?

Marine resident Nancy Cosgriff voiced support for the project, noting that the group could look to Jackson Meadow as a model, learning from mistakes made in addition to things done right.

Old/New Business

Short-Term Rentals – Joint workshop with council set for February 19, 6 pm

Cell Tower: Chair Mrosła briefed the commission on this new assignment from city council, noting that short-term rentals and zoning code updates should come first and that the commission probably won’t address this for a few months. However, to make a timely recommendation the commission might break work into different “buckets:” safety; variance or code changes, records of agreements and contracts, etc. Mrosła said he wanted to review the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Spisak offered to create a list of issues the commission might need to address. Smitten offered to help.

Smitten also requested that anything that comes in from residents be forwarded to Assistant Clerk Suzanne Dammann, who will distribute it to all commissioners.

2020 Project Planning: Chair Mrosła noted that the group has several big projects on its list this year: short-term rentals, updating the zoning code, the cell tower and planned unit development.

STRs: The moratorium ends June 30. Ideally they can set the public hearing for March.

Codes: Spisak offered to create a spreadsheet listing items that need correction. As long as it would not violate open meeting laws, the assistant clerk will distribute this via Google Docs so others can add to it.

The commission will look at the cell tower after these projects wrap up. Work on the Mill Pond Cottages PUD will continue as needed with Brenner as point person for the group.

Approval of November 2019 minutes

Smitten moved to approve the November 26 planning commission minutes, with a date correction at the top of the page. Spisak seconded. Passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Brenner moved and Smitten seconded to adjourn at 9:11 pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk