

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday March 27 2018- 7:30pm
121 Judd Street – Village Hall

1. Call to Order
2. Development Proposal—Bill Smitten
3. Old/New Business
4. Approval of February Minutes
5. Adjournment

The City of Marine on St. Croix Planning Commission regular meeting of March 27, 2018 was called to order by Acting Chair Roden at 7:32pm. Brenner, Hagstrom, Spisak, and Warren present. Mroska, and Smitten absent.

Citizens Present: Bill Smitten, Glen Mills, Roger Lyle, Jim Mortwedt (Country Messenger)

Development Proposal—Bill Smitten

Bill Smitten was present to address the Commission on a development proposal for senior housing he brought to the City Council at its last meeting. He wanted to know whether the development was of interest to the Planning Commission and City, and if so, what steps would need to be taken to pursue it. He said that there is currently a purchase agreement in place with contingencies, such as City approval, and any zoning changes that are needed. Brenner asked what the City Council's views on the development were. Smitten responded that they deferred to the Planning Commission as a starting point.

There was discussion about how this situation compared to the development of the Stugas. Warren explained that the Stugas was rezoned from rural to urban to allow for higher density, but it was a contiguous extension of the SFU district and this site would not be. Glen Mills was also present and stated how the Stugas was property that the City had wanted to turn into senior housing for many years. Brenner believed that they would be unable to accomplish this through the regular Planned Unit Development (PUD) process, and Warren confirmed that they would not. Smitten responded that they are open to the rezoning process but would like clear direction from the Commission and Council before they spend any money on any drawings or plans.

Smitten stated that with the \$600,000 price of the property and its location along Highway 95, it is unlikely anyone else would buy the land to build single-family homes. Hagstrom asked what makes the site desirable for an aging population. Smitten responded that the Comprehensive Plan identifies senior housing as a need, and when speaking to people in that age group they found that they like the diversity of Marine. He further stated that there are options for how it could be designed, such as half of the units being for those 55 and over and half not being restricted. Smitten stated that the Council had made a comment about the need for affordable housing, but he believes that the market itself is a barrier to that. He further believes that giving seniors the option to leave their two-story home would open those properties to potentially younger families. Smitten continued by saying that two septic systems and a wellhouse would likely be needed for the development, but that this site has a larger buildable envelope at 16 acres, compared to what the Stugas was at 20 acres going up the hill. Spisak asked how much would be in the right of way. Smitten said of the approximately 16.6 acres, 14.46 acres would be excluding right

of way. Brenner asked whether there was anything that would make the land unbuildable such as wetlands. Resident Roger Lyle, who lives south of the land, said there is high bedrock.

Hagstrom stated that since a PUD would not accomplish what is needed, the likely next step would be to apply for a rezoning. Spisak agreed and told Smitten that it was his and the developer's decision on whether or not to fill out an application. Warren explained that both conditional use permits and variances are evaluated in terms of the particular owner and neighborhood, and rezoning shifts the evaluation to what is best for the City as a whole. Brenner wondered whether senior housing has been discussed in the current Comprehensive Plan process. Hagstrom referred to Section 307 for the documents required and appropriate process. Brenner agreed, stating that some kind of loose sketch may allow for more input. Warren questioned if there was an overriding need for more senior housing. He also said that some of the units will have to be closer to the highway as Smitten had mentioned earlier as a barrier to buyers. Smitten said that the highway is a negative for large single-family homes, who would want more privacy, but they have considered natural buffers between the development and the road, as well as some building features that would offset that noise. Warren stated that a sketch plan is premature because the dominant issue is the rezoning. He said that the trail linkage is a positive but wondered if those 20-30 families would really participate in the Marine community. Spisak expressed that physically and geographically the site is very separated to have that kind of density. Smitten said that there is not a lot of land in the community that would allow for this kind of housing. Warren responded that the Comprehensive Plan meetings have begun the discussion of developable areas, and the Met Council believes there are more sites than the City may have previously thought existed.

Roden then asked for questions from the audience. Lyle expressed many issues he finds with the proposal, such as the turn off lanes on Highway 95 getting too close to the bike path and presenting a safety issue, environmental concerns, additional drainage, response to a possible fire, and how the proposed septic system is insufficient. Jim Mortwedt, a reporter for the Country Messenger, asked about timelines for the application. Mills said there is 60 days to act on an application once it is submitted with a possible 60-day extension if the applicant agrees. Mills also lives by the proposed site and commented on how any potential septic system design will be a challenge, as well as any restrictions from the Watershed District. There was further discussion about possible next steps, and Hagstrom suggested following up with Clerk Lynette Peterson about the required exhibits Smitten would need to present if the developer wanted to continue in the process.

Old/New Business

Roden stated that in review of tonight's development proposal, she found that our current Comprehensive Plan does not address the term multi-family, but the zoning map in the new Comprehensive Plan does feature multi-family areas. She wondered if multi-family is something the Commission should be addressing in its ordinances. She also wondered about the zoning including Christ Lutheran Church and Oakland Cemetery labeled as Institutional on the new zoning map. Warren stated that the City has long encouraged single-family detached residences as they are more likely to be owner occupied. Hagstrom suggested discussing this at the next Comprehensive Plan meeting.

Approval of February Minutes

*Warren moved and Spisak seconded to approve the February 27th Planning Commission minutes as drafted. **Motion passed unanimously.***

Adjournment

*Spisak moved and Hagstrom seconded to adjourn at 8:56 pm. **Motion passed unanimously.***