

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Tuesday, June 30, 2020 – 7:30 pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

The City of Marine on St. Croix Planning Commission regular meeting of June 30, 2020, was called to order at 7:34 pm. Present: Chair Gerry Mrosla, Commissioners Jennifer Henry, Scott Spisak, Kristina Smitten, Ron Brenner, Ed Sanderson.

Citizens present: Dan Willenbring, Tim Casey, Barb Casey, Wendy Ward, Larry Martin, John Goodfellow, Gwen Roden, Kitsi Vadheim, Juli Hagstrom, Jim Maher, Marcia C., Mary Whitaker, Gayle Knutson.

Variance - Dan Willenbring – 400 Tanglewood Lane

Mr. Willenbring hopes to construct an accessory building to the south of his driveway, which would require two variances: one for setback and one for placing a building in front of the house. He was approved for both in 2014, but did not follow through with construction as his focus turned to the health of his parents. Nothing has changed since then, except that he has transplanted a large pine for more screening. He is requesting to increase the structure's maximum height from 20 feet to 22 feet. It would still be lower than the primary residence. Chairman Mrosla reiterated that the variances were approved but had sunset, and suggested setting a public hearing for July. Commissioner Smitten recalled that she and Jack Warren had visited the site in 2014, and noted that the process has changed regarding the criteria for practical difficulties vs. hardship.

Smitten and Mrosla will do a site visit.

Commissioner Brenner moved to set the public hearing for 400 Tanglewood Lane for Daniel Willenbring for July PC meeting. Seconded by Spisak.

Roll call vote: Mrosla – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Henry – Aye; Brenner – Aye. Motion approved unanimously.

Willenbring will formally apply in early July.

Variance Pre-application – Tim Casey – 1051 Nason Hill Road

Mr. Casey is looking to add a single stall onto the existing garage, which is nonconforming because it is in front of the house. The home is bordered by steep hills.

Mrosla noted that there are practical difficulties at the site and asked for volunteers to visit the site.

Ron Brenner and Gerry Mrosla volunteered to do a site visit.

Short-Term Rental Ordinance

Mrosla requested that the commission reinsert the 14-day maximum per calendar month to section 5J. Spisak was also in favor, in part because it supports the logic of the 72-day annual maximum and precludes more intense usage per month.

Smitten noted that the committee was fine with that a couple of months ago. Henry and Sanderson voiced support.

Councilmember Roden noted that the two-weekend limit was meant to prevent rental for more than 14 days per month.

The commission decided to reinsert the 14-day maximum.

5-I – “shall” vs. “may”

Keep “shall” based on Snyder’s opinion.

Section 4-A

Use Snyder’s recommendation for “by the city” and “in the city.”

Rentals per District

Smitten reported that some commissioners did not agree with the opinion of some council members that two rentals per district was the consensus. The committee had recommended a higher number and two was agreed on with the contingency that more could be allowed by council discretion. As Commissioner Hagstrom pointed out, the discretionary licenses were later pulled from the ordinance.

Sanderson said he agreed that two was not a consensus, as it was discussed in relation to other factors that had not yet been established.

Commissioner Henry and Gwen Roden agreed via chat.

Mrosla said this was also a lesson in process during workshops, having a mutual understanding at the meeting of whether things are agreed on.

Citizen Comments

Smitten noted that she wants residents to know their comments are seen and considered. Because of open meeting laws commissioners are not always able to respond, but citizen comments are valued.

Mrosla noted that without citizen comments the draft would look very different.

Set Public Hearing for Short-Term Rental Ordinance

Prior to the hearing, public notice must be posted (minimum 10-day notice). The draft must be updated and reviewed by Attorney Snyder. The commission will be notified of changes and the draft will be posted for public review.

Logistics are being worked out for how to hold the meeting in person and via Zoom simultaneously.

Spisak moved and Smitten seconded to set the public hearing for the proposed STR Ordinance on July 22, 7:30 p.m., location either City Hall or School property. Roll call vote: Mrosla – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Henry – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Brenner – Aye. Motion approved unanimously.

Commissioner Smitten requested that short-term rental sample materials be re-published on website, with the note: “subject to update once ordinance has passed.”

Wireless Communications Infrastructure – progress update

Commissioner Spisak reported that he, Smitten and Sanderson have been working on this matter since February. Their first assignment was to review whether the current ordinance could accommodate the city's present communication needs. They recommended to the council in April that the ordinance be updated, including 5G and small cell, lest that be foisted upon Marine. The group is working on a Wireless Communications Ordinance. Any cell tower technology or consideration of a proposal would come after the ordinance is written. Next steps include reviewing and understanding adjacent communities' ordinances, regional needs, where coverage gaps are, and proposed service levels.

Sanderson noted that the commission is looking at the community's needs, not rewriting the ordinance to fit any proposal before the council.

Smitten added that the committee has met to ask what the next steps are and what needs to be understood as they work on this.

Zoning Code – progress update

Mroska reported that the most recent review went to Section 508.5. The commission is well on its way putting this together. Once it's reviewed, they'll start filling in the gaps. He requested a meeting in July.

Suzanne will send out a poll to set a workshop date for the week of July 13.

Approval of Minutes

Smitten moved and Sanderson seconded approval of the minutes of the May 26 regular meeting.

Roll call vote: Mroska – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Brenner – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Henry – Aye; Minutes approved.

Spisak moved and Smitten seconded approval of the minutes of the June 2 workshop. Roll call vote: Mroska – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Sanderson – Abstain; Brenner – Abstain; Henry – Abstain Smitten – Aye. Minutes approved.

Minutes of the June 16 workshop were informally approved, as this was a workshop without a quorum.

Adjournment

Smitten moved and Sanderson seconded to adjourn at 8:32 pm. Roll call vote: Mroska – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Brenner – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Henry – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk.