

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Tuesday, August 25, 2020 - 7:30pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Chairman Gerry Mrosła, Commissioners Spisak, Brenner, Henry, Smitten, Sanderson (arrived 7:46 pm).

Citizens present: Juli Hagstrom, Renee Saarela, Glen Mills.

Public Hearing: Variance Request – Tim and Barb Casey, 1051 Nason Hill Rd.

Chairman Mrosła opened the public hearing at 7:36 pm. Commissioner Brenner summarized facts and findings from the site visit as follows: the Caseys' existing garage is closer to the street than the house is, thus does not conform to the code. They would like to expand the garage by one stall, expanding parallel to the road rather than building significantly closer to it. Other site plans comply with the city code including the square footage maximum, setbacks, and building height. The home is in the Single Family Rural district (correction from Single Family Urban listed in the report). Expansions in other directions would require grading, tree removal, and other variances. The proposed location provides the least amount of disturbance. Planning Commission recommends approval, with the zoning district change from SFU to SFR.

Mrosła noted that the property had many steep slopes, limiting options. There were no questions from other commissioners. Mrosła closed the hearing at 7:43 pm.

Spisak moved to recommend approval of the variance request 07-29-20-01, with the zoning district change noted by Brenner. Smitten seconded. Roll call vote: Mrosła – Aye; Brenner – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Henry – Aye. Motion to recommend approval passed unanimously.

Short-Term Rental Ordinance recap

Mrosła reported that the council made several minor changes to the ordinance before passing it August 13. Most notable was language specifically disallowing rentals in accessory buildings. Commissioner Smitten noted that the forms associated with rentals need to be finalized.

Forms: Commissioner Henry and city staff will find a time to finalize these.

Wireless Communications Ordinance progress update

Commissioner Spisak reported that he, Smitten and Sanderson are working on items individually. Smitten added that they are researching other cities' codes to see what is working for those communities. They would also like to define more precisely what Marine's needs are. It's easy to say, "We need better service," but there's a lot that goes into that. Mrosła noted that the sheriff's department has said it is a public safety issue, especially during river rescues. Smitten said public safety concerns would be part of the needs analysis.

Zoning Code progress update

Mrosła reported that the initial review of changes to the zoning code was complete, and Commissioner Smitten had created a list of tasks and items to be addressed. The commission discussed how to move forward.

Input from the city's legal counsel

Commissioner Spisak noted that the opinion of Attorney Dave Snyder would be useful regarding residential care and day care, and possibly other items on the list. Smitten agreed, saying Snyder could help determine how the commission can articulate goals around those two uses if the city desires to allow them. *The group will assemble any remaining issues for Attorney Snyder and staff will relay the questions.*

Additions to the code

Spisak noted that solar language still needs to be added. Smitten recalled a draft from Brian Ross, but said it will need review. *Commissioner Smitten will send the draft to Commissioner Spisak.* Commissioner Smitten said the poultry language is also finished, and added that some of these tasks will be easy and some will take more consideration. Some bigger policy decisions will need to be discussed by the group, including lot size and septic policy.

Consistency with the comprehensive plan

Spisak asked how they were going to review for consistency. Smitten suggested having one commissioner comb through both to compare and contrast. There was discussion of asking Bolton & Menk to look at the ordinance when the group is done. *Commissioner Sanderson later volunteered to review the zoning code and comp plan for consistency.*

Council review and comments

Noting that comments are welcome from council anytime, the commission decided that it would wait to ask for council review and input until the draft is near completion.

Next steps

- The commission plans to devote the bulk of the September meeting to the zoning code.
- Commissioners should review the list of tasks by Tuesday, September 2, and add items as needed.
- Smitten will mark the tasks that require more work and Suzanne will send the list around for people to sign up to work on those individually. Mrosła suggested having two commissioners on each task if possible. Henry offered to take a higher ratio of tasks individually since she was not working on the wireless communications ordinance.
- The group will tackle the easier items together at the regular September meeting.

Discussion of property at 360 Robert Street

Chairman Mrosła asked the assistant clerk if there were any variances or conditional use permits on the horizon. Assistant Clerk Dammann reported that there was interest in building on the property at 360 Robert, which would require a variance for lot size. Attendee Renee Saarela added that she was interested in the property and hoped to talk to the commission about the possibility of a variance. Noting that this was the first they'd heard of the property being for sale, and that it had been some time since the commission worked with this property, they advised Ms.

Saarela to work with City Clerk Peterson to make all the preparations needed before coming to the commission. The history of the property was discussed, especially regarding septic. The property file contains no record of percolation tests at the site. If they have been done, the city has not been notified.

Approval of minutes

July 28 Regular Meeting

Smitten moved and Spisak seconded approval of the minutes of the July 28 meeting. Roll call vote: Mrosla – Aye; Brenner – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Henry – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Sanderson – Abstain. Minutes approved.

August 18 Zoning Code Workshop

Spisak moved and Henry seconded approval of the minutes of the August 18 zoning code workshop. Roll call vote: Mrosla – Aye; Brenner – Abstain; Sanderson – Abstain; Smitten – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Henry – Aye. Minutes approved.

Adjournment

Brenner moved and Smitten seconded to adjourn at 8:29 pm. Roll call vote: Mrosla – Aye; Brenner – Aye; Henry – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Spisak – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk.