

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Nyenhuis at 7:00pm. Nyenhuis (Zoom), Roden, Pardun, Anderson (Zoom), Ward present.

Citizens Present: Lynette Peterson, Scott Spisak, Sebastian Corby, Tom Warth, Glen Mills, Mary Skamser, Curt Moe, Julie Warren; On Zoom: Gerry Mroska, Jennifer Henry, Robbi Strandemo, Gayle Knutson, Nancy Cosgriff, Kitsi Vadheim, John Goodfellow, Ryan Goodman

Public Hearing: Zoning Code Updates

Mayor Nyenhuis opened the public hearing at 7:02pm. Councilman Pardun said the council and commission were in favor of the proposed changes. However, the DNR had reviewed the ordinance and said it would not offer conditional approval until certain changes were made. Pardun suggested sending the zoning code back to the planning commission to discuss the DNR's revisions.

Regarding the process for moving forward, Clerk Peterson said there would not have to be a continuation of the public hearing. This is the public's chance to comment and once they commission has a chance to review the DNR's comments, their recommendation can be sent back to Council for action.

Scott Spisak, 123 Blue Heron Lane, noted two items in the draft that should be edited.

1. Definitions for a non-conforming use states "any land effective before the date of this ordinance ..." That should be changed to reflect the date the original ordinance was passed.
2. Same thing for 401.2

Nyenhuis closed the hearing at 7:07pm

Citizens Considerations

Win Miller – School Update – Mr. Miller was not in attendance, but had written a memo to council apprising them that the Village School Board had appointed two new directors following Susan Loomis' resignation: Kelly Pylkas Bock and Peter Gardner. The board is waiting to hear from the Minnesota Department of Education about a \$600,000 Charter School Program grant. If awarded, funding would begin in January. In the meantime, the group is raising funds. They've received pledges of \$23,500 for use as matching funds. Their goal is to use \$25,000 in pledges to leverage a total of \$50,000 by year end. Funds will be used to pay startup legal, marketing, internet, and other costs. Regular monthly meetings are held the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. A Zoom link is available at www.marinevillageschool.com. Ward noted an interest in hearing what the school's plan is if the grant is not awarded.

Christie Forciea / Brookside – Change Pull Tab Vendors – Clerk Peterson advised the Brookside is requesting a change in vendors for their pull tabs. Currently the Forest Lake Lions Club is sponsoring them however they are not making enough profit and have decided to pull their

business from the Brookside. The Stillwater Legion has agreed to be the new vendor however Ms. Forcica was not in attendance and city staff had not received paperwork for the vendor change. Council proceeded to the next item and address this item in December.

Tom Warth – New Year’s Eve Gala – Mr. Warth reported that the planning committee for this event had decided to cancel due to uncertainty around the pandemic and its impacts on attendance.

Planning Commission

October Meeting Update

Commission Chair Gerry Mroska reported that the commission held a public hearing for the variance at 360 Robert St. and recommended approval. They set a public hearing Nov. 30 for an accessory apartment at 871 Judd St. The commission also worked on prioritizing its work plan. There are several items the commission will be able to revise on its own, and some they’d like to work with consultants on. Mroska noted that the DNR had commented on the draft zoning ordinance, and those revisions will likely become the commission’s highest priority. Update on member terms: Sanderson and Smitten have agreed to stay on. Mroska will rework the terms so renewal is staggered. A panel interviewed four candidates for the Planning Commission on Nov. 8. They recommend appointing Scott Spisak to the vacant seat, mainly because of his past experience on the commission.

Variance Request – 360 Robert Street

Nyenhuis moved and Pardun seconded approval of the variance to build on a nonconforming lot at 360 Robert Street.

Discussion: Ward commended Commissioner Casey for his work on the findings and Commissioner Sanderson for showing that the city should look at related lot sizes. The city also has an opportunity to respond to concerns this request represents. The proposed septic location slopes down into a riparian stream, possibly posing a risk. There could also be tree loss. Ward posed an amendment establishing conditions that the project conform to septic setbacks, that Washington County acknowledge the proximity to wetlands, and that the applicant avoid removing trees at the site. After discussion, Ward rescinded the amendment due to the City not have authority to regulate these items. Councilman Anderson commended the commission for its work on the request and said it was good to see a house going up in the upper village.

The mayor called the roll:

Pardun - aye

Ward - aye

Roden - aye

Anderson - aye

Nyenhuis - aye

All in favor, motion passed.

Appointment of New Member

Roden moved and Ward seconded to appoint Scott Spisak to the Planning Commission.

Pardun - aye

Roden – aye

Ward - aye

Anderson - aye
Nyenhuis - aye
All in favor, motion passed.

Council Reports

Public Safety – Chief Malmgren had no report. Anderson said he and the chief would schedule the annual Fire & Rescue meeting this month. He added that carjackings had moved into the East Metro, and advised citizens to remain vigilant walking to and from their cars, and to stay in well-lit areas at night. Anderson noted that he'd distributed documents to the council regarding a special events ordinance. His goal is to mitigate significant risk to the city, put the onus on organizers, and recoup any costs to the city for handling events. These would be for large events passing through the city, and would have minimal effect on resident events. Nyenhuis said he'd done a quick review of the documents and was reminded of his gratitude for the expertise of those on council and the planning commission.

Roads – Engineer Ryan Goodman of Bolton & Menk reported the road project was in its final stages. There are a couple of punch list items left, and once they get final paperwork from the contractor they can close the project out and seek remaining funding for the city from the state. Then the project will be completely done. Regarding watershed standards and the city code, some things will align as the watershed district's management plan revisions move forward. We'll want to work closely with them on things such as buffer requirements. Neighboring municipalities have gone through that process, so there is help we can seek to make the process easier.

Anderson asked about dumpster screening. Mayor Nyenhuis said their group is reaching out to stakeholders including Waste Wise and the Brookside. They plan to continue the conversation in the coming months. Anderson noted frustration from the Chocolate Co. regarding parking and suggested reserving dedicated parking spaces for them. Pardun agreed that they need to take a look at this issue but enforcement is difficult. Parking on the weekends is a challenge all summer, for many people. Nyenhuis said this winter would be a good time to examine the issue. He asked to add it to the city's list of goals under Roads, and have Roads (Pardun/Roden) address it.

Personnel/Building Inspector - Pardun reported that the Public Works shop was broking into Nov. 1. A lot of equipment was stolen. City staff are now closing and locking the gate. There's a report filed with serial numbers that should help locate the equipment and the people who took it. Anderson said it might have been driven by chemical addiction. A future conversation might be whether to get cameras. Pardun said they are looking at prices now.

Parks & Rec – Ward noted that the Trails and Open Spaces Committee had had its first meeting, and planned to report to the city council in the coming months.

Mill Site Update: Curt Moe was in attendance to report on the Mill Site and its work since the committee was founded in 2009. The site is in the best condition it's been in for 15 years, possibly longer. This is in large part thanks to the work of Anne Reich and Jim Schoeller. Moe recognized their tireless work in improving the site. Moe had stepped down as chair in 2016 and they had

stepped right up. Recent developments include removal of cages around the trees, led by Mary Whittaker. Tom Omdahl is the operations manager at the site, and oversees Sentence to Serve activities. The group is targeting removing ash trees at the Mill Site. They've installed four benches built by Mike Tibbetts. One is dedicated to Jack Warren and the other to Chuck Arnason. In 2018, the Minnesota Historical Society updated the management plan for the site. The historical society would like to restore the site to its pre-European state. The Mill Site Committee continues to receive \$5,000 annually from an endowment initiated by James Taylor Dunn. The group gained members after the volunteer sign-up day, and they hope the city holds the event again.

Jack Warren and Chuck Arnason were instrumental in working with the Historical Society to purchase the site in the 1960s, but it wasn't until 2000 that the Historical Society installed trails and signage at the site. After that, the trails became overgrown. In 2009, Councilmember Everett Myers suggested reconvening the trails committee, which morphed into the Mill Site Committee. Since 2009, about 70 locals have been involved. They started a fund-a-tree program to generate funds in the early years. The Historical Society is now funding maintenance with a \$5,000/year grant. They've built a boardwalk system and observation site at the lower Mill Site. One of their current goals is to get more members. Ward and Nyenhuis noted that this site was a great asset to Marine, and a draw for tourism.

Cemetery – Mayor Nyenhuis said the council would discuss plans for the cemetery in 2022.

Water Systems – Ward and Pardun continue discussions with residents regarding city septic and water inspections. Council members attended a walkabout at the city septic drain field led by former public works lead Jason Crotty.

City Properties – Pardun had no report. Nyenhuis noted that there was a workday at the school forest that renewed conversation about what to do with it for education and the community.

Holidays / Events – In light of results of a recent survey by Dorothy Deetz on behalf of the Events Committee, Roden said the city probably will continue to hold fireworks but will need to rework parking and other details. Nyenhuis asked Anderson and Roden to execute and plan around the holiday because final budget decisions must be made soon. Pardun added that the city will need to get in touch with the fireworks company. Roden and Anderson agreed. Anderson said the budget implications are significant, roughly \$8,000. He would like to continue to hear from residents. They will put together information before the budget meeting.

EDA – No report

Citizen Committee Reports

Green Step Cities – Roden reported that GreenStep Cities had a meeting recently. Anne Reich has stepped away from the GreenStep Committee. Roden recommended Kitsi Vadheim, Leslie MacKenzie, and Mark Kraske as core members going forward. Ward referred to the 2009 resolution governing citizen committees, and said the intent of the resolution was not to micromanage leadership of citizen committees, and that it might be time to update the policy. Roden said the committees are appointed by the council. Pardun noted that citizen committees have council liaisons who are the default leaders of the committees. The council is supposed to be

made aware of changes in the committee. Ward said that hasn't been occurring in this committee or others, and the policy should be updated. She doesn't feel the council should appoint the committee chairs in general. Pardun said usually the appointments are "friendly" or noncontroversial, and if the committees aren't updating the council on changes to membership or leadership, they should be. The mayor agreed that there should be consistency. In reference to a comment about the Urban Forest Task Force, John Goodfellow pointed out that a 2018 revision to Chapter 16 of the City Code established a Forest Advisory Committee.

Regarding funding for an electric vehicle charger, Leslie MacKenzie asked whether the GreenStep Committee is authorized to pursue crowd funding. Ward asked where local businesses stand on the issue, and whether they're open to contributing funds. MacKenzie asked if the group was authorized to speak with local businesses. Nyenhuis said, through the council liaisons, yes.

Nyenhuis passed chair duties to Acting Mayor Pardun at 8:12 pm.

Communication Infrastructure – Pardun reported that the request for proposals to build a cell tower was released Nov. 1. There were no questions as of the Nov. 8 Q&A deadline. Proposals are due Dec. 1.

Referring to the recent resident survey on city projects, Anderson noted that fiber optic cable is not likely a feasible option because of the way the city is laid out, and the cost of laying fiber. Other options are continued broadband, especially through cable delivery. Also fixed wireless, where infrastructure is posted on something like a cell tower and provides a strong, high-quality signal through radio waves.

Urban Forest – Ward said the group expects an update from the DNR about grant funding next month.

Consent Calendar

Ward moved and Roden seconded to approve the Minutes of 10/14/21, Treasurer's Report of 10/21, List of Bills for 11/10/21, Planning Commission Minutes, Zoning Administrators Report (none), and Public Works Maintenance Report.

Anderson - aye

Roden - aye

Ward - aye

Pardun - aye

All in favor, motion passed.

Old/New Business

CARES Funding Discussion – Pardun said he was reluctant to dig in without the mayor and would like to postpone the discussion until December. Council consensus to postpone.

Resident Survey Results – Council consensus to postpone.

Long/Short Term Goals – No changes.

Mayor Notes/Clerk's Report – None.

Adjournment

Anderson moved and Roden seconded to adjourn at 8:19pm.

Anderson - aye

Roden – aye

Ward -aye

Pardun -aye

All in favor, motion passed.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk