

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday, December 12, 2024

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

Citizens: Gerry Mroska, Scott Spisak, Kitsi Vadheim, John Goodfellow, Larry Roden, Gwen Roden, Marc Prokosch, Mary Whitaker, Charles Borden, Shelly Schenfeld, Mike Lovett, Glen Mills, Jake White, Mary Fernstrum, Mike Lammi, Julie Warren, City Attorney Dave Snyder (Johnson Turner). Zoom: Anne Minich, Jim Maher, Joshua Rutherford, Stan Prinsen, Julie Warren, Todd Mestad, Olivia Rutherford, Beth Richmond (HKGi), Mariah Langer (LHB)

Approval of the Agenda – *Nyenhuis moved and Miller seconded to accept the agenda as presented. All in favor, motion passed.*

Citizens Considerations – Planning Commission Chair Scott Spisak thanked outgoing councilmember Lon Pardun for his service to the community, namely 12 years on the Marine City Council during which he led the improvement of roads, wastewater, Village Hall, and the purchase of the school property. Spisak read a letter from former councilmember Robin Brooksbank (attached) and comments from planning commissioner Kristina Smitten.

Planning Commission –

Chair Spisak recommended the appointment of Claudia Carr to the Planning Commission. Carr is a practicing attorney with experience on the Edina Planning Commission.

Miller moved and Pardun seconded to appoint Claudia Carr to a 3-year term on the Planning Commission beginning January 2025. Motion approved unanimously.

In November, Planning Commission reviewed a set of variance requests that would allow construction of a new home and garage at Lot 4, Block 2, Tanglewood. The property has been difficult to develop because of steep slopes. The Commission recommends approval of requests for a garage nearer the house than the road, and accessory structure exceeding 750 square feet.

Miller moved and Ward seconded to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to approve case number 20241126-01 [Lot 4, Block 2, Tanglewood; PID: 13.031.20.22.0007]. Anderson noted that the variance contained conditions requiring submission of a final site plan showing septic and well locations, and ensuring that measures are taken to prevent erosion and sedimentation on the steep slopes. Motion approved unanimously.

Also in November, Planning Commission reviewed an application for a conditional use permit (CUP) at 2531 Jackson Trail. This is a standard bathroom in an accessory structure, with the standard set of conditions.

Miller moved and Anderson seconded to approve the conditional use permit application of Michael and Sylvia Lovett, Planning Case Number 20241126-02 [2531 Jackson Trail; PID: 12.031.20.24.0016]. Motion approved unanimously.

Chair Spisak introduced two ordinances regulating commercial cannabis, explaining that they were a result of statewide cannabis legalization. The Commission had, over the course of five meetings, crafted the regulations based on a model ordinance and guidelines from the Office of Cannabis Management, with input from Council as well as the City's planner, attorney, and staff. The Commission's work was thoughtful and deliberative. The regulations are expected to evolve over time.

Mayor Nyenhuis noted that the section governing temporary cannabis events prohibited on-site consumption. Planner Beth Richmond noted that cities had the authority to choose whether or not to allow that. With guidance from Councilman Anderson, the approach was to start on the more restrictive side and consider loosening restrictions later.

Attorney Dave Snyder requested that the Commission and planner continue to monitor changes at the state level that may continue to occur in the coming months, and change the ordinance as necessary. Anderson added that City staff and the League of Minnesota Cities would also be attuned to changes.

Anderson moved and Miller seconded to approve Ordinance 181 amending the City Code to include regulations pertaining to cannabis. Motion passed unanimously.

Anderson moved and Miller seconded to approve Resolution 241212-01 allowing publication of Ordinance 181 by title and summary. Motion passed unanimously.

Anderson moved and Miller seconded to approve Ordinance 182 amending the Zoning Code to include regulations pertaining to cannabis. Motion passed unanimously.

Anderson moved and Miller seconded to approve Resolution 241212-02 allowing publication of Ordinance 182 by title and summary. Motion passed unanimously.

Glacial Hills Regional Trail Plan

Chair Spisak reported that Planning Commission had recommended support of Washington County's Glacial Hills Regional Trail plan. He noted that the trail is identified in the Marine on St. Croix 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The trail is years, and perhaps decades, from construction. At this time, Washington County is requesting municipal support so they can apply for grants to do further studies and engineering. Spisak also noted that County representatives had reached out to schedule a meeting to discuss details.

Pardun noted that Planning Commissioner Gerry Mroska was leaving the Commission after 15 years, 11 of those as chair. He led the Commission on drafting regulations for short-term rentals and cell towers, and revisions to the zoning code. Council members thanked Mroska for his service on the Commission.

Public Safety – Fire Chief Glen Mills said there had been no fire calls and only two rescue calls since the November Council meeting, one in Marine and one in May Township. Two firefighters are in hazmat training. The Department will train with Nicole Hendrickson on EMR and CPR in

2025. The pumper house has been cleaned, electricity is on, and the pumper has been returned to the garage. Department members are helping to flood the ice rink. Three new 800 MHz radios are in service.

Anderson reminded the public that hunting is allowed with a permit in the Hollow, which is a City property adjacent to Jackson Meadow. Council members encouraged residents to ask City staff or Public Safety liaisons for clarification on regulations rather than taking to social media.

Reappoint Glen Mills as Fire Chief

Miller moved and Anderson seconded to reappoint Mills to a second two-year term. Approved unanimously.

Roads – Isiah Bubany of Bolton & Menk reported that the Nov. 21 open house for 2025 Street Improvement Project plans was successful. The bid package is ready for approval by Council. Red Bridge monitoring is slated for January 2025. MnDOT has released an environmental assessment for the Osceola Bridge reconstruction; the City has a hard copy residents can review.

The Watershed District has reached out about scheduling meetings regarding the Floodplain Risk Assessment: first with City staff in late January or early February to review flood risk maps and identify hazards; a second meeting in late March or early April with Council to share results of the review; a third and final meeting to get draft results to staff and Council.

Mr. Bubany asked Council for thoughts regarding the Glacial Hills Trail Plan letter. Council consensus was that the letter is clear and constructive, but since the County has reached out to schedule an in-person discussion of the matter they will delay sending the letter.

Pardun moved and Anderson seconded to approve plans, specs, and authorize ad for bid for the 2025 street improvement project. Motion passed unanimously.

Personnel – Nyenhuis noted that City Clerk Lynette Peterson will be promoted to the role of City Administrator beginning January 1.

Parks & Rec. – Ward noted that minutes of the Nov. 20 meeting with Carnelian-Marine-St. Croix Watershed District are in the packet. Ward encouraged Council to attend the public input session scheduled for 6pm, Jan. 21. Pardun added that the City does not have the authority to dig for soil tests near the fire hall, because the State Historic Preservation Office found archeologically significant pottery there. Nyenhuis noted that the Watershed District's work will not include infrastructure such as bridges. The City should plan on future expenses for park development.

Ward requested that Council consider adding inoculation to the budget every two years going forward. The 2023 expense was \$1,610 for City trees.

Ward reported that spending is on schedule for the grant projects in the Hollow and North Meadow. Anderson reported that he and other volunteers are working to have the ice rink open by Christmas. Residents can stay tuned to the City website for an update when it opens.

Cemetery – No report.

Water/Wastewater – No report.

City Properties – Pardun reported that after bid levelling for the village hall remodel project, J White Builds had the low bid at \$257,003.26, which includes a 5% contingency. Pardun also reviewed the proposed funding plan, which includes reserve funds, budgeted funds, and a contribution from the Marine Restoration Society.

Pardun moved and Miller seconded to authorize LHB to award a construction contract not to exceed \$243,153.10 to J White builds, subject to necessary insurance requirements.

Discussion: Pardun noted that following a historic structure assessment in 2011 the City made several repairs to the building, including repairs to the foundation in 2015, and exterior painting and emergency staircase replacement in 2018. The roof was replaced in 2010 and the furnace in the last 10 years. Ward moved to amend the motion to include a requirement to pursue a Minnesota Historical Society Legacy Grant to fund a conditions assessment of the Village Hall. No member seconded, although they supported pursuit of the grant separately. Nyenhuis believes there will be unforeseen issues that force spending of contingency funds and noted that the plan does not include furnishings. Pardun replied that a resident has offered to donate office furniture and City Attorney Dave Snyder confirmed that the City can accept the donation by motion. Nyenhuis requested a letter from the prospective donor. Mariah Langer of LHB noted that the company's historical architects had conducted a basic conditions assessment and did not see any items of concern to complete the scope of work.

Motion approved unanimously.

Community Events – Nyenhuis commended Gwen and Larry Roden for doing a great job on the Enchanting Forest this winter.

Nyenhuis moved, Miller seconded, to recess the Council meeting and open the EDA meeting at 8:48pm. Approved unanimously.

EDA – Marine Village School Board Treasurer Mike Lammi and Councilmember Pardun explained that Marine Village School has been thriving but, due to start-up costs and funding delays, is approximately a year behind on rent payments. Pardun suggested holding EDA meetings quarterly with school representatives to ensure agreements are upheld and accounted for. From 2022-2024, MVS has paid the City \$119,108. Overhead including the bond for that period has been \$114,191. MVS plans to resume full rent payments in January 2025 and present a plan in March to resolve or mitigate the past outstanding amount.

Nyenhuis moved, Anderson seconded, to adjourn the EDA meeting and reopen the regular Council meeting at 9:02pm. Approved unanimously.

Forest Advisory – Council postponed the Forest Advisory Committee update to January and approved by consensus the 2024 Arbor Day Proclamation.

Mill Site Committee – Ward reported that the plans to purchase the property are moving forward with Minnesota Historical Society, and a property survey will be coming soon.

Multi-Generational Education – Miller reported that MMEDAC will be seeking public input in summer 2025 to inform the master plan for the school property.

Consent Calendar – *Nyenhuis moved, Pardun seconded, to approve the consent calendar. Motion approved unanimously.*

Public Works Purchases – Public Works Lead Tommy Boesel explained that they had an opportunity to trade in the skid steer for a new one, and requested reassigning reserve funds to accommodate the purchase.

Pardun moved, Anderson seconded, to reassign \$2,685.58 from RDS-Equipment to RDS-Skid Steer. Approved unanimously.

Boesel added that the City had saved \$11,000 for a plow, but the price had increased \$635 since the initial quote was given. The old plow will be declared surplus and sold.

Nyenhuis moved, Ward seconded, to reassign \$635 from RDS-Equipment to RDS-Plow.

Old/New Business

Citizen of the Year – *Anderson nominated Gwen Roden, who had served on as a volunteer on City Council and Planning Commission, in addition to leading community events including the Enchanting Forest and welcoming residents with love and respect in the General Store, where she is manager. Miller seconded the nomination. Approved unanimously.*

Approve 2025 Levy – *Ward moved, Miller seconded, to approve the 2025 levy at \$1,126,971.24 which represents a 7.66% increase over 2024. Approved unanimously.*

Mayor Notes/Clerk's Report – Nyenhuis noted that the ribbon cutting for the North Environmental Center is set for Dec. 16. He also presented outgoing Councilmember Lon Pardun with a card and Marine-on-St.-Croix themed artwork to acknowledging his service. Pardun said that living in Marine has been an honor.

Adjournment – *Pardun moved and Miller seconded to adjourn at 9:18pm. All in favor, motion passed.*

Minutes taken by Suzanne Lindgren, Assistant City Clerk

ATTACHMENT TO MINUTES OF DECEMBER 12, 2024

Dear Marine City Council and Citizens,

I wanted to express my appreciation and thanks to Lon Pardun, for his outstanding service to the citizens of Marine as he steps down from the City Council. From volunteering for many years on the Marine Fire and Rescue department to his service as an elected City Council Trustee, Lon has exemplified servant leadership. Like many of us, I suspect Lon moved to Marine without understanding that ‘pitching in’ really isn’t optional in a small town. I had the honor to work with Lon on a variety of city issues, and even though I had experience on the Council, I learned so much from him about planning, fiduciary responsibility and keeping the focus on the long term needs of the village. Lon has generously used his considerable professional skills in construction and project management to help guide our City, his involvement in Roads management as well as other critical but certainly not sexy City priorities such as waste management and public safety investment will benefit the City for years into the future. Because of his strengths it is hard to identify Lon’s biggest impacts. But his leadership in first acquiring the closed school building and then encouraging the establishment of Marine Village School has helped our village attract new families and has been a positive force in the long term viability of our small town. And more recently his focus on supporting and retaining the City’s committed staff plus his understanding of the need to maintain our critical physical assets has led to his work on upgrading the Village Hall, another project which will both help our City staff be more productive and safe, and benefit all of us for years to come.

I am sorry I can’t be present this Thursday, but my husband Gregg and I wanted to express our heartfelt appreciation for Lon’s service. I know we are not alone in recognizing his professionalism and commitment to the City of Marine. Thank you, Lon.

Sincerely,
Robin Brooksbank
12/8/2024