

**CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX**  
**CITY COUNCIL-PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP**  
**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024 6:00 pm**

**Present:** Mayor Kevin Nyenhuis, Councilmembers Lon Pardun and Bill Miller, PC Chair Scott Spisak, Commissioners Jennifer Henry, Kristina Smitten, Tim Casey, Anna Hagstrom, Lisa White

**Absent:** Councilmembers Charlie Anderson and Wendy Ward, Commissioner Gerry Mroska

**Citizens Present:** None

Mayor Nyenhuis called the workshop to order at 6:00 pm.

**Council Input and Suggestions**

Commission Chair Spisak announced that with the zoning code now in conformance with state statutes, the Commission can turn its focus to other items in the work plan. Notably, in October 2023 Council passed an ordinance allowing up to four ticketed (commercial) events per year on residential properties. Because this type of use isn't allowed in the zoning code, Council had asked the Commission to research whether the zoning code should be changed to allow use of residential properties as occasional event venues. Spisak sees this potentially falling under Home Occupations in the zoning code.

Councilman Miller suggested that the first step might be finding out whether this issue is a priority for Marine residents. Mayor Nyenhuis noted that cultural changes including Covid led to new approaches to events, and said the City should start to anticipate such shifts and respond appropriately. Miller noted that cannabis farming is one such business trend on the horizon.

**Consultant Planner**

Chair Spisak noted that planning funds are potentially available for City planning projects such as the Mill Site, School Site, and Cemetery. The group reached a consensus that spending for any projects outside of Planning Commission would need Council approval, and would ideally come through the Commission first.

**Work Plan Priorities**

Chair Spisak noted that one high priority is developing a plan ensure that historic buildings in Riverway districts can be rebuilt on their existing footprints even if they don't meet water and bluff setbacks. Options include legislative lobbying and adding language to the Comp Plan.

The City Clerk's Office requested that the Commission prioritize addressing the discrepancy between City Code and the Zoning Ordinance around commercial events in residential districts.

Mayor Nyenhuis asked if the City is opening the issue up again. Commissioner Casey said he would like to see it opened up again. Councilman Pardun suggested the Commission research what's happening in similar-sized communities and hold a public hearing for residents to share their views. That process worked well for the short-term rental issue.

The group reached a consensus on the following priorities: pursuing protections for historic Riverway buildings to be rebuilt on existing footprints; ticketed events in residential areas; solar.

The professional planners will likely be able to help with solar. Chair Spisak suggested developing a list with Planner Beth Richmond to include other small work plan items she could lead. Commissioner Hagstrom noted that the Commission could split into groups to work with Ms. Richmond on the small items.

### **City Code Chapter 2**

Chair Spisak drew the group's attention to changes in Chapter 2. By explicitly citing the Commission's authority granted by state statute, the City may have additional leverage – or increased awareness of its existing leverage – when working with political subdivisions (school district, county), especially concerning acquisition and disposal of property.

Councilman Pardun asked for clarification on whether Planning Commission needs to review and comment on routine capital improvements such as road and drain field projects. Council hasn't done this before and it would add a layer to the process for necessary infrastructure projects. Chair Spisak suggested researching best practices and asking the City Planner about practical application of the state statute. Councilman Miller suggested keeping Chapter 2 in mind generally and briefing the commission chair on projects so PC can join the conversation if needed. Commissioner Hagstrom pointed out that keeping the Commission apprised could streamline efforts. Commissioners are able to spot zoning issues early on in the planning process, rather than waiting until plans are near completion before a zoning obstacle is discovered.

Regarding proposed plats and amendments of existing plats, Spisak noted that a re-platting of Broadway St. would be coming up in relation to the cemetery, and it would be appropriate for PC to review and comment on it.

The group also discussed the Commission's role as Marine's Historic District Board, the difference between registered historic buildings and historic districts, and striking a balance between honoring history and creating burdensome regulations. Commissioner Hagstrom offered to write a short background report about Marine's historic district.

Councilman Miller thanked the Commission for their work and said it's impressive that a city of this size has a capable planning commission. Commissioner Smitten thanked Council for meeting, saying the communication and input were helpful to the Commission's efforts to support Council.

The workshop adjourned at 7:04 pm.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk