

**CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

**Tuesday, October 29, 2019 – 7:30 pm**

**121 Judd Street – Village Hall**

The City of Marine on St. Croix Planning Commission regular meeting of October 29, 2019, was called to order by Acting Chairman Brenner at 7:31 pm. Spisak, Henry, Hagstrom, Smitten and Sanderson present, Mrosła absent.

Citizens present: Kitsi Vadheim, John Goodfellow, Larry Whitaker, Mary Whitaker, Scott Iwen, Carissa Roach, Glen Mills, Laurie Schmidt, Gwen Roden, Nancy Cosgriff, Juli Hagstrom.

Scott Iwen – 18337 St. Croix Trail N – Pre-app variance for accessory building square footage limit and CUP for a bathroom in an accessory building. Commissioner Sanderson reported that he and Mrosła visited the site October 9. The property is approximately 6 acres and sits in the St. Croix Rural Residential District. Garages are allowed under sec. 402.3. Total square footage is limited to 2,400 square feet. In addition to the house, a large structure has been remodeled into fitness center and recreational space. There is also a smaller garden toolshed. Mr. Iwen would like to build a 960 square foot garage, which would put accessory structures 705 square feet beyond the limit. County assessor site shows a garage was part of the original home. Recent sales history indicated there was a garage on the site. Clerk Lynette Peterson noted that any conversation to better understand structure's history as it relates to potential approval or denial of the variance will have to wait until public hearing.

*Spisak moved and Smitten seconded to set public hearing for variance and CUP for Nov. 26.  
Approved unanimously.*

Pre-app: Jane Kennedy – 760 Judd St. – Proposal for bathroom in accessory building. Ms. Kennedy was in attendance seeking details for a bathroom in an accessory structure. Commissioner Hagstrom noted she is Kennedy's neighbor and will participate in discussion but abstain from any future vote. Kennedy noted that a 400-square-foot building had been converted to a bunk house on the property. She is seeking permission to put an 8x8 bathroom in. Jack Kramer, the building inspector, has visited the site at the request of the homeowner and told her the structure is nonconforming because the foundation is only timbers on a floating slab and it cannot be expanded. Kennedy reported that city worker Jason Crotty informally looked the site to see if it could be hooked up to the septic system currently servicing the property. He did not see any problems. The commission determined that the bathroom would not need a variance but would need a CUP for a bathroom in an accessory building. They advised Kennedy to see if she has a property survey record, and draw a to-scale plan of where the bathroom will be in the structure. Smitten and Spisak volunteered to do the site visit.

PUD Proposal – 980 Rosabell – John Goodfellow and Laurie Schmidt were in attendance to update the commission on their concept for a planned unit development off of Rosabell and Broadway streets. They have specified their plans, proposing locations for septic, stormwater and greenspace, and targeting the number of houses at 27 based on the city’s PUD guidelines. They reiterated their goal to create attainably-priced housing in a multigenerational neighborhood that attracts permanent residents. “Cottage courtyard” style: a clustered group of homes centered around a common green space; design of physical space creates a sense of community. Strong environmental stewardship with LEED certification, community gardens and green space, while respecting existing character of neighborhood. The homes would be small, approximately 600-1200 square feet, and potentially up to 2 bedrooms. Garages would be in the back of the home to create a sense of neighborhood. Target price per home is under \$300,000; below average for Marine and more accessible to young families or aging residents looking to downsize.

Spisak asked how many acres they are working with. According to Goodfellow and realtor Juli Hagstrom, the property is approximately 18 acres; six parcels. Within that, wetlands are about 10 acres. Commissioner Hagstrom noted that the developers might look for a word that’s more accurate than “affordable,” as \$300,000 is not accessible to many people. Spisak asked about minimum home sizes per Minnesota statutes. Goodfellow referenced an article in the Star Tribune that says Duluth recently eliminated house size requirements — a single family dwelling previously had to be at least 20 feet wide. After answering commissioners’ questions about financing and infrastructure costs, Goodfellow asked if any commissioners would commit to working with them toward a more formal preliminary proposal. Ron Brenner volunteered; Sanderson and Henry are willing to be involved. Sanderson is a nearby homeowner. Schmidt will be the main point of contact for the group.

Smitten suggested holding a community meeting for the city council and neighbors. Goodfellow asked for comments from those in attendance Oct. 29. Larry Whitaker advised looking into panelized (prefabricated) houses. Nancy Cosgriff said the vision was admirable. Gwen Roden noted it would be walkable to downtown, school or church.

Reminder: Short-term rental workshop with city council – Nov. 6; 6 pm

Variance discussion – review Marine’s application process per League of Minnesota Cities

State statute changed in 2011 regarding how municipalities should grant variances, from showing “undue hardship” to “practical difficulties.” In 2013 and 2014 the city updated its processes. League of Minnesota Cities has helpful documents about granting variances. Three questions: satisfy practical difficulty test for reasonableness and uniqueness; purpose and intent of zoning ordinance; whether it fits the comprehensive plan. Brenner noted that he brings basic information about variance requirements to applicants; it would be good if applicants were diving into this material. If the answer to any one of the questions is no, the variance must be denied. Additional questions apply to St. Croix River Overlay District. Planning commission members have a template to help outline facts, findings and recommendations.

The city’s comp plan and zoning code need to be updated to reflect changes in state statutes from hardship to practical difficulties.

Smitten noted that the League has a lot of helpful information about the topic. Spisak suggested members take training classes, as a first or as a refresher. City staff and Spisak will look into offerings from the League.

Brenner will send the checklist, applicant guide and template to staff for distribution to commissioners for review and revision. Once updated they can be given to residents curious about obtaining a variance.

Discussion of PC terms – Terms expiring in December: Jennifer Henry, Anna Hagstrom, Gerry Mrosła, Ron Brenner. Brenner has not decided whether he'll continue but others will. Clerk Peterson noted that the terms ideally should be staggered so four don't expire at once. Hagstrom said she would take a two or three year commitment. Commissioner appointments will be made at the December council meeting.

2040 Comp Plan: Review and revisions needed. Spisak reported that at least one error regarding future land use has been found, and suggested a review to see if there's anything else. Code changes have been dormant. Peterson noted the council initially put it off to see if new code changes would come because of the comp plan. The comp plan has now been adopted. STR will require a public hearing to change the ordinance, so that would be a good time to approve other proposed updates to the code. Staff will send zoning code proposed changes to PC and council.

Staff will also email Bolton & Menk for a final version of comp plan and post it to the city's website.

#### Approval of September minutes

*Smitten moved and Sanderson seconded to approve the September 24 meeting minutes. Hagstrom requested that the minutes read "The applicant stated there was currently a barn," regarding Scott Iwen's variance request. Minutes with changes approved by 5-0 vote (Spisak abstained, Mrosła absent).*

#### Adjournment

*Spisak moved and Sanderson seconded to adjourn at 9:20 pm. **Approved unanimously.***

Minutes by Suzanne Lindgren Dammann, Assistant City Clerk