

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Tuesday, November 10, 2020 - 7:30pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Chairman Gerry Mrosla, Commissioners Spisak, Smitten, Sanderson, Hagstrom.

Citizens present: Larry Martin, Mayor Glen Mills, Jeff Stonehouse.

Chairman Mrosla called the meeting to order at 7:36 p.m., noting that this was an extension of the October 2020 commission meeting, which had to be postponed due to technical difficulties.

Wireless Communications Ordinance progress update

Commissioner Spisak reported that the committee had drafted a proposal to hire a consultant with wireless communications expertise who could help guide the city's wireless ordinance process, Carly Kehoe, currently of Texas. She's done work in Minnesota and will be able to work remotely. She would be taking on two major tasks – creating a template the committee and commission can customize, one for macro infrastructure and one for small cell. In order to better understand the needs for service in Marine they've asked her to develop a map of towers in the immediate area and where there are gaps in coverage based on different carriers and tower sites.

The proposal asks for funds not-to-exceed \$5,000, unless approved by the city. The committee would like to ask for approval from council at their coming meeting.

Commissioner Sanderson added that when they started discussions with Ms. Kehoe she was in Minnesota, but recently separated from the firm. She has deep Minnesota connections and has worked on ordinances here. She has depth of knowledge required, and they can move forward with conversations they've had with her. Smitten added that the group sought proposals from two other consultants as well, and thought Ms. Kehoe was the most qualified.

There was consensus among commissioners to send the proposal to council. The assistant clerk will ask the clerk to include the proposal in the council packet.

Zoning Code updates

Chairman Mrosla noted his goal to finish the code and give it back to council for review, saying they should keep the review simple for now.

Commissioner Spisak said that was fine, but he thought some items still need work and had marked them for discussion tonight. Definitions, mostly. Commissioners Sanderson and Smitten discussed the previous to-do list, and proposed turning it into a cover memo for the council's consideration. The commission agreed, and turned to review of the zoning code.

Day Care: No changes.

Family Day Care: The commission discussed returning to the definitions at the November meeting, presuming Commissioner Henry would be there to discuss them. They also discussed adding day care facilities to the memo.

Outlot: Commissioner Smitten suggested putting a period at the end of “construction,” and the other commissioners agreed.

Steep Slope: Smitten noted that she would submit the standard definition from the DNR: a 12% slope.

308.4: Smitten suggested keeping the conditional use and variance language, and the other commissioners agreed.

311.5: Commissioner Spisak reported that solar needs a significant amount of attention and should go in the memo, saying the best thing for now is to delete it and say in the memo that it needs to be addressed. Smitten noted that the commission is already getting solar variance requests, and it would be helpful to have more guidance in the code.

405.7 & 510.6 Tree and Woodland Preservation – no change.

504.2 & 3; 505.2; 506.2; 507.2 Essential Services: Smitten suggested simply refer to these as essential services, and there was consensus from the commission to remove the detailed language.

506.6 (1): Smitten noted that it’s inconsistent to have lot area when you have setbacks, but there is not appetite for changing that right now.

508.7 (6) – Colors: Add this to the memo, because in the village center it seems like white is the theme.

Commissioner Hagstrom signed off at 8:30 p.m.

511.11 Variances in the Floodplain District: No changes.

Regarding the memo, commissioners will add to the working “to-do” list to prepare that as the memo.

New and Old Business

Chairman Mrosła noted that Commissioner Hagstrom had asked to discuss how to respond to citizen communications such as letters or calls. Commissioner Spisak noted that many calls or communications are an ex parte, and commissioners can’t comment on something that’s beyond the scope of the project before them. Mrosła suggested asking people to send the communication to staff at city hall. Sanderson added that some people might be frustrated that the commission didn’t go in their direction, but it doesn’t mean their input was not received and considered. Mrosła noted that councilmembers might have comments on this too, and said they would continue the conversation when Commissioner Hagstrom was present.

Approval of minutes

September 29 Regular Meeting

Spisak moved and Sanderson seconded approval of the minutes of the September 29 meeting as drafted. Roll call vote: Mroska – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Minutes approved.

October 15 Workshop Minutes

Spisak moved and Smitten seconded approval of the minutes of the October 15 meeting as drafted. Roll call vote: Mroska – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Sanderson – Abstain. Minutes approved.

Adjournment

Smitten moved and Sanderson seconded to adjourn at 8:50 pm. Roll call vote: Mroska – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Spisak – Aye; Smitten – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk.