

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 - 7:30pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present: Chairman Gerry Mrosla, Commissioners Tim Casey, Jennifer Henry, Kristina Smitten, Ed Sanderson, Anna Hagstrom. Absent: Ron Brenner.

Citizens present: Councilman Lon Pardun, Mayor Kevin Nyenhuis, Larry Martin, Mary Whitaker, Councilwoman Wendy Ward, Emily Blake.

Chairman Mrosla called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Welcome Tim Casey

Chair Mrosla welcomed Commissioner Casey and asked him to talk about his background. Casey explained that he has been an architect since 1991 and has done work across the nation. Mrosla noted that Casey had worked with the commission to get a variance at his property and Mrosla had been impressed by his knowledge of the rules and process.

Wireless Communications Ordinance progress update

Commissioner Sanderson gave background on the wireless communications project and reported that the committee has been working with a consultant on updating Marine's ordinance. Their most recent call was January 15. They discussed mapping and community concerns. Carly Kehoe will submit a template Feb. 1, and the committee will return it to her Feb. 15. They would like a joint workshop with the City Council between March 15 and March 18. The assistant clerk will start the process of checking for councilmember availability.

The commission would continue to work with Ms. Kehoe (KPCG) with the intent of having the commission do a full review with intent to recommend for adoption at the April 27 PC meeting.

Commissioner Smitten added that the idea to review multiple proposals through an RFP process would likely give the city more options and leverage in finding a proposal that considers the community's interest in a meaningful way.

Chairman Mrosla pointed out that according to the proposed schedule, the ordinance was unlikely to see approval before late May or early June. The commission discussed whether there would be places to shorten the timeline, but decided that the timeline seemed realistic for the complexity and long-term impacts of the task.

Commissioner Casey noted that the city should include requirements in its RFP process. Smitten agreed and said Kehoe could help with this, and help review the proposals as an independent third party.

PC Member Terms and Procedure for Recruitment Process

Chair Mrosla reported that a council member had expressed a desire to create a more formal process for commission appointments. Mrosla said that the process has been when the commission had a vacancy, he would typically ask someone to join. Then, when two spots opened up, the city had posted the openings and there was a more formal selection process.

Smitten noted that the existing selection process allows the commission to fill in gaps in knowledge. She added, however, that if the commission knows vacancies are coming it would be helpful to post, because it's a chance for people to volunteer who the commission might not think of.

Mrosla requested to revisit the topic in August.

New and Old Business

Communications: Commissioner Hagstrom raised the issue of how commissioners or city staff could respond to resident inquiries in a way that complied with Open Meeting Law and also let residents know their remarks were considered. Mrosla noted that he'd been advised to have commissioners ask residents to pass their concerns to administrative staff, who could pass the message on to all the commissioners.

Hagstrom noted that she had talked to someone who had submitted a comment through city staff and was frustrated because they never received a response from the commission. She suggested having city staff give a standardized response noting that their comments would be passed on to the commission, read, and considered. Other commissioners were friendly to this idea.

Commissioner Hagstrom was also interested in having a separate email address for commission-related communications, and asked whether that was something the city could provide. The assistant clerk will look into that. Chairman Mrosla asked the assistant clerk to check the League of Minnesota Cities website to see if they have any best practices regarding commissioner interactions with residents.

Approval of minutes

November 24 Meeting

Smitten moved and Sanderson seconded approval of the minutes of the November 24 meeting.

Roll call vote: Mrosla – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Henry – Aye; Hagstrom – Abstain; Casey – Abstain. Minutes approved as drafted.

Adjournment

Henry moved and Smitten seconded to adjourn at 8:17 pm. Roll call vote: Mrosla – Aye; Smitten – Aye; Sanderson – Aye; Henry – Aye; Casey – Aye; Hagstrom – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk.