

**CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX**  
**PLANNING COMMISSION**  
**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, January 25, 2022 - 7:30pm**  
**121 Judd Street with Option to Attend Remotely**

Present: Chair Gerry Mrosla (Zoom), Commissioners Scott Spisak, Tim Casey, Kristina Smitten, Anna Hagstrom, Jennifer Henry (Zoom), Ed Sanderson

Absent: None

Public: Lon Pardun, Wendy Ward, Steve Anderson (Vinco), Mike Bultsma (Vinco),

On Zoom: Nancy Cosgriff, Julie

Chair Mrosla called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Preapplication Meeting – Vinco Cell Tower

Mrosla noted that the city's request for proposals and Vinco's cell tower proposal were shared for the commission to review.

Commissioner Sanderson gave background on the project. A committee (Pardun, Sanderson, Smitten, Dana Anderson, Sara Rotunda) has been meeting since the proposals came in. Vinco's proposal initially looked at two sites: the compost site and public works site. The committee has been working with Vinco to look at other sites. Many places in town aren't feasible for various reasons. The committee is working to catalog the sites they've considered and their criteria for consideration. Vinco has started to do analysis with vendors on propagation mapping, and the committee and Vinco are working collaboratively to select a site and have the application ready for the February meeting.

The commission discussed site ranking and propagation mapping. Mike Bultsma of Vinco noted that the Science Museum observatory didn't offer good coverage. A private property site gave good coverage but conflicts with carrier's other sites. The compost site gives good coverage and doesn't conflict with other tower sites.

Commissioner Spisak asked about different frequencies. Bultsma answered that low frequencies (600-800 megahertz) usually offer better coverage but carry less information due to a "smaller pipe." High frequencies (1900 MHz) transfer more data but have poorer coverage.

Commissioner Smitten noted that the commission will want photo simulation showing what the tower will look like once the carrier equipment is on it.

The group discussed carriers and co-location. Spisak noted that an audience poll at the public hearing for the wireless ordinance, by a show of hands most people in Marine use Verizon. Lesser numbers use T-Mobile and AT&T. He asked about the process of getting a provider on a tower. Steve Anderson of Vinco said they were working on propagation maps with Verizon. Their desire is to have as many carriers ready to go as they can.

The group discussed stealth towers that are designed to blend in with the environment. Anderson of Vinco said in the past they painted monopoles. Now more communities want to leave the towers galvanized. They would propose paint, if that was desired. In wooded environments they've have done pine tree structures, but the tradeoff is structural loading. And in an open location without other trees, it really doesn't look like a tree.

Commissioner Sanderson noted that camouflage towers can be executed well: cactuses, flagpole towers. Bultsma and Anderson said a flagpole can be done but severely limits the amount of space for equipment, so co-location would be limited to two carriers total. Any work on the tower would have to be done with a crane (it can't be climbed). Mroska showed a photo of a monopole with a flag near his Florida residence, saying the tower gives poor reception. He's also concerned that co-location potential won't come to fruition.

The commission reviewed the 4G ordinance with Vinco, noting what the commission would need for the application for a conditional use permit to be considered complete. They established that initial approval could be given contingent upon documentation that design has been approved by a qualified, state-licensed engineer.

Commissioners Sanderson, Smitten, and Spisak volunteered to help with the preapplication process.

#### Discuss DNR Feedback on Zoning Code

Mroska noted that the DNR had 68 pages of feedback on the city's zoning code. Spisak noted that, per the DNR, comments in red were required changes but the commission owes it to the community to go through them and make sure they're necessary, seeking outside professional opinions if necessary.

Sanderson noted that the changes might possibly create inconsistencies with existing items in the code. It might be appropriate to consult with the city attorney and a local consultant familiar with codes.

Mroska had checked with the city attorney to see if the city could call for a moratorium while the commission works on this. Smitten noted that they would be delaying improvements to people's properties. City staff can let people know about the situation if and when they came in.

The group decided to split up the work and go through the comments. Commissioners would be responsible for looking at the comments as well as cross referencing throughout the zoning ordinance. They will also begin to look for a consultant planner with experience with river communities, and come up with ideas for next month for someone to assist us. Suzanne will assign comments to the commissioners in Microsoft Teams, and will ask Snyder to confirm whether the city must comply with the cited statute requirements (comments in red). "Please confirm that we have to comply with the cited statute requirements. Beyond that, what else are we obligated to comply with?"

## Discuss PC Work Plan

The group discussed top priorities:

2022

- DNR comments on the zoning ordinance
  - some of the items in the work plan are mentioned in the DNR comments (vegetative cutting, definitions for Lower St. Croix, substandard structures), which might eliminate some of the other items on the list
- Establishing 5G design guidelines (budgeted for this year)
- Comp plan consistency and errors: zoning map doesn't show light industrial
  - Schedule a talk with Bolton & Menk for June
- Lot area requirements, Q4 this year (need guidance from council)

2023

- Solar
- Residential Care Facilities; start research in 2022

Councilman Pardun said he believed the council has signed on to these. The commission should keep council informed and they'll talk more about policy things at the upcoming workshop on Long and Short-Term Goals.

## New and Old Business

- Appoint Acting Chair

Mroska is looking for someone to chair the meetings and attend council meetings while he's in Florida.

*Hagstrom nominated Commissioner Spisak as acting chair until Mroska's return. Smitten seconded the nomination. Roll call vote: Mroska — Aye; Smitten — Aye; Hagstrom — Aye; Casey — Aye; Sanderson — Aye; Henry — Aye. Spisak — Accepts. Motion approved unanimously.*

## Approval of November Minutes

*Spisak moved and Smitten seconded approval of the minutes of the November 30, 2021, Planning Commission meeting as drafted. Roll call vote: Mroska — Aye; Smitten — Aye; Spisak — Aye; Sanderson — Aye; Casey — Aye; Hagstrom — Aye; Henry — Aye. Motion approved unanimously.*

## Adjournment

*Spisak moved and Smitten seconded to adjourn at 9:10 pm. Roll call vote: Mroska — Aye; Hagstrom — Aye; Smitten — Aye; Spisak — Aye; Sanderson — Aye; Casey — Aye; Henry — Aye. Motion passed unanimously.*

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk.