

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Tuesday, August 30, 2022 - 7:30pm
121 Judd Street and Remotely

Present: Chair Scott Spisak, Commissioners Gerry Mrosla, Ed Sanderson, Kristina Smitten, Jennifer Henry, Tim Casey

Absent: Commissioner Anna Hagstrom

Citizens Present: Luke Christenson, Rita Trapp (HKGi), Beth Richmond (HKGi)

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

Approval of Agenda

Mrosla moved and Sanderson seconded approval of the agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

July 26 Regular Meeting

Smitten moved and Henry seconded to approve the minutes of the July 26 City of Marine on St. Croix Planning Commission meeting as drafted. Motion carried unanimously.

Application: Variance for setback and Conditional Use Permit for accessory apartment

Luke Christenson – 350 Judd St

Mr. Christenson was in attendance to explain updates to his building plans.

Building 2 (“the shack”): Will be rebuilt in the same footprint with the same peak height. The original plan included raising the height of the roof, but the permit process can now be handled administratively. He’d like to build the shack this fall.

Proposed Garage: The 22’x30’ garage would be placed 5 feet from property line. The current garage crosses over the property line onto platted-but-undeveloped Wilke St., so this plan increases compliance with the zoning code, but would still require a variance from the required 30-foot front yard setback (from Wilke). The septic tank prevents the garage from being placed farther from the property line and this placement also preserves a mature maple. Because Mr. Christenson requests a bathroom, he also needs a conditional use permit for an “accessory apartment” in the St. Croix Urban Residential District. He’d like to build the garage next spring, and would like more time to design the garage before the case goes to public hearing.

Old Business

• Consultant Planner

Chair Spisak introduced Rita Trapp and Beth Richmond of HKGi to the full Planning Commission. After introductions, the group moved on to discuss the Zoning Code.

• Zoning Code: Review DNR Comments

Spisak explained that it’s been 20 years since the city updated its zoning code. The Commission

has been working on updates since before 2015, but there have been various delays. Last year the commission moved a draft forward for review by the DNR and City Council. The DNR came back with voluminous comments, mostly because DNR guidance hadn't previously been adopted into the code. The commission doesn't know the full extent of some of the DNR's proposed changes. For instance, if the village hall burned down, would the city be able to rebuild it? They have a lot of questions about unintended consequences. Sanderson added that they'd like to know if they would be creating nonconforming uses, especially with downtown businesses.

Trapp and Richmond asked questions for additional context and shared insights. In the code, substandard structures and uses appear to be two areas that the city will want to negotiate terms with the DNR, in a spirit of collaboration. Before that, the city will need to revisit legal descriptions for zoning districts, and research the history of base districts and overlay district standards. With that information, Marine should be able to build a case for uses that were in place before coming under the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. Richmond did some initial research into whether similar communities been able to get exceptions or modifications. Afton's seemed promising. It will also be important to get an accurate zoning map in place. Right now, the zoning map contains some errors. The city will pursue fixing those with the city engineer.

Smitten added that the planners should feel empowered to jump in with solutions that accomplish a goal better than what is being proposed. The city is trying to comply with DNR regulations while protecting Marine's historic character.

Regarding floodplain regulations, Marine's are in the city code (Chapter 21) rather than the zoning code. The DNR said that was acceptable, and that the city should delete Section 511 from the zoning code. It would be good to find a way to reference the regulations in the zoning code so it's not missed. It would also be nice to have a floodplain map for residents to reference.

• **5G Design Guidelines Draft**

Mroska talked about satellite cellular service that could make 4G monopolies obsolete within a couple of years, and asked how that would affect the city's cell tower plan. It could make 5G more feasible as well. People with T-Mobile are already getting better service in Marine. Spisak said that Marine doesn't know what 5G is going to look like, but needs to get the guidelines in place. Sanderson noted that the tower ordinance requires taking the tower down if it becomes obsolete and is no longer being used. The topic will be revisited next month.

• **Maggie Raedeke – Capstone Project**

No update this month. Commissioners Casey and Sanderson will work with Ms. Raedeke on the project.

New Business

None.

Adjournment

Mroska moved and Smitten seconded to adjourn at 8:53 pm. All in favor. Passed unanimously.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk