

CITY OF MARINE ON ST. CROIX
PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES

Tuesday, July 25, 2023 - 7:30pm
121 Judd Street

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

Absent: Commissioners Jennifer Henry and Anna Hagstrom

Citizens Present: Sharon Looney, Stacey Looney, Beth Richmond (HKGi)

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

Approval of Agenda

Casey moved to approve the agenda. Mrosla seconded Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

May 30 Regular Meeting

Casey moved to approve the minutes of the May 30 City of Marine on St. Croix Planning Commission meeting as drafted. Mrosla seconded. Smitten abstained due to absence from the May meeting. Sanderson, Mrosla, Casey, and Spisak in favor. Motion carried.

Conditional Use Permit Preapplication – Sharon Looney – 331 Third St.

Sharon Looney and her daughter, Stacey Looney, were in attendance to discuss a potential CUP for a bathroom in the loft above the garage. The property is in the St. Croix Urban Residential District and is on the City's septic system.

Stacey explained that they are planning in-home care for Sharon as she ages. They would like to have a guest room above the garage with a bed and bathroom, for a nurse. This would require a conditional use permit for an "accessory apartment." Chair Spisak explained the CUP process and timeline, noting that the commission has historically allowed accessory apartments to contain either a bathroom or kitchen facilities, but not both.

Commissioners Mrosla and Casey volunteered to meet with the Looneys for a site visit. They will coordinate with public works staff as needed to assess the impacts of City septic on the plan.

Old Business

Zoning Code

- **Code Audit and Updates**

Chair Spisak told the Commission that the Council, at its July meeting, had approved up to \$13,000 in new spending, which will allow HKGi to extensively revise the code by early 2024. Planner Beth Richmond said their staff had already started work, and have reformatted the code, created tables, and are grouping standards for uses.

- **Riverway Regulations**

The Commission reviewed the most recent version of draft riverway regulations, including several items Ms. Richmond identified for feedback.

Substandard Structures: Ms. Richmond had revised the draft language to meet DNR requirements. Under these regulations, structures built prior to Lower St. Croix Riverway protections that don't meet current setbacks from the ordinary high-water level or bluff line cannot be replaced except through a variance process.

The Commission believes the regulations proposed by the DNR would severely limit the ability to rebuild historic structures in Marine including the Village Hall, General Store, and Marine Landing. Over time this could have dramatic impacts on the character of the City, and the issue should be clarified now. Staff will work with commissioners to draft an inquiry to send to the city attorney.

Substandard Lots: Ms. Richmond asked whether the Commission was ready to finalize 60% as the minimum area requirement for which a lot is buildable without a variance. The commission believes this is consistent with regulations of surrounding communities, and will have the fewest unintended consequences.

Agricultural Use: In the draft of the full code, agriculture is a conditional use in the SFR, SFU, and SC-UR districts, but permitted in SC-RR. Ms. Richmond asked the Commission how to handle this inconsistency. Given recent concerns over industrial agriculture and relatively small property sizes in Marine, the Commission reached a consensus to allow agriculture as a conditional use in all districts.

Marine Mill Site: Ms. Richmond had added language restricting impervious surface on riparian lots in the Village Center District to 20%, reflecting standards in the SC-UR district. After seeing a map of slopes and bluff line setbacks on the property, Spisak asked Ms. Richmond to share a similar map with the DNR showing that most of the property cannot be developed. Spisak noted that the Mill Site is also a historical site with archaeological interests. The Commission would like to avoid adding an additional layer of regulation if possible.

Reflections on Maggie Raedeke's Capstone Project and Workshop on the Water

Commissioners informally discussed these recent commission-related events.

New Business

Chair Comments: Council has approved the 5G Guidelines and the Commission is done with this item. The Commission is waiting to see updated City septic maps; the assistant clerk will check on these for the next meeting. Smitten offered kudos to the chair for his leadership in conveying the need for professional code updates and securing funding from Council.

Adjournment

Mroska moved and Casey seconded to adjourn at 8:45 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes taken by Suzanne Dammann, Assistant City Clerk