



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA
February 24, 2014
7:00pm

1) Call to Order

Heck called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

In attendance: Planning Commission – Chair Mark Heck, Patricia Thoele, Michael Molitor, John Strandell, Lora Sandholm and Mike Stulberg; City Council liaison Mayor Cheryl Fischer; City Staff – Community Development Director David Abel and City Clerk Terri Haarstad.

a) Approval of Agenda

By unanimous consent, the agenda was approved as amended.

Add item 3c) Planning Commissioner Updates

b) Oath of Office and swearing in of new Planning Commissioner, Patricia Thoele

Mayor Fischer issued the oath of office to Patricia Thoele.

c) Approval of Minutes – January 27, 2014

Motion by Stulberg second by Sandholm to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion carried 6 – 0.

2) Public Hearing:

a) VARIANCE: Application from Joshua & Jennifer Riff for a Lakeside Setback Variance from 75 feet to 48.7 feet to construct a screen porch on the property located at 4779 Crane Island, R-1 zoning, PID# 36-117-24-23-0010.

Abel presented the staff report as found in the staff report dated February 24, 2014. He pointed out that staff received seven letters from citizens supporting the variance although one requested buffering and staff added that request to staff recommendations. Abel also noted that a second story addition on the porch or future additions to the residential structure that do not comply with the setback requirements would require a variance.

Joshua and Jennifer Riff (4779 Crane Island) described the project, provided reasoning for the addition and offered to answer commissioner questions.

Heck opened the public hearing at 7:09pm.

Dan Cornejo (1657 Saunders Ave, St. Paul) spoke on behalf of his client Katina Johnstone (4780 Crane Island). He asked how this variance application fit into the comprehensive plan, expressed concern about maintaining the history of small structures, noise and disruption of the future enjoyment of his client's property, the view and retaining the strong sense of community. Ms. Johnstone would like the City to require the applicants to work with a landscape architect to design a living buffer to shield her property from the addition. She would also like

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the city to require the applicant install double pane windows on all three sides of the screen porch that could be closed to shield her property from potential noise from the Riff's cabin.

Carl Beard, the Riff's design architect, spoke regarding the request for windows. He stated that the Riff's would prefer to not install windows in their screen porch but that they planned to install canvas covers for the windows to keep out inclement weather. Should a need arise to cover the windows, they would certainly be able to use these canvass covers. He stated that a registered landscape artist from his office has made a recommendation regarding vegetation and suggested there is no need for the Riff's to be required to contract another one.

Margaret Ford (4788 Crane Island) stated that almost everyone on the island has a screen porch. They are commonly used to play games, have breakfast and so on. She stated that there is a porch on the existing property but that it is too small to use.

Mary McCarthy (4778 Crane Island) confirmed that everyone on that side of the island has small lots and screen porches. Everyone has had small children and noise has never been an issue. She has the canvass awnings that Carl Beard described and spoke in favor of the Riff's proposed project.

Lewis Remele Jr (4795 Crane Island) pointed out that the community tennis courts are nearby and pointed out that the proposed screen porch is not inconsistent with current use of the island. He considered Tina Johnstone a friend but respectfully disagrees with her requests and spoke in support of the variance. He pointed out that most property owners use the canvass coverings for their porches and expressed appreciation that the Riff's were keeping the historical nature of the island in mind in designing their project.

Heck closed the public hearing at 7:48pm.

Discussion included:

- Whether or not it meets variance criteria
- Whether or not it infringes on anyone else's property rights
- Whether or not the applicant should be required to install a buffer
- Whether or not requiring window is in keeping with the nature of the other historic properties on the island

Motion by Stulberg second by Heck to approve the variance with staff conditions 2 through 6, striking staff condition 1. Motion carried 5 – 1. (Molitor)

Motion by Molitor second by Strandell to amend the motion to include condition 1. Motion failed with 3 – 3 vote. (Heck, Stulberg and Sandholm)

3) Informational Items:

a) Staff Reports

Abel informed the Planning Commission that John Watson joined the board of a nonprofit organization that has conflicting meeting dates. As such, he tendered

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his resignation. He also informed the Commissioners that the Wallace property located at 950 County Road 110 N will be going to the LMCD in March and pending delays will be presented to the Minnetrista Planning Commission at the March meeting.

b) Council Reports

Fischer informed that Commissioners that the Council was spending a lot of time on efficiencies with St. Bonifacius, water treatment, lake area joint branding efforts, issues with snow, the snowplow accident last Thursday and Trista Day.

c) Planning Commissioner Reports

Heck informed the Planning Commission that he may not be in attendance at the March Planning Commission meeting.

4) Adjournment

Motion by Heck second by Sandholm to adjourn the meeting at 8:17pm. Motion carried 6 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri Haarstad
City Clerk

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