

May 5, 2020

The Scandia Planning Commission held their regular monthly meeting on the above date with modifications. Due to the health advisory issued by the State regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, to avoid public gatherings and limit social contact, the meeting was conducted over an electronic platform. All Planning Commissioners, staff, and participants who joined the meeting remotely could hear each other and contribute to discussions. City Administrator Cammilleri, Deputy Clerk Eklund and City Planner Merritt Clapp-Smith were present in the Council Chambers. Cammilleri was the presenter and displayed the meeting materials for participants to view on their remote screens.

Chair Dan Squyres called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Roll call was taken. The following were participants to the meeting: Commissioners Greg Amundson, Jan Hogle, Travis Loeffler, Perry Rynders and Chair Dan Squyres.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA, MINUTES

Loeffler, second by Hogle, moved to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

Hogle, second by Amundson, moved to approve the April 7, 2020 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING: VARIANCES AT 12140 196TH STREET NORTH TO RECONSTRUCT A RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE. JEFF HOLKER, APPLICANT

Jeff Holker has applied for variances from lake setback and side setback to reconstruct a residential structure at 12140 196th Street located on Big Marine Lake. The existing cabin is nonconforming from the required 100-foot lake setback and 20-foot sideyard setback. The applicant owns the 2 adjacent lots (Lots 1 and 2, Block 2 of Beckstrom Addition) and has applied to Washington County to combine the lots into one.

Planner Merritt Clapp-Smith presented the staff report with details of the request. The new residential structure has a wrap-around porch on the front which will be the same distance from the lake as the current building. The sides of the porch, as well as an attached garage, will be wider on each side than the existing house, thereby increasing the nonconformity of frontage width within the lake setback area. The porch will be 5.9' from the side lot line to the north. Clapp-Smith explained that expansion of a nonconforming structure away from the lake is allowed, but it's the expansion of the width that is visible from the lake that triggers the need for variances. The applicant's plans for the reconstructed home will use the existing structure and foundation instead of a complete teardown. The attached garage must be angled to the side to avoid the septic area which takes up much of the lot width along the street.

Planner Clapp-Smith reported on the City Engineer's comments that a drainage and utility easement be extended on the southern part of the lot down to the lake to handle the discharge from a culvert under Lakamaga Trail. The Carnelian-Marine Watershed will require stormwater management and erosion control permits and buffers. The DNR did not reply to a request for comments.

Planner Clapp-Smith concluded with a listing of findings and conditions for recommendation to approve the variance request. The proposed replacement of the existing structure with expansion away from the lake is in general harmony with the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code and a reasonable use of the property; practical difficulties of the site are not caused by the landowner; the proposed size is not out of character for the area; and the request is the minimum action required to eliminate the practical difficulties – the proposed expansion is a modest addition for livability. A resolution to approve the variances was prepared with seven conditions, including the Engineer and Watershed requirements for drainage and erosion control.

Chair Squyres questioned what exactly is the practical difficulty. Commissioner Rynders asked for clarification that adding on to the back of the home does not require a variance from lake setback; Planner Clapp-Smith replied that is correct, it's the expansion to the side that triggers a variance. The proposed porch to the north lot line is beyond the original footprint.

Chair Squyres opened the public hearing at 7:31 p.m.

Ron Helms, 12160 196th Street, said he lives to the north and has no concerns or objections to the request, other than that proper drainage is achieved at completion.

Glen Bechtold, 12020 196th Street, stated his support.

Josie and Jeff Holker, applicants said they trying to minimize impacts to the land and neighbors.

There were no other comments and Chair Squyres closed the hearing at 7:39 p.m.

Chair Squyres voiced his concern about the proximity of the structure to the lake, with the deck measuring 8.8' from the OWHL. Squyres said this is not a good situation and the addition is making it worse because it is increasing lot coverage within the lake setback. When approving variances, they try to bring the situation into conformity and he would prefer to see that they move the house away from the lake. Squyres asked the applicant to describe the practical difficulty.

Mr. Holker explained that the lot has a small buildable area and that the septic system eliminates much of it along the road. They are trying to maintain some of the existing cabin with the rebuild and building away from the lake.

Chair Squyres said approval would set precedent in making a non-conforming property more non-conforming and he doesn't see this as the minimum required action. The proposal offers no protection to the lake.

The Commissioners discussed Planner Clapp-Smith's reference in the report that defines a porch as a structure but a deck that is within 3' of the ground is not a structure.

Mr. Holker explained that the covered porch will be no wider than the existing roofline. Everything else is moving back away from the lake to minimize impacts. He is proposing minimal improvements like a single-stall garage to make the structure feasible. Dylan Howard,

the builder, provided comments during the meeting that there are septic location issues if the house were to be moved closer to the road, and that raingardens will be installed to offset runoff. Mr. Holker explained that this is an opportunity to correct the drainage from Lakamaga Trail that is now funneling 12 acres of runoff from the north through his property and going directly into the lake.

The Commissioners continued to discuss alternative designs and concluded that the request should be tabled to allow the applicant to return with a revised plan that offers protection to the lake. Commissioners decided that improved lake setback should be a priority.

Mr. Holker agreed to request an extension to the review of his variance application to allow time to return with a revised plan and data from the Watershed. Commissioners asked that total lot coverage be provided on any revised plans.

Loeffler, seconded by Amundson, moved to table the request for a variance at 12140 196th Street to allow the applicant time to revise the plans for the project. Roll call vote: Rynders – yes; Loeffler – yes; Amundson – yes; Hogle – yes; Squyres – yes. Motion carried 5-0.

DRAFT LOWER ST. CROIX COMPREHENSIVE WATERSHED PLAN 60-DAY REVIEW

Last month, the Commissioners received the Draft Lower St. Croix Comprehensive Watershed Plan to review for comments before its final adoption later this year. No discrepancies with local regulations were identified. Staff will provide comments of support to the Lower St. Croix Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Loeffler, second by Amundson, moved to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried 5-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Eklund
City Clerk