



PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 10, 2023

Members: Joshua Goldstein, Etienne Hancock (Chair), John Meyer, and Tom Snipp

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Zoning Administrator Todd Thomas

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS:

Conservation Commission Co-Chair Ron Stancliff, Tim Magee, Tom Cloutier, Martin Green, Bob Provost, Dave Hibma, Jim Lovinsky, Damon Lee, and Gary Bourne

CALL TO ORDER

1. Prior Council meeting minutes

Member Meyer moved to approve the December 14th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion (Member Goldstein arrived after this vote).

DISCUSS

1. Development & density bonus for all-electric bldgs

Jim Lovinsky, the Executive Director of Lamoille Housing Partnership, explained how he recently constructed a 24-unit all-electric apartment building on Hutchins Street. He added the solar panels on the roofs of electric buildings were important to offset the cost of Vermont's higher electric rates. Bob Provost, the developer of the soon-to-be 23-unit Jersey Heights townhouse development, said the current building codes pushed him into doing an all-electric development when he breaks ground in the spring. He encouraged the Council to investigate Williston's point system for energy efficiency, as well as the transfer of development rights (which are often quite attractive to developers). The Council turned its attention to incenting the retrofit of fossil fuel fired buildings to electric. It was agreed that grid capacity conversations at MW&L would be needed before such a policy could be put into place. A town program that traded Selectboard tax stabilization in exchange for all-electric building retrofits was also discussed.

2. Review of initial 2023 zoning changes from DRB

Mr. Thomas led the Council through an initial review of the DRB language interpretation issues from the fall that had to wait to be reviewed until the then pending zoning changes were approved. From these changes, the Council, by consensus, agreed to the proposed §204 Waiver calculation language and the revised §820.5 Street naming process change. Mr. Thomas was directed to make further edits to §206(a) Architectural Repetition, and §§206(d)&(e) regarding the currently ambiguous requirements for front porches and public entrances when a corner lot was under consideration. Mr.

Thomas said that he would make these additional edits for the next Council meeting,

3. ZBL language issues from Dec 14th DRB meeting

The Council discussed language interpretation issues from the December 14th DRB meeting. From this discussion, it was agreed that the Dwelling Unit Two-Family use would be regulated under §206 Design Criteria as part of the next zoning change, and §206 Design Criteria regulation would also be expanded into the Medium Density Residential (MDR) Zone. After a lengthy discussion, and citing the current housing crisis, Council Members declined to remove the Dwelling Unit Two-Family use from the MDR Zone. However, it was agreed that Mr. Thomas should further edit §206 to ensure that new garages had to be setback from the front plane of new buildings. Mr. Thomas was also directed to propose alternate front setbacks (minimum and maximum) for the Council to consider in the MDR Zone.

Member Goldstein reiterated his preference for having buildings as close to the road as possible in a village or commercial setting. Mr. Thomas also agreed to study revising the §204.5 allowance for multi-family dwellings in the Commercial Zone, and to revise the §510(n) requirement for walking / hiking trails in the dedicated open space of a conservation subdivision, towards the goal of ensuring public access to the open space when the development is accessed by a private road system.

4. Town Plan Implementation Plan 1-year letters

The Council discussed its Town Plan Objective letter that encouraged the Selectboard to create a Housing Committee. Mr. Thomas said the Town Administrator seemed initially opposed to its creation, especially if the committee would be standing and not temporary. Mr. Thomas instructed the Council that they would need to attend the next Selectboard meeting to lobby for the committee's creation if it were to become a reality.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director

Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Planning Council meeting.