



PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 14, 2023

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

Absent:

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Zoning Administrator Todd Thomas

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Selectboard Member Judy Bickford, Zeph Bryant, Tom Cloutier, Mary Goderwis, Laura & Martin Green, Mike Krancer, Damon Lee, Jeff Manosh, Julie Marks of the VT Short-Term Rental Alliance (VTSTRA), Brook Scatchard, Laura Streets, and Grant Wieler.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hancock called the meeting to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Old Tegu Theatre at 43 Portland St at approximately 5:00 P.M. A discussion about the Jersey Heights sidewalk project, via consensus, was added to the agenda.

1. Approve prior Planning Council meeting minutes

Member Goldstein moved to approve the January 24th meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0-1 affirmed the motion with Member Magee abstaining.

DISCUSS

1. Julie Marks from VT Short-Term Rental Alliance

Julie Marks of the Vermont Short-Term Rental Alliance (VTSTRA) appeared before the Council to discuss the Town's new short-term housing regulations, and statewide trends regarding short-term rentals. Her data, as of December 2022, showed that approximately 5% of the Town's total housing stock (142 units) was being used as short-term rental. Ms. Marks said that her organization, VTSTRA, did not object to the concept of short-term rental registries, and noted that Killington has what appears to be a reasonable registry in operation. Chair Hancock asked Ms. Marks if she had any recommendations regarding the town's short-term housing regulations. Ms. Marks suggested allowing purpose built short-term rentals, as well as the conversion of existing commercial or industrial buildings into short-term rentals, as both options would bring more tourists and additional economic activity to Morrisville without detracting from the supply of existing housing stock. Mike Krancer objected to the first proposal to allow purpose-built short-term rentals because many of the building lots they would be sited on would reduce opportunities to build badly needed non-short-term housing. Planning Director Thomas cited the letter delivered earlier in the day from Selectboard Member McDowell regarding his previously requested +1 off-site short-term rental allowance. The Council discussed its clear preference for keeping short-term rentals on-site to keep the landlord accessible

and accountable to his or her neighbors for any bad guest behavior. Zeph Bryant spoke in support of the +1 off-site rental allowance. Mary Goderwis said she supported only allowing owner occupied rentals. Laura Streets said she supported creating a rental registry. Zeph Bryant agreed. The Council thanked everyone for their participation and commentary and said they would continue to study the ideas discussed this evening.

2. §206 Design Criteria edits DRB interpretation issues

The Council discussed language interpretation issues from recent Development Review Board (DRB) meetings. Upon a question from Member Snipp, former DRB Member Laura Streets expressed the importance of eliminating subjectivity in the zoning language. From this discussion, it was agreed that the revised architectural repetition portion of §206, Design Criteria, of the Zoning Bylaws would be included as part of the fall 2023 zoning changes. Mr. Thomas was also instructed to re-revise the proposed §206 Design Criteria rules for setbacks for garages and road-facing garage doors.

3. Tools to incentivize development of single-family homes in LDR Zone that use MW&L services

Mr. Thomas submitted a list of tools the Town could offer (sorted between no cost items and items with a tax cost) to incentivize development of new single-family homes in the portions of the Low Density Residential (LDR) Zone that could be accessed by MW&L water and sewer services. After a lengthy discussion, the Council directed Mr. Thomas to add a new provision to the existing waiver within the Conservation Subdivision Bylaw that allows smaller lot sizes and density if the proposed development will be hooked onto MW&L water and sewer services (as opposing to tying up what little land remains undeveloped in the village with septic systems).

4. Discussion (agenda addendum): Jersey Heights sidewalk project

Mr. Thomas alerted Council Members that their Jersey Heights sidewalk completion project was warned incorrectly on the printed ballot for Town Meeting Day. Mr. Thomas added that Town Counsel said the ballot could not be legally corrected, and the result of the vote would be non-binding because the ballot was asking voters to fund a sidewalk on Jersey Way instead of Jersey Heights. The Council Members were instead informed that the vote to fund the construction to fill the gaps between developer-built sidewalks on Jersey Heights would now take place as a floor vote at a Special Town Meeting on April 18th at 6:00 P.M. in the Peoples Academy Auditorium. Mr. Thomas asked Council Members to allow Town Administration to spread the word about the ballot mistake and the Special Town Meeting vote in April when the sidewalk expenditure would be legally decided.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 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.