

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
PO Box 748 / Morrisville, VT 05661
Phone (802) 888-6373

Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 14 March 2023

Council Members present: Joshua Goldstein, Etienne Hancock (Chair), and John Meyer

Council Members absent: Tim Magee

Guests: Jamie Brewster, Tom Cloutier, Martin Green, and Wally Reeve.

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

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. The Council discussed adding reorganization to the agenda, but it was decided to wait until all the Planning Council Members could be present to reorganize.

Meeting Minutes: Member Goldstein moved to approve the February 14th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion.

Discussion: Jersey Heights sidewalk infill sections for town vote – Council Members were informed that the advertised vote to fund the construction to fill the gaps between developer-built sidewalks on Jersey Heights may not take place at the Special Town Meeting on April 18th at 6:00 P.M. in the Peoples Academy Auditorium. Council Members who were concerned about this schedule change were instructed to attend the special Selectboard meeting regarding the Jersey heights sidewalk tomorrow night. It was decided that Members Goldstein and Meyer would attend this meeting, supporting the Council's sidewalk infill initiative. Mr. Thomas recommended against petitioning a vote on this sidewalk infill project due to the estimated \$15,000 cost for holding an election.

Discussion: Short-term housing regulations after VTSTRA talk – Council Members discussed the presentation from Julie Marks of the Vermont Short-Term Rental Alliance (VTSTRA) at the previous Council meeting regarding the Town's new short-term housing regulations, and statewide short-term rental trends. It was discussed that Ms. Marks suggestions for allowing the conversion of existing commercial or industrial buildings into short-term rentals could not be practicably accomplished without the Town creating a rental registry. The Council decided to leave their relatively new short-term rental regulations unchanged, other than the owner-occupied clarification by former Member Steve Foster, until there was willingness expressed from the Selectboard and Trustees to explore and potentially move forward with creating a rental registry.

Discussion: §206 Design Criteria revisions for garages & outdoor space – Council Members discussed §206 Design Criteria Zoning Bylaw interpretation issues from recent Development Review Board (DRB) meetings regarding required outdoor space per dwelling unit and garage sizing in relation to the primary road frontage. From this discussion, it was agreed that the evening's proposed revisions to §206 Design Criteria would be included as part of the 2023 zoning changes.

Discussion: Town Plan implementation letter (bury powerlines) – Mr. Thomas noted that the Town Plan initiative to bury the overhead utilities in downtown Morrisville would be discussed at tomorrow's Village Trustee meeting. The specific request to the Trustees was for them to appoint a committee to study burying or diverting the overhead power and utility lines within the heart of downtown Morrisville, and to allow a qualified MW&L staff-person to serve on said committee for up to 2 hours per month. Mr. Thomas reiterated for the audience that this was effort was very much a long-term project.

Discussion: Development & density bonus for all-electric buildings – Mr. Thomas noted that the Town Plan initiative for electrifying buildings would also be discussed at tomorrow evening's Village Trustee meeting. Chair Hancock said that he thought this discussion was more of a formality since MW&L staff had already confirmed that such a program would not foreseeably cause any issues with the local power grid (other than transformer or transmission line upgrades on certain streets).

Discussion: Interviews for open Planning Council seat & recommendation – Wally Reeve interviewed for the open Planning Council seat. Mr. Reeve spoke to his previous years of community service, which included the Fire Department (Chief), and a 7-year stint as a Village Trustee. It was noted that Mr. Reeve was the only candidate applying for the open seat, but he was more than qualified. Member Goldstein moved to recommend Wally Reeve for the open Planning Council seat to the Selectboard and Trustees for approval. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director