

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 11 April 2023

Council Members present: Joshua Goldstein (on phone), Etienne Hancock (Chair), Tim Magee, John Meyer, & Wally Reeve

Council Members absent:

Guests: Conservation Commission Co-Chair Ron Stancliff, Brian Hamor, Brooke Scatchard, Tom Cloutier, Laura & Martin Green

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. Planning Director Thomas reminded everyone that the Planning Council meeting on April 25th would not take place due to school vacation week and a staff vacation.

Meeting Minutes: Member Goldstein moved to approve the March 14th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0-2 affirmed the motion, with Members Magee & Reeve abstaining.

Vote: Annual reorganization

Mr. Thomas said that the Council must reorganize per the “Rules for Jointly Appointed Boards.” Member Goldstein moved to reappoint Etienne Hancock as Chair. A vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion. Member Reeve moved to appoint Josh Goldstein as Vice- Chair (filling Tom Snipp’s recently vacated position). A vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion.

Discussion: Town Plan implementation letter (bury overhead utilities downtown)

Planning Council Members reviewed a letter designed to initiate the Town Plan designated priority of burying the overhead utilities in downtown Morrisville. After Council Members directed Mr. Thomas to make a few small edits to the letter, Member Reeve moved to have Chair Hancock sign it and send it to the Selectboard so this committee could be created. A vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion.

Discussion: Jersey Heights sidewalk infill section vote at Special Town Meeting

Council Members discussed the Special Town Meeting vote that would take place on April 18th regarding funding the construction to fill the gaps between developer-built sidewalks on Jersey Heights. It was agreed that a letter should be mailed to nearby property owners expressing facts about the sidewalk proposal due to all the misinformation being posted about it on Front Porch Forum. Mr. Thomas asked Planning Council Members to be ready to speak at the Special Town Meeting about this project.

Discussion: Conservation Subdivision changes for affordable housing in LDR Zone

Council Members discussed proposed changes to the Conservation Subdivision Bylaw intended to help create more affordable housing in the Low Density Residential (LDR) Zone. These changes, which would only be available in the LDR Zone, included allowing townhouses when Class 1 Development is available, and adding a density bonus that would allow for the creation of smaller than normally allowed lots for single-family

homes when Class 2 Development was available. Council Members, after a brief discussion of proposed State legislation that would impact local Zoning Bylaws statewide, said they were amenable to these proposed edits. Mr. Thomas said these edits would be included as part of the larger fall zoning change.

Discussion: HDR multi-family use size permit differentiation for adaptive reuse

Mr. Thomas asked if DRB hearings should be necessary to add small amounts of new housing within existing accessory buildings (using the carriage house and barn conversion on W. High Street and Winter Street as respective examples). It was discussed how the adaptive reuse of such buildings, regales of density requirements, had far less impact on the environment and neighboring property owners than new construction. The Council decided to allow the by the Zoning Administrator to administratively approve the adaptive reuse of accessory buildings that existed on 1 January 2023 into 1 or 2 new dwelling units. Mr. Thomas said that this change would be included as part of the larger fall zoning change.

Discussion: Development & density bonus for all-electric buildings – Mr. Thomas noted that the Council’s recent initiative to incentivize all-electric buildings was also discussed at last week’s Housing Committee meeting. He opined that both Boards would likely be working towards creating a matrix of density bonuses that were meant to encourage desired town outcomes, like smaller lots, smaller homes, ownership of said homes, and the home being all-electric. Brian Hamor asked if wood fired backup heat would be allowed. The Council decided that it would not prohibit as such, and it would wait to see what the Housing Committee came up with before proceeding further with this proposal.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director