

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 8 August 2023

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

Council Members absent: Tim Magee, & Wally Reeve

Guests: Tom Cloutier, Martin Green, Damon Lee, Kristen Fogdall, Yon & Todd Perras

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order under the event tent at Copley Country Club at 443 Copley Country Club Drive at approximately 5:00 P.M.

Meeting Minutes: Member Meyer moved to approve the July 25th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed.

Discuss: Planning Council membership

Planning Director Thomas said that the Selectboard voted unanimously to remove Tim Magee from the Planning Council last night. He added that once the Trustees make the same action, Town Administration will advertise for a new Planning Council volunteer.

Discuss: Letter to SB about downgrading certain Town roads

Mr. Thomas said that he was joined at last night's Selectboard meeting by Highway Superintendent Kevin Barrows and Planning Council Chair Etienne Hancock. Mr. Thomas explained that the Selectboard seemed open to the Planning Council's August 3rd letter regarding downgrading existing dead-end town roads that did not meet the Town's minimum requirements. He related that the Selectboard Members would be driving these roads on the list contained in the letter and discuss their reactions at an additional discussion of this topic at the August 21st Selectboard meeting.

Discuss: Make another meals, rooms, and alcohol local option tax pitch to SB?

The Council discussed the results of its August 2nd letter that asked the Selectboard to appoint a committee to study adopting the 1% local option tax for rooms, meals, and alcohol. Mr. Thomas said that one Selectboard Member (Streets) was opposed to this tax due to the fragility of local restaurants, but the other 3 Selectboard Members seemed open to exploring it. Mr. Thomas related that most of the discussion focused on the need to have a charter for this tax, and if the existing Village charter should be used or if the Town should create its own charter. The Selectboard decided to meet with the Trustees about this topic before moving forward on appointing the study committee as requested in the Council's letter.

Discuss: Additional string light zoning change

Mr. Thomas said that Member Reeve, who could not attend tonight, stopped by his office to request an additional change be made to the newly agreed to rule that allowed holiday or string lights to be used year-round provided that said lights are turned off by 10:00pm nightly, are attached to structures, and located outside of required setbacks. Mr. Reeve requested that all non-holiday string lights also not be located above the drip edge of a

structure's roof. All Council Members agreed to this change via consensus. Mr. Thomas said this lighting edit would be included as part of the larger fall zoning change.

Discuss: Commercial vitality ground-floor zoning use query

Mr. Thomas said that he completed the research requested at the last Council meeting regarding ground floor zoning uses allowed in certain surrounding downtowns. He opined that none of the towns queried, other than perhaps Waterbury, proved to be useful. The Council decided to leave the Business Services as a valid use for the ground floor of mixed-use buildings in the downtown and the Commercial Zone. However, the Council decided to slightly alter the examples of business types allowed within the Business Services use, by deleting examples like "insurance office" and "consulting firm" so these examples would instead fall under the Professional Office use. Mr. Thomas said this change would be included within the fall zoning change.

Discuss: Review of previously approved 2023 zoning changes

The Planning Council reviewed the list of pending zoning changes for the typical fall zoning update. It was discussed if these changes should be pushed through now or wait for the larger S.100 driven changes. The Council, by consensus, decided to push through the pending zoning changes this fall and to complete another zoning change for S.100 in the spring.

Discuss: S.100 housing changes, no more single-family zoning & zoning map edits

The Council again discussed the numerous zoning map and zoning bylaw updates needed to bring Morristown and Morrisville into compliance with the new S. 100 "Housing for Everyone" Law. It was discussed that the Zoning Bylaw's defined Sewer Service Management Area was now much more important, as was having accurate water and sewer maps from Morrisville Water & Light. Mr. Thomas said that the water and sewer mapping layer that he worked from daily was about 10 years old. Mr. Thomas was directed to work with Morrisville Water & Light to obtain an up-to-date water and sewer map or layer due to the zoning changes being compelled by S.100. Mr. Thomas was also asked to seek guidance from the State regarding the "dwelling unit density standards for allowed residential uses" found on page 64 of the Council's meeting package. Mr. Thomas said that he would do as much and report his findings back to the Council.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director