

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

Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 12 September 2023

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

Council Members absent:

Guests: Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff, Ann Becht, Bob Bortree, Tom Cloutier, Alex Cyr, Peter & Linda Kramer, Gary & Sue Sinnot, Carl & Marcia Stewart, and various members of the public that watched the public hearing via Zoom

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Office at 43 Portland Street in Morrisville at approximately 5:00 P.M.

Public Hearing: Review of proposed 2023 zoning changes

The annual public hearing was held regarding the proposed zoning changes that were informally agreed upon by Planning Council throughout 2023. Chair Hancock opened the hearing by explaining that the aim was to push through these pending zoning changes now, and then tackle the additional zoning changes required by the Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone (HOME) Act over the winter. The warned zoning changes to the Morrisville/Morristown Zoning Bylaws were as follows (in italics):

§204.4 – add specific waiver calculation language & clarify parking waiver

§204.5a – allow 1 or 2 new housing units as adaptive reuse of accessory buildings in HDR Zone

§204.5b – correct front setback in CB Zone, reduce front setback in MDR Zone, & revise COM Zone mixed use ground floor requirement

§206 – new Design Criteria requirements for duplexes, new MDR Zone jurisdiction, and various subsection edits for architectural repetition, cladding, front porches, garages, public entrances, outside space, & parking.

§207 – clarify applicable streets that fall under Historic Preservation Criteria, and include Park St.

§320 – make floodzone bylaw edits, & use town listed values for substantial damage & improvement

§426.2 – edits will allow ponds to be shared across property lines

§450 – clarify parking rules pertain to private roads & reduce parking minimums to 1 per unit (S.100)

§485 – change Extraction of Earth Resources title via Special Industry Use to clarify rock extraction

§490 – exterior lighting changes for parking lot lighting, and allow string lights to be used year-round

§502 – prohibit the use of dumpsters in residential zones

§505b – add specific rules when landscaping is required for parking lots & to protect residential uses

§510 – allow townhouse style development for Class 1 Development in the village, new waiver category for Class 2 Development in the LDR Zone, revise maintenance agreement language for open space, allow tree blazings for open space identification, and require public access to trail systems in a private road situation.

§820.5 – Specify public or private street recommendation per Selectboard request

Article IX – Revise definitions for the following: Building, Business Services, Family, Final Subdivision Approval, Short-Term Housing, Setback, Special Industry, Structure, Substantial Damage, Substantial Improvement, Town Clerk.

Delete definitions for the following: Airport, Building Envelope, Commercial Communication Equipment, Municipal Clerk,

Add definition for Public Entrance

Article X – Revise the following Zone descriptions: Central Business, Commercial #1, Industrial (1,2,3,4&5), Hospital, High Density purpose & High Density #1, Medium Density Residential #1, High Density purpose & Low Density #1,2,3,4&5, & Rural Residential Agricultural

During the course of the hearing, the Council agreed to make minor edits to §206(f) clarifying maximum garage widths, §207.2 better defining the regulatory area for Historic preservation Criteria, and changing the definition of Short-Term Housing to Short-Term Rentals (the latter change per the suggestion of resident Linda Kramer). Resident Bob Bortree read from the Town Plan asked a question about the title changes proposed to §485 Extraction of Earth Resources. Zoning Administrator Thomas responded that the proposed language edits did not change how gravel extraction was regulated but did strengthen the existing incidental gravel extraction allowance language by switching the word “premises” with the word “parcel.” Chair Hancock added that the Council had already committed to evaluating the actual regulations for §485 Extraction of Earth Resources as soon as the needed HOME Act zoning changes were completed in early 2024. Mr. Thomas added that the Town Plan language that Mr. Bortree read had been significantly weakened by the Selectboard / Town Administration at the request of the Lamoille County Planning Commission, and the original Town Plan language that was originally approved by the Planning Council was very strict by not allowing new gravel extraction anywhere in town. At the conclusion of the zoning change discussion, the Council agreed by consensus to close the public hearing. Member Goldstein moved to approve the 2023 zoning changes as warned with the 3 aforementioned changes made during the public hearing. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion.

Meeting Minutes: Member Goldstein moved to approve the August 8th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0-1 affirmed the motion, with Member Reeve abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director