

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

Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 12 March 2024

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

Council Members absent:

Council Guests: Judy Bickford, 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, 43 Portland Street, in Morrisville at 5:00 P.M.

Meeting Minutes: Member Goldstein moved to approve the 27 February 2024 meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0-1 affirmed the motion with Member Meyer abstaining.

Discuss: Proposed S.100 “HOMES for everyone” zoning edits

a. Discuss: Review Town-Wide Building Height Reduction: The Planning Council reviewed the proposed S.100 HOMES Act Zoning Bylaws changes for the definition of Building Height, decreasing it from 35 feet to 30 feet for residential structures, and from 50 feet to 40 feet commercial structures. Mr. Thomas said that he, as requested, asked to be granted permission 2 weeks ago to have Town Counsel review the new definition, but he was yet to be granted to do so by the Interim Town Manager. He added that he followed-up on this request earlier in the day.

b. Discuss: New Zoning Map & Sewer Service Management Area: The Council examined the edits proposed to the Zoning Map post Mr. Thomas consulting with MW&L staff to ensure a realistic gravity-based Sewer Service Management Area Boundary. The Council was amenable to these resultant map changes. Member Goldstein questioned the zoning change the Planning Council directed at its last meeting for the east side of Brooklyn Street to Low Density Residential (LDR). He did not believe it made sense to apply the same zoning to Brooklyn Street than what was being applied to Morristown Corners. A majority of the Council decided again, due to local residents’ desires to protect the existing single-family homes in this area from being converted into large multi-family dwellings, to apply LDR Zoning to the east side of this street.

c. Discuss: §206 Design Criteria Edits for Missing Middle Housing: The Council considered adopting the following Section 206 zoning enhancements, as recommend by the book Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis: (1) Allowing “cottage court” development, (2) Prohibiting road facing garages, (3) Prohibiting tuck-under parking that faces a street, (4) Prohibiting the front of townhouses from backing-up to the rear of other townhouses unless they were separated by a street or parking lot, (5) Creating a maximum building width of 60 feet, and (6) creating a maximum building depth of no more than 50% of the depth of the larger of the 2 adjacent dwellings. The Council agreed to adopt these Missing Middle zoning enhancements as part of the current S.100 HOMES Act Zoning Bylaws

changes, except for #2 (prohibiting street facing garages) as previously agreed to zoning edits were deemed to already adequately regulated this issue.

Discuss: Town Plan: Mr. Thomas presented the replacement Town Plan Transportation Chapter language to the Council for review and approval. Member Goldstein moved to accept the language as presented. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 5-0. The legal issues created by coinciding public hearings for the S.100 HOMES Act Zoning Bylaw changes and a new Town Plan were again discussed. Member Goldstein said that the pending HOMES Act zoning update should be finalized before opening the hearing for the new Town Plan. He therefore suggested the Council send a letter to the Selectboard and Village Trustees asking for time on their upcoming agendas prior to April 5th to determine if there were any potential “showstoppers” included within S.100 Homes Act Zoning Bylaw changes prior to the warnings being issue for it and then subsequently the new Town Plan. It was decided by consensus that if the requested Legislative Body zoning change meetings went well, the proposed new Town Plan adoption schedule would proceed as presented by Mr. Thomas. Said schedule showed an initial Planning Council Town Plan hearing date of May 28th and the Selectboard potentially voting to adopt the new Town Plan on 19 August 2024.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM. Submitted by Todd Thomas