

Morrisville/Morristown Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 9 April 2024

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

Council Members absent:

Council Guests: Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff, 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 approximately 5:00 P.M.

Meeting Minutes: Member Meyer moved to approve the March 26th meeting minutes. A roll-call vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion.

Discuss: Post Town Meeting reorganization

Mr. Thomas reminded the Planning Council that per the governing “Joint Rules” they are expected to conduct an annual post Town Meeting reorganization vote. Member Reeve moved that Etienne Hancock remain as Chair and that Joshua Goldstein remain as Vice Chair. A roll-call vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion.

Discuss: Proposed S.100 / HOMES Act zoning changes

- a. Add renters / residents to statutory list of people who can appeal Zoning Administrator & DRB permits.
- b. Character of the area DRB consideration for Affordable Housing projects.
- c. Eliminate DRB ability to require more parking spaces than minimum ratios.
- d. Eliminate DRB ability to require larger lot dimensions, larger street widths, smaller building heights, less density and lot coverage.
- e. New definition for “Served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure.”

Mr. Thomas led the Council through the above 5 agenda items, which were the final parts of the HOMES Act that needed to be reviewed locally. Mr. Thomas explained that local zoning changes were not needed to comply with items a & b. He then led the Council through the zoning changes that must be made to remove language that allowed the DRB to require more from a developer than what was specified in the Zoning Bylaws per above items c & d. Finally, Mr. Thomas told the Council that he added the State’s definition of “served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure” into the Zoning Bylaws and adopted the 500-foot linear mandatory “hook-on” distance therein from the Village’s existing Sewer Ordinance.

As requested at the prior Planning Council meeting, the Council reviewed the sizes of the under-construction apartment buildings on South Street with the proposed Design Criteria “building size maximums.” It was decided as a result not to allow Waivers for this Section (206.2d) of the Zoning Bylaws. The Council also agreed to reduce side and rear setbacks in the Low Density

Residential Zone to encourage the construction of single-family homes on small lots “served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure” to comply with the HOMES Act’s minimum density.

Discuss: Last week’s Selectboard & Trustee zoning meetings:

The Council discussed the Selectboard’s and Village Trustee’s reactions to the draft HOMES Act zoning changes from the prior week. It was noted that the certain Selectboard Members seemed opposed to the larger 3 builder’s acre lot size (120,000 ft²) minimum requirement proposed in the RRA Zone. At the Trustee meeting, no direct feedback was received other than a density question about how Cottage Court Developments would work mathematically in the HDR Zone. Mr. Thomas said that he found this specific feedback helpful and made the corresponding change. The Council expressed that it was pleased to be provided with the opportunity to at least introduce these impactful S.100 HOMES Act zoning changes to the Legislative Bodies so this information would not be brand new at their respective public hearings on June 17th & 19th.

Discuss: Meeting schedules for Homes Act zoning change and new Town Plan

Mr. Thomas said that he recently elongated the HOMES Act zoning adoption schedule by 2 weeks to account for the Village Trustees summer meeting schedule in July. The Council reviewed the revised meeting schedule for both the HOMES Act zoning change and the new Town Plan and decided by consensus to proceed as planned.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 PM. Minutes submitted by Todd Thomas.