

Morrisville/Morristown Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 27 August 2024

Council Members present: Etienne Hancock (Chair), Jamie Morris, Josh Goldstein, Wally Reeve

Council Members absent: John Meyer

Council Guests: Tom Cloutier, Mason Kemerer, Laura Green, Julia Compagna

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas, Town Manager Brent Raymond, Media Operator Kaysie Smith & Video Recording Operator Charlie Burnham

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 5:05 P.M.

Meeting Minutes: Member Reeve moved to approve the July 9th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0-1 affirmed the motion with Member Morris abstaining because he did not attend this meeting.

Discuss: Parking and safety improvement letter for Pleasant St. and downtown Morrisville

Planning Director Thomas presented the letter the Council asked him to draft at their prior meeting regarding striping in parking spaces on Pleasant Street and examining the addition of traffic calming features on it and the surrounding streets in downtown Morrisville. The Council was generally pleased with the letter, but asked Mr. Thomas to expand the scope of one of the bullet points from a consultant review of just Pleasant Street, to the surrounding downtown streets, specifically including the intersection of Bridge Street and Portland Street. Mr. Thomas noted that Mason Kemerer's proposed one-way downtown traffic pattern, which is included as one of the letter's bullet points, will be in front of the Selectboard on October 7th. Member Reeve moved to have Chair Hancock review these new changes that Mr. Thomas was directed to make to the letter, and to send a signed version of it to the Selectboard for consideration directly thereafter.

Discuss: Section 204.4 Waiver allowance expansion

Member Goldstein spoke to expanding the existing Section 204.4(f) Waiver allowance (currently 2 additional dwelling units in exchange for a permanent and durable public art installation) to things like architectural lighting (Section 490.5), decorative pavers, streetscape improvements, fountains, pocket parks, and similar public gathering spaces with shade. The Council was generally agreeable to this request, and Mr. Thomas was asked to draft revised Section 204.4(f) Waiver language as such. Member Reeve asked that any such inclusion for the creation of public parks or public space ensure that the developer or Town would maintain it in perpetuity before such a waiver is granted. It was also decided that the Recreation Coordinator should be added to the list of actors in Section 204.4(f) that could write the required letter to the DRB supporting a Waiver in exchange for the creation of a pocket park or publicly available recreational amenities (ex. basketball court). Mr. Thomas was also instructed to exclude the RRA Zone from the revised Waiver allowance.

Discuss: Consultant report on 2024 proposed zoning changes

Planning Director Thomas introduced the Sterling Mountain consultant report that commented on the failed 2024 zoning changes. Chair Hancock said he disagreed with one of the main findings in the report which stated that the 2024 zoning proposal for larger lot sizes in the town contravened the Town Plan. Mr. Hancock added that the entire tenor of the Town Plan was to

direct new development into the village, while keeping the town rural and mostly undeveloped, which larger lot sizes therein would foster.

Discuss: 3-acre Minimum Lot Size in rural parts of the town

The Council discussed proposing the recently failed 3 builder's acre minimum lot size out in the town again as part of the next zoning change. Julia Compagna said that increasing the minimum lot size in the town would hurt both young community members looking to build or buy their first home and senior community members who have long planned to subdivide 2-acre lots from their land to fund their retirement. Chair Hancock said that surrounding towns all have much larger minimum lot sizes in their rural areas. The Council agreed not to move forward with a 3 builder's acre minimum lot size in the town again, but instructed Mr. Thomas to introduce graduated lot sizes (R1, R2, R5, etc.) into the Town Plan as part of its next update.

Discuss: Alternative to Maximum Lot Sizes in village areas

Planning Director Thomas explained that the Planning Council's maximum lot size zoning response to S.100 / Act 47 of 2023 (which matched a Q&A response on the DHCD website) for lots served by municipal water and sewer was no longer viable with the additional municipal zoning preemptions contained in Act 181 of 2024. He said that Act 181, otherwise known as the Act 250 reform bill, made it very clear that town zoning must allow up to 4 housing units on each municipally served lot. The Council said it would have to work in the coming months to strengthen the existing and recently proposed Section 206 Design Criteria requirements for all residential uses in served areas (including for single-family homes). The Council also decided to retain the Low and Medium Density Zone distinction, increase setbacks in certain zones (like LDR), study creating a small (4 or less) and a large (5 or more) multi-family use, and edit the Zoning Bylaw's Dimension Table to comply with Act 181. Mr. Thomas was asked to present a zoning change timeline spreadsheet at the next Council meeting that scheduled work on the aforementioned edits throughout the fall and perhaps early winter.

*** The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM. Minutes written by Todd Thomas. ***