

Morrisville/Morristown Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 24 September 2024

Council Members present: Etienne Hancock (Chair), John Meyer, Josh Goldstein (electronically), Wally Reeve

Council Members absent: Jamie Morris

Council Guests: Jerry Throne, 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 Reeve moved to approve the September 10th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion (Member Goldstein had not arrived via Zoom prior to this vote).

Discuss: §204.5 Dimension & Use Table revisions

Council Members reviewed the §204.5 Dimension & Use Tables, as revised to comply with Act 47 & Act 181 preemptions. Most of the discussion was spent on whether to allow the Dwelling (5 or more Units) Use in the High Density Residential Zone or not. The Council decided to leave it as Conditional Use, and not to make other changes to the Dimension & Use Tables presented.

Discuss: Review of Minimum Lot Size Waivers granted during the last 10-years

Planning Director Thomas presented his research regarding Minimum Lot Size Waivers granted by the DRB during the last 10-years. He found that 6 such waivers had been requested, with 4 approved and 2 denied. Chair Hancock noted that the only waiver granted larger than the old 15% maximum waiver threshold was for the duplex at 248 Maple Street, which was the genesis for the Selectboard increasing the waiver threshold to 25%. Member Reeve said that he was still very concerned about a 25% Minimum Lot Size waiver being granted on a minimum 4,000 ft² lot in the village now that the State Legislature was requiring up to 4 dwelling units being allowed thereon. With Member Meyer in agreement, the Council ultimately agreed to change the maximum waiver percentage from 25% back to 15%, and to limit waivers to 5% in served areas within the Medium Density & Low Density Residential Zones. Mr. Thomas said he would revise the §204.4 Waiver percentage accordingly for review at the next Planning Council Meeting.

Discuss: 5-foot minimum setbacks from sidewalks

The Planning Council continued its discussion from the previous meeting regarding the desire to see a setback within village areas from the outside edge of the sidewalk to any new structure. Mr. Thomas said that formalizing such a setback, which is handled more informally now, will be greatly appreciated by the Town Road Crew employee that drives the sidewalk plow. Member Reeve directed Mr. Thomas to expand his related edit to the definition of structure from a “pad mounted electric transformer” to a “ground mounted utility enclosure.” It was also decided that the setback definition change should be 3 feet, not the 5 feet proposed, so the maximum front setback required in the Central Business Zone would not be so prescriptive.

Discuss: §206 Design Review criteria changes

Mr. Thomas led the Council Members through the handful of additional changes he was proposing to §206 Design Criteria post the prior zoning change. Said changes included a ensuring a weather break was present above the front porch entrance, that a walkway existed

from the dwelling's main entry to the sidewalk (when present), exempting the Commercial & Hospital Zones from the building size maximums, and editing the garage size and garage location requirements that became an issue during the last zoning change proposal. To alleviate the garage regulation issue, the Council decided to exempt detached garages from the setback and locational requirements, but not the requirement that limits garage size to no more than ½ length of the house. The Council also decided to remove pavement and crushed stone from the list of allowed materials for walkways that connect the primary entrance to the sidewalk (when present). The Council then reviewed the design and architectural standards that are required in Burlington and decided to have another §206 Design Criteria discussion on the October 8th Planning Council agenda. The Council and staff, lacking this specific expertise, expressed a desire to have these standards reviewed by a consultant or an architect. Upon the suggestion of Chair Hancock, Mr. Thomas said that he would build a matrix of minimum designs standards uses by local manufactured home companies (Fecteau, Harvey, Huntington, & VerMod) to ensure that any changes to the §206 Design Criteria did not exclude such housing. Mr. Thomas was also asked to propose a new regulation within the §206 Design Criteria requirements for commercial storefronts that were not regulated by §207 Historic Preservation Criteria (with 611 LaPorte Road as an example of such a site).

**** The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM. Minutes written by Todd Thomas. ****