



**PLANNING COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
OF FEBRUARY 11, 2025**

Members: Etienne Hancock\*, John Meyer, James Morris, Wally Reeve

Absent: Josh Goldstein

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Brent Raymond, Interim Zoning Administrator; Ron Rodjenski, Consultant; Judi Alberi, Executive Assistant

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Richard Craig, Jerry Throne, Bob Bortree, Laura Green

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Etienne Hancock called the Selectboard Meeting to order at 5:02 PM at the Tegu Building.

**APPROVE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES**

**1. Approve minutes 1-21-25**

*Motion made by Wally Reeve to approve the minutes of 1/21/2025. Motion seconded by John Meyer. Motion carried. (4/0)*

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Discuss Zoning Bylaw process without a Planning Director**

Etienne, Brent, and the planning council members discussed the need to move forward with zoning changes and the potential for a shift from a planning council to a commission. Brent explained that the planning council lacks statutory authority under state statute and that a planning director would be needed to carry that authority. Also discussed were the roles and responsibilities of a zoning administrator and a planning director, noting that a zoning administrator is distinct from a planning director or planning staff. The importance of a planning director was highlighted in creating zoning bylaws and considering the town plan. The discussion also touched on the potential for cost savings if a planning director is not hired, but the council emphasized the value of having a professional in the role. The conversation ended with the need to decide on the structure and title of a planning staffer, and the importance of community input in this decision, but for the immediate needs the Planning Council agrees that the Selectboard rescind the previous vote of a Planning Council and make a motion to create a Planning Commission with the same, members, terms, and duties.

Brent informed the council on 2/20/25 that consultant David White would be joining the Select Board, DRB, Zoning Administrator, Planning Commission, and community to hear about the models used to address the needs of Planning and Zoning responsibilities with a determination of the best fit for our town. Soon after that date, Brent will arrange a meeting to approve the model recommended for Morrystown.

***Motion made by Wally Reeve to request the Selectboard and Village Trustees disband the Planning Council and establish a Planning Commission on an interim basis with all the current members in their roles, terms, and responsibilities to continue the work undertaken by the council. Motion seconded by Jamie Morris. Motion carried (4/0).***

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. Consideration of Zoom - Open Meeting Law changes**

The meeting revolved around the use of Zoom for future planning meetings. Judi Alberi discussed the content of the Open Meeting Law of 2024. The council discussed that changing from an advisory board to a commission would require recordings of meetings to be posted online and that transparency is important so that all community members can participate even if they do not come to the meetings. The council agreed to continue using Zoom for these meetings.

### **2. Letter to PC from Housing Committee**

As the Planning Council had no decision-making authority, they decided to hear the issues addressed in the letter received by the Housing Committee as an advisory board. Bob Bortree of the Housing Committee discussed the housing assessment's suggestion to rezone areas for more affordable housing development, particularly in the Morristown Corners and Cady's Falls areas. He proposed expanding the Low Density Residential Zone to accommodate smaller lots. Concerns were expressed about the infrastructure's capacity to handle the proposed development and the potential traffic impact on the intersection of Route 100 and Morristown Corners Road. A suggestion is to open up only a portion of the area for development and consider alternative options like duplexes and manufactured homes for affordable housing. Issues arose involving: limited growth; lack of ability to ensure that low-income housing is exactly that; availability of water and sewer; and the impact on the town plan. It was suggested that the Morristown Corners area be considered first and evaluated before the Stagecoach Rd area is addressed. As these lands can be purchased and buildings can be built without a low-income housing restraint, it is urgent for the Housing Committee.

The Planning Council suggests further consideration of the proposal for rezoning areas to accommodate more affordable housing, including addressing concerns about infrastructure, traffic, and water/sewer supply. Any zoning changes need to be approved by the select board. Etienne thought there was room for a compromise on the architectural repetition rule.

Several members of the community offered their opinions.

## **ADJOURN**

***Motion made by Wally Reeve to adjourn. Motion seconded by John Meyer. Motion carried. (4/0)***

Meeting adjourned at 6:15 pm  
Submitted and filed this 2/11/25.  
Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

*Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Planning Council meeting.*