MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 748
MORRISVILLE, VT 05661
Phone (802) 888-6373
Fax (802) 888-6377

Minutes of December 21, 2010

Members Present: Bill Henchey, Reeves Larson, John Meyer, Max Paine, Lauren Traister and Andrew Volansky

Members Absent: Paul Griswold

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator (ZA)

Guests: Howard Manosh, Dan Lindley, Cindy Locke, Heather Sargent, Ellen & Phillip Wolff

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Call to Order: Chair Henchey called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

Nomination: Reeves Larson – ZA Thomas informed the Commission that he discovered that Member Larson was not appointed properly earlier in the year. Member Larson said that he would send a letter to the Selectboard in the morning stating his intent to continue to serve out his term on the Commission. Member Traister moved to appoint Member Larson to the four year term he is currently serving. A vote of 6-0 affirmed the motion.

Presentation: Central Business zoning district changes – ZA Thomas led the Commission through a PowerPoint presentation he created illustrating the problems with the current zoning and parking requirements in the Central Business zoning district, as well as his proposed revisions to this section of the Bylaw that were intended to revitalize the downtown. Chair Henchey asked about the unintended consequences of the proposed changes. ZA Thomas answered that there were always unintended consequences with any change, but that some reasonable form considerations might mitigate new development that did not fit in with the downtown. Howard Manosh agreed with ZA Thomas and said that the zoning needed to be fixed and that additional density should be allowed downtown. Chair Henchey questioned if the proposed zoning changes should be tied in with the upcoming VCORD Community Visit Program. Town Administrator Lindley said no, because the visioning process was about the entire town and was not specific to downtown zoning changes. Chair Henchey said that he wanted a larger public process regarding the proposed zoning changes. Cindy Locke, representing the members of the Chamber of Commerce, said that she supported the proposed zoning and parking changes and could help pull together a larger public meeting. The Commission discussed having ZA Thomas draft a letter that would be sent to all owners and merchants in the downtown. ZA Thomas said that he would draft such a letter for the approval of Chair

Henchey and distribute it thereafter, along with copies of the proposed zoning and parking changes. It was decided that this larger public forum would take place on January 18, 2010.

Discussion: Zoning changes to the Sign Bylaw – ZA Thomas led the Commission through the changes to the Sign Bylaw that were made since the last meeting. He said that the maximum allowed sign size for directory boards was reduced from 10sf to 5sf as requested. He also said that he changed the maximum sign size allowance to 75sf in the CB zoning district, as opposed to the 50sf he originally brought forth. Howard Manosh said that he thought 5sf was too small for a directory board sign, as his directory board signs were 7.5sf at Northgate Plaza. The Commission decided by consensus that 10sf might work better for directory board sign size. The Commission also decided that it was important to have new directory board signs have the same aspect ratio as existing signs on the pylon. ZA Thomas said he would make these final changes so the Bylaw could be ready to send to the Selectboard at the next meeting.

Discussion: Zoning for food relates use allowances – ZA Thomas informed the Commission that since the last meeting he distinguished between conditional and permitted for the additional food use allowances being considered. Chair Henchey asked that this discussion be moved to the next Commission meeting due to the late hour of the discussion. The Commission briefly discussed what items should appear on the January 4th agenda. It was decided to add discussions for the following items: final sign bylaw revisions, CD zoning district revisions with form considerations, form based zoning, as well as other planning initiatives for the coming year.

Approve Prior Meeting Minutes – Upon a motion by Member Traister, the minutes of the December 7, 2010 meeting were accepted as presented. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 6-0.

Respectfully submitted: Todd Thomas, ZA