

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 18 December 2018

Council Members Present: Allen Van Anda, Etienne Hancock, Joshua Goldstein, and Tom Snipp

Council Members Absent: Linda Greaves, and Steven Foster

Guests: Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff, Bill Bourne, Tamara Bourne, Jacob Bourne, and Denise Trombley

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Old Tegu Theatre, 43 Portland Street, at approximately 6:30 P.M.

Prior meeting minutes – Approval of the September 18th, November 6th, and December 4th meeting minutes were tabled due to quorum issues.

Discuss: Increasing the waiver threshold from 15% to 25% – Denise Trombley asked the Board to allow more waiver flexibility by increasing the current maximum percentage from 15% to 25%. Zoning Administrator Thomas said that a letter had been submitted signed by local area realtors in support of this change. Member Van Anda asked if granting this request would encourage the conversion of more single-family homes into non-owner occupied properties. Mr. Thomas said that it could. A property on Maple Street was used as an example for this waiver request. Bill Bourne said that we need to encourage investment in these large older homes in our community, as few people are interested in buying an expansive 5 bedroom house that is in need of major upgrades. Chair Hancock asked Mr. Thomas to study how many other properties in the core of the village would be impacted if this request were to be granted. Mr. Thomas said he would report the results of this study, along with what other peer communities allow for waivers percentages, at the January 15th Council meeting. Member Snipp said that he thought the existing waiver criteria should be reviewed so more than one goal had to be met in order for the DRB to grant a waiver. Member Goldstein said that he thought offering more flexibility via waivers was a good thing in the village.

Discussion: Stowe & Morrisville School merger – Member Van Anda said that he did not think that busing our school children to Stowe for middle school would be good for the long-term health of our community. Member Hancock said that this should be discussed again on the 15th when the full board could be present. In the interim, the Council dropped the statement from the to-be Town Plan that Stowe High School should serve as the merged school district's middle school. The Council decided to instead call out the critical importance of keeping Peoples Academy as the high school for the merged school district. Member Snipp said it was unclear if facilities would be merged in the future and he thought there may never be more than the proposed governance merger.

Discussion: Areas for new housing development – The Council discussed relaxing zoning requirements in the following areas as to create more housing in our community.

- a. Park Street / MOR Zone – Member Goldstein said that adding multi-family back in should be considered. Member Hancock asked Mr. Thomas for a zoning proposal that uses demonstrable successful initiatives that incentivized infill development while ensuring livability.
- b. Uptown/North End to Pinewood Estates – Todd said that he would propose adding more Low Density Residential (LDR) zoning to these areas, especially areas served by a public water supply.
- c. Morristown Corners – Todd said that he would look to expand the (LDR) zoning around this village, especially in areas served by a public water supply. Mr. Thomas opined that the new Barbour homes on 2+ acres each on the former Godfrey property were a missed opportunity for adding housing that matched the settlement pattern of this village. Member Goldstein said that the Council should consider allowing some additional commercial development in the core of this village since the corner store here had become Black Diamond BBQ.
- d. Cadys Falls – A similar discussion was had about expanding (LDR) to surrounding developable properties that could be served by the new MW&L waterline. Member Hancock requested community meetings with each village to ascertain what kind of local zoning changes were desired.
- e. Jersey Heights – Member Goldstein spoke about the Mandigo home that was for sale at 377 Jersey Heights. He said that adding multi-family uses to this main artery and neighborhood seemed make sense. The Council asked Mr. Thomas for a proposal. He said h would develop a map that brings the High Density Residential Zone over into this neighborhood.
- f. Stowe town line – it was discussed if allowing smaller house lots along the Stowe town line would be a benefit to Morrisville since development would add to our Grandlist, but they property owners would be more Stowe-centric to due proximity. It was agreed that this concept should be evaluated in the upcoming Town Plan revision.

Discussion: Minimum Access/Frontage ZBL Section 422.c – The Council agreed that the intent of this new bylaw was to have the Development Review Board allow development via 20 feet of frontage or 20 feet of right-of-way. Mr. Thomas said he would clarify this language as part of the 2019 zoning change. Mr. Thomas was also asked to prepare a zoning change warning for 2019 so the Council could assess how many zoning changes were currently waiting for approval.

Agenda addendum discussion: Sunoco gas station – It as noted that the Sunoco gas station on the corner of Main & Congress Street had been sold and that gas was no longer being pumped on Sundays. Member Goldstein asked to add a statement to the Town Plan that encouraged the Town Government or Copley Fund to buy this lot so it can be redeveloped with a building anchoring this important corner of downtown Morrisville.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director