

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of December 6, 2016

Planning Council Members Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Yvette Mason, Max Paine, Laura Streets & Mark Struhsacker

This meeting was Laura Streets first as a Council member. She was recently appointed by the Selectboard and Trustees to fill the rest of Andrea Beeman's term. Ms. Beeman stepped off the Council to spend more time with her family. Her service was appreciated.

Planning Council Members Absent: Tom Snipp

Guests: Marci Young, Police Chief Richard Keith, Amy Gates, Jeff Jackson, Julie Gaboriault, Village Trustee Dana Wildes, Kevin Petrochko & Hannah Smith

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Offices at 43 Portland Street at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Discuss: Medium Density to Low Density for Fairwood Parkway neighborhood – Planning Director Thomas began the discussion of the proposed zoning change for the Fairwood Parkway neighborhood. Mr. Thomas explained that the Council was looking to down-zone the neighborhood from its existing Medium Density Residential zoning to Low Density Residential zoning. He said the existing built environment of the Fairwood Parkway neighborhood was even less dense than the proposed Low Density Residential zoning requirements – never mind the density allowed by Medium Density Residential Zone. He added that the proposed zoning change did not alter the allowed density significantly, but, if approved, removed the possibility of the multifamily use from the neighborhood. Mr. Thomas read comments supporting the zoning change into the record from neighborhood residents Celia North and Jane Green. Resident Amy Gates said she just bought a home in the neighborhood because it was largely single-family and that she supported the zoning proposal because it would help the neighborhood remain as such. Village Trustee Dana Wildes said he supported the zoning change and that he thinks this neighborhood should remain predominantly single-family without multi-family residences. Mr. Thomas noted that his office has seen interest recently in multifamily conversions in this neighborhood. He said that if the neighborhood were to become more multi-family, it would require infrastructure upgrades, such as larger water lines, the addition of sidewalks, and in some cases, wider roads. Neighborhood resident Marci Young said that she would like to see more cluster development in this neighborhood moving forward. Mr. Thomas responded that any "major" subdivision, per the local Bylaw, now required cluster development. Mr. Thomas also explained that the proposed zoning change would allow for a better transition in density from the rural town zoning on the east of this neighborhood to the denser village zoning on the west of this neighborhood. Council Member Mason thanked the attendees who participated in the evening's discussion about the future of their neighborhood. Council Members then unanimously spoke in favor of the proposed zoning change. Mr. Thomas said that this

proposed zoning change would be sent to the Selectboard and Trustees in the spring as part of a larger zoning change that involved MW&L sewer plant Act 250 conditions. He also explained that multi-family conversions of existing homes would still be legal until this proposed zoning change was advertised.

Discuss: Site Plan Review landscaping standards area – Mr. Thomas presented the Council with a proposal for revised landscaping requirements. Mr. Thomas explained that this change would move the Bylaw's existing landscape requirements from the conditional use section to the site plan review section of the Bylaw. He said this move would ensure that the landscaping requirements were applicable in all situations, which would correct the problem he found with the CVS Pharmacy site plan submittal (the CVS project did not require landscaping because it did not need Conditional Use approval). Member Hancock asked why a carrot was not offered in the draft language as previously discussed for attenuating stormwater within the parking lot landscaping section. Mr. Thomas responded that there was not a viable carrot to offer in trying to meet the Council's desire to attenuate stormwater within parking lot landscaping islands. Instead, he recommended a simple requirement that parking lot islands, if proposed, should not be curbed, which should lessen the volume of stormwater that would leave the site. He added that the need for parking lot islands could still be avoided by a developer geometrically, as long as there was no section of the proposed parking lot that was more than 60 feet from the closest shade tree. The Council was pleased with this shade tree requirement and the revised landscaping standards as a whole. Additionally, the Council decided change the Bylaw's landscaping lifespan guarantee requirement from one year to five years. Member Streets said that it took about three years to know if a newly planted tree was going to make it. It was decided that once a tree was in place five years, it was going to survive. Mr. Thomas said he would make this landscaping guarantee change from one year to five years and also include it within next zoning Bylaw update.

Discuss: Minimum parking ratio changes – Mr. Thomas gave Council Members draft revisions to the Town's minimum parking ratios to review at the January meeting.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the November 15, 2016 meeting minutes. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 5-0-1 with Member Mason abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director