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**MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
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Minutes of November 21, 2006

Members Present: Richard Duda John Meyer, Lauren Traister, Andrew Volansky, Bill Henchy, Steve Berson

Members Absent: Kelly Rogers (leave of absence)

Guests: Heidi Krantz (Community Coordinator), Mike Miller (LCPC), Steve Rae & Amy Walker (Conservation Commission)

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator (ZA)

Chairman Bill Henchy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Agenda items for this meeting are to review and discuss comments received from the public at the Oct 17 Town Plan update meeting and to try to define a 'vision' for the Town Plan.

Steve Rae commented that while there had been fairly good attendance at the Oct 17 meeting and the preceding August 14 meeting addressing how the Town Plan update process would be conducted, he felt that broader input from the over 5,000 residents of Morristown was needed. He suggested developing a survey to be conducted with a more scientific cross-section of the community. The survey could either be traditional paper form or online, or some combination of the two. Mike Miller recommended having a professional researcher conduct the survey and provide analysis of the results. Heidi said she would check with the Town Administrator to determine if there was any money to conduct such a survey.

Heidi listed the four major topics discussed on Oct 17, which will be covered in more depth during the Town Plan update process. These are: Economic Development, Housing, Land Use, and Governance & Infrastructure. Each topic posed a number of questions for meeting participants, responses to which she presented.

John Meyer addressed the responses to the Governance & Infrastructure questions. Most people basically agreed to the idea that options for improving town and village government should be studied; if an option was found to be more efficient and saved taxpayer money, then it should be pursued. Those who came with firm opinions about possible changes (e.g., merging the town & village) were, of course, opposed to the idea. He added there was some concern about losing local control and oversight of key functions under proposals to consolidate or 'regionalize' services. Mike Miller began to list the various official and unofficial groups and organizations involved in town & village matters and suggested developing an organizational chart for town, village, and school functions to help identify who currently does what.

Andrew Volansky covered the Housing discussion. Comments from that group included no objections to looking at changes in residential zoning, favorable views of 'cluster development' concept to allow housing development on smaller lot sizes in order to preserve more open space, and the view that the town should encourage affordable housing.

Richard Duda said the Land Use discussions highlighted the need to educate the public on what land use does (and does not) do, as well as what our current zoning allows. The discussions also identified the inherent conflicting interests between preservation of existing land use versus the need for economic development. Heidi suggested creating illustrations of properties with the existing lot densities to help people understand what fits within the current lot sizes.

Lauren followed with the discussion on economic development. Most participants cited the lack of telecommunications infrastructure as an obstacle to bringing in the kind of businesses that people viewed as desirable. Participants were open to the idea of establishing design review standards, although they did not appear to have specific requirements in mind.

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Turning to the task of defining a common vision to guide the Town Plan process, Bill Henchey felt that doing so at the front end of an 18-month process, before garner broader public input, was premature and would perhaps prejudice the public discussions on each Town Plan chapter that are to be held during this process. Most members agreed. Mike Miller offered the alternative of establishing 'guiding principles' and presented those used in Eden's recent Town Plan as an example. For now, the members decided to hold off on defining a vision or guiding principles.

The next meeting on Dec 5 will look at the Community Profile section of the plan, along with a discussion of the proposed Special Use District boundary change.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Leonard, recorder

Minutes approved on: 12/5/06