

MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
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Meeting Minutes of November 20, 2012

Present: Paul Griswold, Etienne Hancock, John Meyer (Chair), Max Paine & Mark Struhsacker

Members Absent: Reeves Larson & Tom Snipp

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator & Planner

Guests: Michael Paritz and Joni Lanphear, Steve Bousquet and Jackie Schmetzer

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:05 P.M.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Meyer moved to approve the November 6, 2012 meeting minutes. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 5-0.

Discussion: Joni Lanphear & Mike Paritz rezoning request – Michael Paritz and Joni Lanphear appeared before the commission requesting that part of the Lanphear Farm be zoned commercial. Zoning Administrator Thomas explained that the existing dividing line between the Commercial Zone and Rural Residential Agricultural Zone was the property line between the Lanphear Farm and the former Langdell Farm. Member Meyer said that he did not recall the reason why the commission had previously decided that this property line should be the boundary for the commercial zone. Mr. Thomas explained that any rezoning of the Lanphear Farm should be done along the lot lines of the contemplated subdivision to avoid having the large farm parcel split by zoning districts. After a discussion about how much of the farm could be zoned commercial and of the future plans for Mr. Paritz's business, Leo's Small Engines, the commission came to a consensus regarding commercial zoning and the Lanphear Farm parcel. It was decided that the commission would add language to the as-revised land use chapter of the Town Plan that recommended studying an eastward move of the commercial zone on Vermont Route 15 to include a portion of the Lanphear Farm.

Discussion: Existing Small lots in Village language – The commission discussed the proposed language meant to fix the problem with foreclosures in the village contributing to some existing small lots losing their grandfathered status. The property formerly owned by Todd Yando that is adjacent to the fire station was cited as an example of such a property. Mr. Thomas explained that the proposed zoning language that he wrote at the request of the commission would allow any property that was in residential use within the last three years to be able to be reused as a Dwelling Unit, Single-Family use, regardless of lot size. Mr. Thomas added that there is nothing in the proposed language that would offer a similar protection to commercial uses that were in use with the last three years, but had lost their grandfathered status. The commission discussed if it desired to offer similar protections for business uses as the three-year residential protection being discussed provided. Member Struhsacker said he would be in favor extending a similar protection for business zoning. Member Meyer said he would not be in favor of this. Mr. Thomas said that it's hard to regulate the scale of a business on small lots and the

resulting impact to the neighborhood unless the business use is limited to something like a Home Business. The commission decided that the as written language should be amended to include an allowance for Home Business.

Discussion: Education Chapter of the Town Plan – Zoning Administrator Thomas said that Superintendent Tracy Wrend was still working on the Education Chapter of the Town Plan and it was not ready for discussion this evening.

Discussion: Statement on Policies Chapter of the Town Plan – Mr. Thomas said that the Statement on Policies chapter was a simple summation of all the policies listed in each chapter of the Town Plan. He said that the revised Statement on Policies chapter would be the same for this iteration of the Town Plan.

Discussion: Historic, Scenic & Archaeological Resources Chapter of the Town Plan - The commission discussed the Historic, Scenic and Archaeological Resources chapter of the Town Plan. The commission discussed the chapter's existing language about protecting ridgelines. The commission decided to ask Zoning Administrator Thomas to propose language for the revised chapter that contained a recommendation to study protecting ridgelines that are seen from public property. Mr. Thomas said that he would streamline the rest of the existing chapter and present a revised draft of it to the commission at its December 4th meeting.

Discussion: Community Profile Chapter of the Town Plan – The commission discussed the amount of information needed in a revised Community Profile chapter of the Town Plan. It was decided that the introduction and data about population growth was important to keep in the town plan. The commission also decided that the growth of some surrounding towns was not as important to catalog, but the growth of Morristown should still be measured against State growth rates and County growth rates. Mr. Thomas said that he would streamline the rest of the existing chapter and present a revised draft of it to the commission at its December 4th meeting.

Discussion: Town Plan update schedule – The commission agreed to discuss the Economic Development and Natural Resources chapters of the Town Plan at the December 4th meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Todd Thomas, ZA