Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
PO Box 748 / Morrisville, VT 05661
Phone (802) 888-6373

Meeting Minutes of November 19, 2013

Planning Commission Members Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Max Paine, Yvette Mason & Tom Snipp
Planning Commission Members Absent: Andrea Caldwell & Mark Struhsacker
Staff: Todd Thomas, Planning Director
Guests: Village Trustee Dana Wildes

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Discussion: Business Enterprise Zone review and changes – The Planning Council began the Business Enterprise (BE) Zone discussion by reviewing the proposed split between the BE Zone and the Innovation (INN) Zone. The Council agreed with the depicted division, which was based on the prior meeting's discussion. Mr. Thomas recommended that the Council remove Town owned lot 14 from the Inn Zone, as it was narrow and not buildable. It was agreed that lot 14 would be placed back in the residential zone. Mr. Thomas also asked the Council to review lot 191 for inclusion into the zone. He added that this 4 acre lot was the first property on the north side of Cadys Falls Road not included in the business zone. Mr. Thomas said that he spoke to the owners of lot 191 and they said that they would like this property to be included in the business zone and were willing to sell it in the near term. Mr. Thomas asked Council Members to drive down Cadys Falls Road to evaluate the topography of lot 191 and its suitability for business development. Mr. Thomas said that this discussion would continue at the December 3rd meeting. Council members also asked Mr. Thomas to speak to the owners of lot 193 about potential inclusion into the INN Zone as well.

Mr. Thomas said that the Council was yet to review the minimum front setback and the minimum shore setback in the revised BE & INN zones. The Council agreed to set the front setback at 75 feet from centerline and the shore setback at 50 from Ryder brook and 100 feet from Lake Lamoille.

Mr. Thomas distributed a list of buildings larger than 19,000sf in Morristown and asked the Council members to drive by some of these buildings to get a feel for the massing and potential impact of the same building being constructed in the BE or INN zones. Mr. Thomas said that he desired feedback on which buildings Council members think could be impactful enough to require conditional use review. It was agreed that this discussion would resume at the December 3rd meeting after Council members could get a better feel for the buildings on the 19,000sf or larger list.

Discussion: Zoning changes for fence regulations – Mr. Thomas said that Council Member Mason asked him to review the Town's fence regulations. Mr. Thomas said that after researching his permit spreadsheet, he found that he had spent a considerable amount of time regulating fences. Mr. Thomas proposed changes to the fence regulations to the Council to exempt many types of fences, like split rail fences, from zoning permit requirements. His proposal included allowing, by-right, up to six foot tall fences alongside and rear property lines and up to four foot tall fences along front property lines, regardless if the fence was open (i.e. split rail) or closed (i.e. stockade). Council Member Hancock said that he believed there was value to not creating visual corridors along Village roads and said that he preferred to not allow closed off fences at a height of four feet along front property lines. It was agreed that the side and rear fence changes would remain as proposed by Mr. Thomas, but that fences on front yards could only be four feet tall if they were more than 50% open and two feet tall if they were less than 50% open, with all other non-compliant fences needing conditional use approval. Mr. Thomas said that he would revise the proposed changes to the fence regulations, along with the corresponding definitions, for the December 3rd meeting.

Discussion: New work priorities – Mr. Thomas asked the Commission what they wished their upcoming work priorities to be. Options discussed included changing the subdivision regulations, changing the sign bylaw, group home zoning compliance and fixing the Commercial (COM) Zone setbacks. It was agreed that Mr. Thomas would ask Nicole from Great Big Graphics to speak at an upcoming Council meeting to discuss signage and that he would proposed immediate changes to the setbacks in the COM Zone. It was agreed that changing the subdivision regulations, with a goal of satisfying Criterion 9B of the Village's sewer plant permit, would be a near term agenda item. Village Trustee Wildes thanked the Council members for agreeing to fix the setbacks in the COM Zone.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the November 5th meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0-1 with Member Snipp abstaining affirmed the motion.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, ZA