MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
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Meeting Minutes of November 15, 2011

Members Present: Paul Griswold, Bill Henchey (Chair), Reeves Larson, John Meyer, Max Paine & Andrew Volansky
Members Absent: Lauren Traister
Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator & Planner
Guests: Kate Whitehead, Valerie Valcour & Leah Hollenberger

Call to Order: Chair Henchey called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Public Hearing: Town Plan update for new wellness section – Chair Henchey opened the public hearing for the proposed update to the Town Plan. Kate Whitehead explained the outreach and committee process that resulted in the proposed wellness chapter that was being requested to be added to the Town Plan. Chair Henchey asked how adopting a wellness section benefited the Town. Ms. Whitehead said that more grant opportunities would be available if the wellness plan were added as a chapter of the existing Town Plan, especially for the community visit food co-op group. Member Griswold inquired about the level of school involvement with the proposed wellness plan. Ms. Whitehead said that a middle school teacher helped draft the plan. Valerie Valcour from the State's Health Department and Leah Hollenberger from Copley Hospital said that they support the addition of a wellness chapter to the Town Plan. Member Griswold said that he is concerned that the wellness plan talks about requiring pedestrian amenities with such a broad brush, while not differentiating that sidewalks are more appropriate in the Village than in the Town. Chair Henchey and Member Griswold asked ZA Thomas to review the plan and identify such language issues for the next Commission meeting. Member Paine moved to continue the public hearing until December 6th at 7:00 P.M. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 6-0.

Update: Review "zoning change worksheet" for agenda – The Commission reviewed the highlighted zoning issues on the "zoning change worksheet" slated for discussion at the meeting.

Discussion: Proposed Zoning Changes – ZA Thomas led the Commission through the following proposed zoning changes:

- Expansion of Non-Conforming Structures: The Commission reviewed the finalized zoning langue regarding Non-Conforming Structures and agreed that this proposed language should be included within the next zoning update.

- BE zoning district –The Commission discussed the changes made to the draft BE zoning language resulting from the prior meeting's discussion. ZA Thomas said that the main change was that the language now mainly regulated building materials on the front façade, as opposed the building materials on the entire building. The Commission decided that it did not want to make the Bylaw's existing Lot Coverage requirement subject to §219.1 Waiver. ZA Thomas said that he would have the revised language available at the next meeting. The Commission also asked ZA Thomas to analyze the Union Bank, Rock Art and Alpine Snow Guards buildings for compliance with BE zoning for demonstration purposes.

- Existing Small Lots: ZA Thomas said that he was still reviewing the approximately 980 parcels for zoning compliance that might be impacted by a change to Existing Small Lots zoning.

Discussion: Architectural scope of services for BE changes – The Commission discussed the proposed scope of services for an architect's rending of a building that minimally complied with the revised §215 Business Enterprise zoning language. The Commission ultimately decided that paying for services was too restrictive and that a design contest was more appealing. The Commission hoped that a design contest, where submissions would be hung in the windows of the Town Offices, with design credit clearly displayed thereon, would engender multiple entries. Furthermore, the Commission agreed that the winning design, with credit given, would be placed in the Bylaw as an illustrative example of complying development in the zoning district. ZA Thomas said that he would work to revise the existing scope of services document so it read as an invitation to a design contest for the next meeting.

Discussion: Sign size maximum in RRA/SI (Harrison letter) – ZA Thomas submitted a letter to the Commission from Harrison Redi-Mix Corp asking that the maximum sign size in the RRA/SI zoning district be increased. The Commission discussed the request and decided that most businesses in this zoning district did not rely on pass-by traffic to generate business. It was decided that a small sign (six square feet) to identify the entrance of these businesses was all that was needed and that no increase of the sign size in the RRA/SI zone was warranted.

Discussion: District 5 SSMA permit relief response letter – ZA Thomas shared a letter from Ed Stanak, District 5 Coordinator, dated November 10, 2011 addressed to Village Water & Light. The Commission discussed the letter and thanked ZA Thomas for bringing it to the attention of the Members.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Upon a motion made by Member Paine, the November 1st meeting minutes were accepted. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 5-0-1, with Member Meyer abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.
Respectfully submitted: Todd Thomas, ZA & Planner