

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

Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 10 November 2020

Council Members Present: Allen Van Anda, Steven Foster, Joshua Goldstein, Etienne Hancock (Chair), Tom Snipp

Council Members Absent:

Guests: Valerie Valcour, Alison Link, Dan McLaughlin

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Old Tegu Theatre on 43 Portland Street at approximately 5:00 P.M. Member Snipp requested to add a discussion to the agenda regarding the current lack of available owner occupied housing in the community. Planning Director Thomas suggested that this agenda item be added in place of the planned Land Use Chapter discussion, which he recommended be tabled until after the Selectboard's November 16th discussion of the revised downtown designation area. A vote of 5-0 amended the agenda as such.

Prior meeting minutes – Approval of the September 22nd and October 13th meeting minutes were tabled due to quorum issues. Member Foster moved to approve the October 27th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0-1 affirmed the motion (with Member Snipp abstaining). Member Van Anda arrived just after this vote took place.

Discuss: Draft Wellness Chapter of the Town Plan – The Council was joined by Valerie Valcour and Alison Link to discuss changes to the existing Wellness Chapter of the Town Plan being proposed the Town's new Recreation Committee. Ms. Valcour suggested that the Wellness Chapter focuses on the Vermont Department of Health's 3-4-50 campaign (which states that 3 poor behaviors, result in 4 diseases, and contribute to 50% of the deaths in Vermont). Member Goldstein expressed support for supporting the Recreation Committee in the Town Plan. Ms. Link explained that she works for Healthy Lamoille Valley and her work has a focus on substance abuse. Member Van Anda said that he did not support her proposed language insertion into the Wellness Chapter that asked for community concerts, celebrations, and similar events to be completely substance free. He said the Vermont Craft Brewers Association had been working with the Vermont Department of Health in recent years so the outdoor event area at concerts where alcohol could be consumed was not confined to a small penned-in area set off in the corner. Member Van Anda added that he would prefer to see this language replaced with opioid avoidance language, a substance far more damaging to our community than craft beer. It was agreed that that Ms. Valcour and Ms. Link would submit revised Wellness Chapter language for the Council to consider at its November 24th meeting that was based on the evening's conversation.

Public Hearing: 2021 proposed zoning changes – Mr. Thomas announced the December 2nd Village Trustee hearing date and the December 7th Selectboard hearing dates for the 2021 zoning change public hearings.

Discuss: Proposed statement concerning development trends and adjacent municipalities for the Town Plan – The Council reviewed the first draft of the “statement concerning development trends and the plans of adjoining municipalities.” Mr. Thomas explained that this was a required element of the Town Plan. The Council members had no questions or concerns regarding this revised chapter thereof.

Discuss: Lack of available owner occupied housing in the community – Member Snipp related how his mother in-law had been unable to buy a condo in the community in recent months, even while offering cash at full asking price. He expressed concern that only rental housing was being constructed, and there were no comparable condo projects, or senior housing developments being built. Mr. Thomas said that the Town did not have the ability under its zoning to require ownership instead of rental housing. Member Snipp said that he did not want Morrisville to become a town that consisted largely of rental housing. The Board decided by consensus that Mr. Thomas would go back into the Housing and Land Use Chapters of the Town Plan to stress a desire therein for more ownership based housing.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director