

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of October 20, 2015

Planning Council Members Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Yvette Mason & Mark Struhsacker

Planning Council Members Absent: Andrea Beeman, Max Paine & Tom Snipp

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Guests: Max Neal, Executive Director of the Lamoille Chamber of Commerce

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Tegu Building at 43 Portland Street at approximately 7:05 P.M.

Discussion: Final review of new town Sidewalk Policy – The Council reviewed the finalized version of the Sidewalk Policy after changes were made thereto by the Selectboard in the prior week.

Discussion: Reduce 2 acre minimum lot size for Cadys Falls – Mr. Thomas presented the Council with a map of the Cadys Falls area highlighting the very small lot sizes therein when juxtaposed with the two acre minimum lot size required by the underlying RRA Zone. Mr. Thomas said that the Town Plan instructed the Council to correct the zoning for this Village like area, but he needed feedback if this zoning change should or should not allow additional development in Cadys Falls. Mr. Thomas added that this new density consideration should be discussed with the residents of this area. Member Hancock said that he thought this was a good village area to allow growth in, especially since municipal water service would be available by summer. He suggested a minimum lot size that made all the small lots in the developed section of Cadys Falls conforming – possibly at 1/7th of an acre. Mr. Thomas said that he would look at adding one of the existing village residential zones to this area for discussion at the next Council meeting.

Discussion: Reduce 2 acre min. lot size Morristown Corners – Mr. Thomas said that a similar situation existed in Morristown Corners to the aforementioned lot size discussion in Cadys Falls. Mr. Thomas clarified the capacity of the Morristown Corners Water Corporation was a consideration here, unlike the Cadys Falls scenario. He also added that Morristown Corners has some small commercial enterprises that do not exist in Cadys Falls, such as the Four Corners Bookstore and the former Green Top Market. Mr. Thomas said that the current zoning would not allow a new commercial enterprise to open in the Green Top Market space come spring when the one-year time period elapsed for keeping this use grandfathered. There was unanimous agreement from Council Members that a change was needed and it was not in the community's best interest to preclude a store from reopening in this location. Mr. Thomas said that he would work towards revised zoning that would better speak to the small lot sizes in this area and would also look to preserve the small existing commercial uses.

Discussion: SSMA changes north of Rte 15 – Mr. Thomas spoke to the small lots on the north side of Route 15 on streets such as Silver Ridge Road, Sunset Drive and Center Road. Mr. Thomas recommended increasing the Sewer Service Management Area to include neighborhoods that contained these small lots. He explained that adding sewer service to this area would not allow any additional development because of the underlying two-acre zoning (the zoning is what drives growth not sewer service). Member Griswold questioned if additional development here was desired. Member Hancock said that he would not support additional development here as this section of town was cut off by Route 15 and had no pedestrian accessibility. Member Struhsacker did not want to support extending the Sewer Service Management Area into these neighborhoods at this time because they still seems somewhat rural to him. Mr. Thomas said that without the support of four Council members, he would not proceed further in this regard for the foreseeable future.

Discussion: Sexually Oriented Business area designation – Mr. Thomas passed out a draft zoning change that would allow sexually oriented businesses in the Innovation 1 Zone, as well as a proposed definition of what constituted a sexually oriented business. Mr. Thomas explained that sexual expression was protected by the First Amendment and that a town zoning bylaw could not prohibit it, but could relegate it to certain zones in town. He said that current town zoning would allow a sexually oriented business without any restrictions from other like business uses– retail related sexually oriented businesses could locate where other retail businesses were and something like a strip club should be treated like a Bar use elsewhere in the same zone. Members reviewed the proposed bylaw changes and agreed that such regulation of sexually oriented businesses was desired and needed. Mr. Thomas said that he would include this within the next zoning change.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Approval of the September 15th meeting was tabled to due quorum issues.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director