

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

PO Box 748 / Morrisville, VT 05661

Phone (802) 888-6373

Meeting Minutes of October 17, 2017

Planning Council Members Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Max Paine, Tom Snipp, Laura Streets, and Mark Struhsacker

Planning Council Members Absent: None

Guests: Ron Bomer, Linda Greaves, James Westermann, Leah Hollenberger (representing Copley Hospital), Town Road Foreman Roland Boivin, and Community Development Coordinator Tricia Follert

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Offices at 43 Portland Street at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Discuss: Bumpouts and street trees in downtown – Town Road Foreman Roland Boivin joined the Council to talk about how any proposed bumpouts in the downtown might impact snow plowing operations. He said that having to plow around bumpouts would take extra time. Chair Griswold asked Mr. Boivin if the Town had all the needed equipment to maintain any bumpout that was installed. Mr. Boivin said that the Town had the needed equipment, but that the real question was manpower. Mr. Boivin estimated that each bumpout may delay snow removal from that road by 15 to 20 minutes. The Council talked hypothetically about having a bumpout in front of the Town Offices. Member Struhsacker asked if there was a safety hazard in this area. All agreed that the crosswalk in front of the Town Offices was safe. Member Hancock said that the crosswalk by Thompson's Flour Shop and the crosswalk in front of the Senior Center were where a safety hazard may exist. All agreed that these two Main Street crosswalks could be made safer with the installation of bumpouts. Member Snipp said a bumpout makes it easier to see the pedestrians (that we are trying to entice downtown) because they are not walking out into the road from in-between parked cars. Member Hancock suggested that a bumpout on the Thompson's crosswalk be installed as part of the angled parking proposal as a pilot project. Planning Director Thomas said that he would speak to Town Administrator Lindley about how to move forward with this pilot project. Leah Hollenberger said that Copley Hospital was supportive of infrastructure projects that allowed residents more opportunities to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

Discuss: Oxbow Skate-park sponsorship signs – Community Development Coordinator Tricia Follert appeared before the Council to discuss the advertising / sponsorship request at the Town skateboard park that was denied at the last meeting. Ms. Follert explained that there are a group of young men that use the skatepark that are looking to raise money to improve its safety and appearance. She explained that they were planning to put up 3x5 panels as safety barriers at the top of the half-pipe that would be covered in graphic design and include some sponsorship and/or advertising thereon. Member Streets said that she has serious concerns about this proposal, including the upkeep of the signage on these panels. Chair Griswold said that he is concerned that this proposal may inadvertently lead to a proliferation of other sponsorship signage at Oxbow

Riverfront Park. Member Snipp suggested a plaque on a small section of the artwork that simply stated a list of donors that made the safety improvements possible. Member Paine agreed with Member Snipp. Members Hancock and Struhsacker said they were agreeable to the current proposal so as to help the young men improve the safety and appearance of the skatepark. Ms. Follert said that there were other ways to raise money and that she would present additional information on this request to the Council at a future meeting.

Discuss: Home Business Use allowance review town-wide – Mr. Thomas began a larger Town-wide discussion of where Home Businesses were allowed in Town. He said that this discussion was continued from the Council's previous meeting and its genesis was from Member Hancock looking to accomplish the Town Plan goal of keeping Route 100 rural from the airport south to Stowe. Member Struhsacker said that it was expensive to live here and that he did not want to get in the way of someone trying to make a living off their own property. It was discussed that the biggest complaint regarding Home Businesses was noise to neighboring properties. Mr. Struhsacker suggested tighter controls on the noise that a Home Business can burden neighboring properties with. Chair Griswold agreed and said that there should be different levels of review and regulation for a Home Business depending on the impact to neighboring properties. It was decided that this discussion should be carried over to the next Council meeting agenda.

Discuss: Employee and housing shortage for local businesses – Mr. Thomas explained that he was recently asked to visit MSI where he learned that they are bussing their workforce in from as far away as Burlington because they are having a very hard time recruiting, and housing local talent. Ms. Hollenberger said that the rental housing market in Town was very tight and that 5% of the hospital emergency room visit's last quarter were from patients who did not have dedicated housing. Member Hancock asked for more data regarding MSI's problems with hiring and housing their workforce. He said that the Council needed to know where their employment base was coming from and what they could afford to pay for rent (at 30% of salary). Member Hancock said that he would also like to learn about the long-term plans of MSI before considering any substantive zoning changes to accommodate their present needs. Mr. Thomas said that he would invite MSI's human resource director, Kim White, to the next Council meeting.

Discuss: Supervisory Union school gym capital project letter – Mr. Thomas reminded the Council that its letter to the school's capital project committee was on the Selectboard agenda on Monday night.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Hancock moved to approve the September 5th meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0-2 affirmed the motion with Members Snipp and Struhsacker abstaining. Member Snipp moved to approve the October 3rd meeting minutes. A vote of 5-0-1 affirmed the motion with Member Hancock abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

– submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director