

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 15 October 2019

Council Members Present: Etienne Hancock, Joshua Goldstein, and Tom Snipp

Council Members Absent: Allen Van Anda and Steven Foster

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Guests: Dan McLaughlin, Bob Heanue, Gary Greaves, Sharon Rowell, Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff, Becky Gonyea from the Clarina Howard Nichols Center, Engineer Tyler Mumley, Architects Sam Ostow and Andrea Kerz-Murray, and Kerrie Lolth, Susan Sinnott, and Jim Lovinsky from Lamoille Housing Partnership

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 26 Hutchins Street at 6:00 P.M.

Discuss: Site visit of the proposed LHP apartment building at 26 Hutchins St. – Council Members Hancock and Snipp, along with Planning Director Thomas, attended a site walk of the proposed Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP) apartment building at 26 Hutchins Street that was led by the LHP development team. Residents Dan McLaughlin and Bob Heanue also attended the site walk. The Council recessed this portion of the meeting and returned to the Community Room of the Town Offices to review the plans.

Discuss: Plans for the proposed LHP apartment building at 26 Hutchins St. – With Member Goldstein now in attendance, the Planning Council reviewed the proposed plans for the new LHP apartment building. Members of the development team present said this could be an all-electric building, which could contain 20 or more housing units. It would be a mixed income project with rents ranging from \$646 for a studio to \$1,000 for a 2-bedroom apartment. It was noted that the rents included all utility costs. Jim Lovinsky said that the local vacancy rate for apartments in this area is less than 2%, so the housing units proposed were sorely needed. Becky Gonyea, Executive Director of the Clarina Howard Nichols Center, spoke in favor of the proposed project. She described the significant lack of safe, affordable housing in the area and said her organization has seen an increase in calls from individuals who are in roommate/shared living situations and are being sexually assaulted in their living situations and/or are being forced to perform sexual acts to retain their housing. In addition, many homeless households receiving housing vouchers cannot find a unit that meets the voucher requirements due to high rents and substandard conditions. Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff said he was opposed to the project because that there was not enough new parking planned to support a development of this size. Member Goldstein expressed support for permeable pavers to help with any post-development stormwater issues at the site.

Discuss: Greaves Family for Hospital Zone reconsideration – Gary Greaves and Sharon Rowell appeared before the Council asking for reconsideration of recent zoning changes in the Hospital Zone. Jim Lovinsky stayed briefly to support this request. Mr. Thomas explained that there had been only two changes of note in this zone. The first was in November of 2015 when the density per housing unit was increased from 4,000

ft² to 8,000 ft² (to match the existing minimum lot size). He said the second change was when the Dwelling Unit Multi-Family use was eliminated from this zone and the surrounding Medium Density Residential and Low Density Residential Zones. Mr. Thomas added that, unlike the other aforementioned zones, multi-family housing is actually still possible in the Hospital Zone if it is part of a Health Care Facility use, such as a nursing home or assisted living facility. Chair Hancock closed the discussion by saying that there are no plans for any future zoning changes in the Hospital Zone.

Discuss: Proposed change to Section 206 Design Criteria – Mr. Thomas walked the Board through a proposed requirement that would guarantee at least half of the dwelling units in any new multi-family apartment building would have a minimum of 6 ft² of dedicated outdoor space. Mr. Thomas read a letter into the record from local developer Graham Mink expressing opposition to this proposed zoning change. Mr. Mink claimed that such a requirement would add significant cost to his housing projects and even prevent some projects from happening. The Council decided to take a different approach and instead evaluate how other communities require an aggregate common open space that is sized by the number housing units. Mr. Thomas said he would bring some research in this area to the November 5th Planning Council meeting.

Discuss: Morristown Road Policy – The Council asked about the status of their letter to the Selectboard asking for a reconsideration of the 12 foot travel lanes in the new Morristown Road Policy. Mr. Thomas explained that he had been unable to obtain specifications for the plow blade lengths and plow wing protrusions as requested. He said he discussed this issue with the Town Administrator and the Village Road Foreman but was yet to receive a reply. Chair Hancock said he did not understand why 12-foot wide travel lanes were needed on some future small road in a residential setting. The Council directed Mr. Thomas to send this letter to the Selectboard if a reply on the plow length and wing protrusions was not provided to the Council by the end of the month. Mr. Thomas was also asked to speak to the Post Master if mailboxes could be placed as far as 3 feet back from the edge of pavement.

Discuss: Town Plan Transportation Chapter – The Council reviewed the draft transportation chapter of the new Town plan. The Council asked Mr. Thomas to make specific revisions, including: removing decimal places, explaining the warrant process for new roadway improvements, supporting public transit, and a desire to fund an update to the 2011 North End Circulation Study so it could have post Truck Route data. It was also decided that, if received in-time from Andy Lundeen at the Supervisory Union, a new draft of the education chapter would be reviewed at the November 5th Planning Council meeting.

Prior meeting minutes – Member Goldstein moved to approve the October 1st meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director