

## Morristown/Morrisville Housing Committee

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### Meeting Minutes of Thursday 10 October 2024

**Committee Members present:** Judy Bickford, Bob Bortree, Joshua Goldstein (electronically), Donna Sherlaw

**Committee Members absent:** Yvette Mason

**Guests present:** None

**Staff:** Planning Director Todd Thomas

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Offices, 43 Portland Street in Morrisville, at approximately 5:05 P.M.

**Vote: Approve prior meeting minutes** – Member Bickford moved to approve the May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion (Member Sherlaw had not arrived yet). Approval of the September 12<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes was tabled due to quorum issues.

**Discuss: Legislative Body letters meant to entice the creation of affordable housing** - Per the recommendation on page 141 of the Lamoille County Housing Needs Assessment, it was agreed at the prior committee meeting that letters would be drafted to the Selectboard asking to offer municipal tax stabilization for the creation of new affordable housing, and to the Village Trustees asking to share utility extension costs for the creation of new affordable housing. The committee reviewed the letters that Planning Director Thomas drafted and agreed to reduce the 10-year period of tax stabilization suggested in the Selectboard letter to 5 years. Mr. Thomas said that he would make this change, along with confirming, per Member Bickford, if the data in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence of each letter referred to affordability specifically within the town or within the greater county. Member Bickford wondered if the programs suggested by each letter, if approved, could also be used to entice the conversion of existing short-term rentals into long-term affordable housing or veterans' housing.

**Discuss: Lamoille County Housing Needs Assessment** – The Committee again discussed the recently published Lamoille County Regional Housing Assessment. The committee debated if the Selectboard should be encouraged to use its statutory authority to create a Housing Authority in Morrisville or alternatively work towards creating a county-wide Housing Authority. It was agreed that either structure would be for the end goal of creating an entity that could manage affordable units within private market-rate housing developments. The Committee also examined areas of the Low Density Residential Zone at the edges of the village to see where it could be extended as part of the next zoning change as a means to add new single and two-family ownership housing into the core of our community. Mr. Thomas said he would bring the Town Plan's Future Land Use map to the next committee meeting to help with this discussion. Member

Bickford also suggested changing the Industrial Zone land on the south side of Bridge Street to residential to encourage housing development there. Mr. Thomas said that such a change would require a corresponding Town Plan edit because it was not shown on the approved Future Land Use Map. Member Bortree expressed concerns that any land rezoned for new housing would just be used for the construction of luxury housing for out of state buyers. Mr. Thomas described the concept of how churning within the housing supply created indirect affordability. He used the example of a new car being purchased, where the buyer upgrading to a new car or house was leaving behind a used and more affordable car or house for the market to absorb, with that process being repeated each time someone stepped to buy or rent a better used car or house than he or she currently had.

**Discuss: Example of successful affordable housing density bonuses** – Mr. Thomas provided the committee with New Haven, VT's density bonus which he said was succinct and well designed to entice the construction of new affordable housing. After committee discussion, Mr. Thomas was asked to inquire how often New Haven had used this density bonus, and how the town ensured that the affordable housing this bylaw was creating continued to be used by qualified residents. Mr. Thomas said he would make these inquiries and report back at the next committee meeting.

The Housing Committee will meet next at 5pm on Thursday November 14<sup>th</sup>.

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The meeting adjourned at 6:25 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director

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