Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of October 7, 2014

Planning Council Present: Andrea Caldwell, Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Yvette Mason & Tom Snipp
Planning Council Absent: Max Paine & Mark Struhsacker
Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas
Guests: Yohan Jaremczuk, Rhoda Bedell, Leon Whitcomb, Julie Marckres, Robin Desrocher and Conservation Commission Member Jim Pease

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

Public Hearing: Proposed Fall zoning changes – Mr. Thomas walked the audience through the following proposed zoning changes as part of the advertised October 7th zoning hearing:

a. §215 strike existing Business Enterprise Zone, replace with new version of zone
b. §490 strike existing Exterior Lighting Bylaw, replace with new version of bylaw
c. §503 add stormwater treatment section to existing "Additional Conditions" section of the Site Development Plan Review Bylaw
d. §638 strike existing Stormwater Treatment Bylaw designed for Conditional Uses
e. Article 9, add Definition for "Water Quality Storm"
f. §1140 add parcel 12-156 to the Airport Zone

The Planning Council made a couple of minor edits to the proposed BE Zone language, but discussed the sidewalk requirement therein in greater detail. Julie Marckres said that she thought a requirement that compelled developers to build "a sidewalk to nowhere" was not good policy and that the town constructing a longer sidewalk at one time would be more economical. The Council debated if sidewalks should be paid for by developers upfront of by the taxpayers on the backend. After a discussion that included the recent examples of new sidewalks constructed by Tractor Supply and CVS (as required by the DRB), it was decided to leave the existing sidewalk zoning language that made their construction incumbent upon developers unchanged. The Council also discussed the proposed lighting bylaw. It was decided that the Town and Village should not be exempt from its requirements. It was decided that street lights would be exempt and that the lights in municipal parking lots could remain on overnight. Mr. Thomas said that he would make these minor changes and advertise the as-revised zoning changes for legislative body approval in November.

Discussion: Lamoille Regional Planning Commission's Role in ACT 250 review – Mr. Thomas said that he was instructed to update the Council on recent problems the town was having with the Lamoille County Regional Planning Commission (LCPC). Mr. Thomas explained that the town and the regional planning commission seem to have very different opinions about development and its impact on the region. He cited the recent lengthening of the airport runway and the addition of a diesel pump at Maplefields as examples of projects where the regional planning commission looked to claim regional impact, where the town views the impact of these projects as only local. Mr. Thomas also explained how the regional planning commission may have intentionally misrepresented the town's viewpoint on truck turning for Maplefields' proposed diesel pump. Member Griswold asked what the town's recourse is if the regional planning commission continued to be adversarial to the town's objectives and if the town could remove itself as a member of regional planning. Mr. Thomas said that he would look into this option with the Town Administrator, but he would like to try to work for change within the organization first since he was the new village representative to LCPC. The Council agreed that it was very concerned with the recent examples of LCPC being adversarial to its largest member town. Mr. Thomas said that he would update the Council regarding the situation once the Selectboard and Village Trustees decided upon a course of action.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Hancock moved to approve the September 23, 2014 meeting minutes. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 4-0- 1 with Member Caldwell abstaining.

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