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MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
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Minutes of October 7, 2003

Members Present: Bruce Tomlinson, Bill Henchey, Sam Guy, John Meyer, Kelly Rogers

Members Absent: Bill Bourne

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator

Guests: Jim Pease (Agency of Natural Resources, Morristown Conservation Commission member), Julia Compagna

Sam called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. The minutes of September 16, 2003 were reviewed and approved on a motion by Bill H, seconded by John.

Jim Pease, a village resident who works in the Water Quality Division of the Agency of Natural Resources, presented an update on ongoing actions to stabilize the Wilkins Ravine streambank and a proposal for a bylaw change to address stormwater runoff under the Conditional Use review/approval process.

Jim explained that the Agency of Transportation (AOT) had recently cleaned out the culvert under the old railroad tracks across Wilkins Ravine and installed rip-rap along the upper section of the ravine along Brooklyn Street. Additionally, Vermont Precision Woodworks had removed industrial residue that had been placed in the ravine. These actions should improve water flow down the ravine into Lake Lamoille. However, during the course of these actions it was revealed that much of the west side of the railway embankment (facing the lake) has crumbled and that the culvert has been breached. AOT has plans to replace the culvert this month. Long term, the planned bypass route will further improve the runoff situation in the ravine. Jim listed several pending grant projects to reduce stormwater runoff along Brooklyn Street, which has significantly impacted the erosion problem in the ravine.

Jim outlined existing state stormwater permit requirements, stating that projects involving more than two acres of impervious surface require such permits. Most large commercial projects fall into this range and are therefore subject to state permit review. He said approximately half of the Commercial zoning district is covered by impervious surface and most of the runoff from this area flows into the Wilkins Ravine. A number of business and other properties in the district are regularly subjected to flooding as a result. He offered two versions of a proposed zoning bylaw (copy attached) for stormwater runoff review standards on Conditional Use applications of projects which fall below the threshold of the state stormwater permit. The commission will review the proposed changes for inclusion in the next bylaw amendment.

The ZA reported on response he had received from other towns regarding pond permits. Of those responding, most did require a permit, although few had specific criteria for approving such permits, other than meeting applicable setbacks. The towns of West Windsor and Underhill did have detailed requirements for pond permits and these will be reviewed further. An opinion from the VT League of Cities and Towns Municipal Assistance Center stated that under our existing bylaws, and using the bylaw definition of development, ponds do require permits as they involve excavation. Members felt that if we did start requiring pond permits as an accessory use, there should be specific standards for approval.

The ZA offered a short list of bylaw changes on issues which were either unclear in the bylaws or to address concerns raised by the public during the permit application process. The proposed changes are attached. The proposed change dealing with trailers needs to be reviewed more closely to ensure it adequately addresses the issue of using large tractor-trailers as semi-permanent storage units on individual properties without unduly burdening all trailer owners. A proposal to exempt accessory structures and residential additions below a certain square footage from obtaining a zoning permit, similar to Hyde Park's bylaws, also needs further review.

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The ZA advised members of upcoming seminars and training events they may wish to attend. The next meeting will be on October 21, 2003. Agenda items include review of work by the Select Board and Village Trustees on a policy regarding extending the village sewer lines into areas beyond the village boundaries and an update on the Route 100 corridor study.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Leonard, Recorder

approved: 11/4/03