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**MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
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Minutes of October 4, 2005

Members Present: John Meyer, Richard Duda, Bill Henchy, Steve Benson, Andrew Volansky, Bruce Tomlinson

Members Absent: Kelly Rogers

Guests: Steve Ames, Phil Fournier, Brian Kellogg, Hazel Bowen, Dave Crawford

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator (ZA)

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Town Administrator Dave Crawford conveyed the Select Board's interest in considering changes to the uses allowed in the Business Office Park (BOP) zoning district. While no specific new uses were mentioned, his understanding is that they would like retail and other commercial uses considered for inclusion in this district.

Dave asked the Planning Commission to identify a date when they could meet with the Select Board to discuss this topic, along with the issues of retail store size limits, the ongoing discussions regarding the sewer system extension, and implications of the bypass on town development. Bill expressed the commission's preference to set up a separate meeting for this purpose, outside of the regular meeting schedule for both bodies. After Dave explained the Select Board's schedule constraints, the commissioners agreed to meet on Wednesday, November 2, at the start of a regular Select Board meeting. Bill suggested inviting former Planning Commissioners who had been involved in the establishment of the BOP in the late '90s, along with the Conservation Commission. Bill stated that he hoped a separate meeting, with the Select Board and Development Review Board, could be subsequently scheduled.

Mark outlined the timeline and process for bylaw amendments. A public hearing has been warned for the next Planning Commission meeting on October 18 to present the set of proposed changes that has been developed. After that meeting, assuming there are no changes resulting from it, the Planning Commission may vote to forward the proposal to the Select Board for its review and further public hearings. Given the upcoming meeting with the Select Board, it may be prudent to hold off forwarding the proposal until after that meeting.

Steve Ames and Phil Fournier, representing the Vermont Records Center (formerly Union Carbide), asked the Planning Commission its thoughts on adding retail and other commercial uses within the BOP. Bill said he understood the original intent was to identify a growth area that would be able to attract businesses that would provide stable, well-paying jobs. Retail was not regarding as bringing that type of employment. There were also concerns that allowing retail would encourage more stores and shops outside of the downtown village business area and the north end commercial district. Steve expressed the view that allowing retail and other commercial uses along the existing Route 100 segment within the BOP might provide an incentive to exit the bypass at its south end and venture into the village.

Mark reviewed the changes currently proposed in the BOP. These consolidate a number of business uses currently listed under the broader 'business services' category and add 'child care facility' to the list. The latter is in response to several requests submitted earlier this year from interested parties looking to have more areas in town where such facilities could be permitted.

Hazel Bowen, who resides on Houle Avenue, asked how the proposed addition of 'other commercial uses' would impact her neighborhood. Bill explained that the area already is commercially zoned, but is restricted to industrial uses. The proposal would broaden the types of commercial uses that could be permitted. Mrs Bowen asked how this would impact her property values. Bill said he believed that the property value as commercial would

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be higher than residential, but that the current assessment for property taxes is based on the property's residential use, not its potential commercial use. He asked the ZA to confirm that with the lister's office.

Richard asked if 'other commercial uses' might not be in keeping with the character of the area, in particular along what is primarily a residential area on Houle Avenue. Mark noted that the current list of conditional uses in the Industrial zone are, for the most part, not in keeping with a residential area but that the residential area is 'grandfathered' in an industrial zone. Over time, the residential properties may be sold and converted to industrial or other commercial uses, eventually transforming it from a residential area to primarily commercial.

Turning to the set of proposed bylaw changes, Richard again raised the issue of landscaping for subdivisions and conditional uses. He would like to see more stringent review standards and requirements. Steve suggested possibly mandating a percentage of the project cost be required for landscaping.

Mark brought up a discrepancy regarding the boundaries of the BOP district. He noted that all current and prior zoning maps depicted the southern boundary running from the Lamoille River along the village line to Route 100, ending at the stream along the southern edge of the Bishop Marshall School property. The district boundary description in Section 1020 of the bylaws identifies the southern boundary as being along the proposed bypass route. All agreed the map depiction is correct and on a motion by John, seconded by Richard, voted to authorize the ZA to correct the description in Section 1020 to match the map boundaries.

On a motion by Steve, seconded by John, minutes of the September 6, 2005 meeting were reviewed and approved. On a motion by Bruce, seconded by Richard, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Leonard, recorder

Minutes approved on: 10/18/05 SB/jm