

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of October 3, 2017

Planning Council Members Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Yvette Mason, Max Paine, Tom Snipp, Laura Streets, and Mark Struhsacker

Planning Council Members Absent: Etienne Hancock

Guests: Ron Bomer, and Kristen Connelly

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

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

Discuss: Home Business Restrictions on Route 100 – Planning Director Thomas brought the Council's attention to proposed changes to the Zoning Bylaw's allowance for Home Businesses. The proposed change would not allow a Home Business permit to be granted for any property with frontage on Route 100. Mr. Thomas said that this change aligned with the desires the Council expressed at the last meeting to keep Route 100 south of the Village looking rural and agricultural. Member Struhsacker said that Route 100 would all be commercial at some point in the future, which was desirable versus seeing business growth spread to places like Stagecoach and Randolph Roads. Member Struhsacker suggested tighter controls on what a Home Business looks like on Route 100 as opposed to the proposed prohibition. Member Mason said that she was also opposed to this zoning change, especially how it would impact Brooklyn Street. Member Streets said that she was in favor of this proposed zoning change as she did not want to see Route 100 commercialized. She added that she wanted to retain the rural feel of the road, as well its current traffic carrying capacity. Chair Griswold said that he would rather prohibit Home Businesses on Randolph and Stagecoach Roads. Mr. Thomas said that he would prepare a larger Town-wide Home Business allowance discussion for the Council's next meeting.

Discuss: Fence regulations – Kristen Connelly rejoined the Council to discuss the fence that was erected in their backyard at 35 Howard Street. Mr. Thomas submitted the two revisions to the Town's Fence regulations that were discussed at the previous Council meeting. He said that both proposed zoning changes would make Ms. Connelly's newly constructed fence compliant with the as-revised Zoning Bylaws. The Council examined the proposed fence regulation changes proposed by Member Snipp and Member Hancock. The Council Members Streets, Paine, Snipp, and Struhsacker ultimately decided to move forward with the Snipp amendment, which allowed 4 foot tall fences of any style parallel to a road. Member Mason said that she was opposed to this change. Member Thomas said that he would amend the working draft of the Zoning Bylaws per this Snipp's amendment before the next zoning change.

Discuss: Oxbow Skate-park sponsorship signs – Mr. Thomas said that he received a request to place business sponsorship signage on the top safety rails of the Oxbow Skate-park. He said there was not a clear exemption for this kind of fundraising signage in the Zoning Bylaws. Member Struhsacker said that he was comfortable crafting such an

exemption to foster improved safety and aesthetics at the skate-park. Member Paine agreed. Member Mason said she as opposed to business signage on the skate-park and at the Oxbow in general. Member Streets said that there were lots of ways to raise funds to improve the skate-park without resorting to advertising. Chair Griswold said that he was not eager to write an exemption into the Zoning Bylaws for this situation. Mr. Thomas said he would inform Community Coordinator Tricia Follert that there was not a majority of the Council that supported adding advertising to the skate-park to help fund improvements thereat.

Discuss: Morrisville hART (History & Art) Walk – Mr. Thomas introduced to the Council to the Morrisville hART Walk. He explained that the concept was based on the Freedom Trail in Boston. He added that he hoped the to-be-painted green line on Morrisville's sidewalks, connecting the architecturally important and visually interesting art sites throughout the downtown, would draw tourists and drive economic development in the downtown. He also said that the hART Walk would highlight culturally important artifacts like the Civil War Bell that is hanging in the Grace Brethren Church that are unfortunately little-known in the community.

Discuss: Pinecrest Trailer Park – Mr. Thomas alerted the Council that the ownership changed at Pinecrest Trailer Park and that staff resources to the park were increasing as a result. He said this was a Selectboard issue, but he wanted the Council to be aware.

Discuss: Bumpouts and street trees in downtown – The Council briefly discussed angled parking on Lower Main Street and then segued into a larger discussion of bumpouts and street trees in the downtown. It was decided that Road Foreman Roland Boivin should be invited into a future Council meeting in order to move forward with trying to beautify the downtown, while making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Discuss: Supervisory Union school gym capital project letter – Council Members reviewed the draft Planning Council letter dated October 3rd addressed to the school's Capital Committee. Council Members reviewed the letter as it related to the proposed kindergarten classroom and gym expansion that is to be voted on in December. Council Members decided to delete comment #7 and replace it with a suggestion that the Capital Committee conduct better community outreach via venues such as Front Porch Forum and WLVB's morning-drive radio show. It was agreed that this Capital Committee Letter would be CCed to the EMUU School Board, the Selectboard, the Village Trustees, and Front Porch Forum. The Council discussed that the News & Citizen was no longer a viable source for community news and topics such as the school's capital gym proposal.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the September 19th meeting minutes. A vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion with Member Streets abstaining. Approval of the September 5th meeting minutes were tabled due to quorum issues.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

– submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director