

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 27 September 2022

Council Members present: Steven Foster, Joshua Goldstein, Etienne Hancock (Chair), John Meyer, and Tom Snipp

Council Members absent:

Guests: Approximately 140 people were in attendance for the public hearing, including Selectboard Members Don McDowell and Judy Bickford, Lister Charles Burnham, and Development Review Board Members Donnie Blake, Susanna Burnham, Christy Snipp, Laura Streets, and Mary Ann Wilson

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order under the tent adjacent to the clubhouse at Copley Country Club at approximately 5:05 P.M.

Public Hearing: 2022 Proposed Zoning Changes – Chair Hancock opened the 2022 zoning change public hearing regarding the following proposed language changes:

- §201 Add detail to and edit boundary line description language
- §204.4 Clarify maximum waiver applicability language
- §204.5a Revise “use matrix” to clarify Special Industry use & Site Plan Approval for big projects
- §204.5b Edit dimensional table and notes for lower Brooklyn Street (west) zoning change
- §206 Add exterior access, outside space, flat roof, & lighting requirements to Design Criteria
- §207 Major additions to historic preservation criteria & protect contributing historic buildings
- §340 Add steep slope protections and make other edits to local environmental resource areas
- §402.1 Revise permit expiration language to give ZA discretion on renewals
- §405 End harsher zoning treatment of corner lots, and clarify waiver allowance
- §415 Remove measurement of yard area from 25% Home Business allowance
- §422 ZA can approve new lots accessed by 20’ right-of-ways & minor edits to DRB approvals
- §470 Edit sign bylaw for content neutrality legal requirements, dark-sky lighting, etc.
- §482 Modify Conditional Use requirement for Class 4 roads to allow for in-fill development
- §484 Edit special gas station rules to clarify front setback requirement
- §485 Very minor edit changing “district” reference to more modern zone where allowed language
- §488 Revise rules for RV/camper parking, their use as a Primitive Camp & use during construction
- §490 Revise lighting rules to better comply with dark-sky initiatives
- §500 Revise Site Plan Requirement for compost rules & require multi-family cluster mailboxes
- §503 Make very minor change to modernize condition of approval language
- §510 Various changes to conservation subdivision bylaw, delete density bonus, require lotting
- §610 Minor language change to reflect joint appointment of Development Review Board
- §612 Match State statute for public warning periods
- §620 Correct zoning bylaw cite for severability
- §710 Change minor subdivision definition so 1 new lot can be created at a time (instead of 2)
- §720-760 Make minor revisions and improvements to subdivision approval process
- §810 Add Town Plan compliance subdivision standard
- §820.4 Offer more site specific diameter guidance for cul-de-sac sizing & give DRB flexibility
- §820.5 Codify existing process for the naming of new subdivision roads
- §900 Definitions: revise definition for Fence, Recreational Vehicle, Short-Term Housing, and Special Industry, Storage Trailer, / add Primitive Camp & delete Preliminary Plat definitions
- §1000 Zone boundary changes for Sewer Service Management Area, Central Business, Commercial, Industrial, High Density (Brooklyn St.), Medium Density, & Low Density Residential.

Planning Council Members, and Planning Director Todd Thomas, entertained questions and comments from the large crowd in attendance. A majority of the comments and questions were in regards to the proposal to restrict short term rentals to Owner Occupied properties in the Town, which matches current rules in the Village. Planning Director Thomas also explained how the grandfathering of existing short-term rentals would work if the proposed regulation was ultimately approved as proposed by the Town Selectboard and Village Trustees. Other audience questions centered on the need for more green space, the rezoning of lower Brooklyn Street, the slightly revised location of the High Density Residential line on the south side of Jersey Heights, the zoning for south end of Cadys Falls Road, a request to not delete the conservation subdivision density bonus within the village, and the proposed §207 architectural requirements for development within the Morrisville Historic District. Christy Snipp asked for the area of the §207 Historic Preservation Criteria to be expanded to include the village portion of Park Street. Chair Hancock explained to the crowd the significant changes that were part of the new Section 207 Historic Preservation zoning, including a ban on vinyl siding. Mr. Thomas added that the proposed §207 language is now accompanied by architectural sketches that demonstrate these new requirements. After being questioned about the adoption timeline for the new zoning, Mr. Thomas explained to the crowd how the zoning change approval process works (with the Planning Council deciding to forward the proposal to the Selectboard and Village Trustees for approval), and when the new zoning rules would take effect. Chair Hancock asked the Council Members if they preferred to act tonight so these new rules would be in effect by October 6th, or if they preferred to wait until their October 11th meeting to act (which would instead yield an October 20th effective date for the new zoning as it waits Selectboard and Trustee final approval). The Council, by consensus, decided to not wait until their next October meeting to act so more of the coming downtown development would fall under the new more robust zoning regulations. Member Myer moved to approved the zoning changes as presented. A vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion. Mr. Thomas added that the Selectboard and Trustee public hearings on the proposed zoning changes would be on November 7th and 17th.

Meeting Minutes: Approval of the prior meeting minutes was tabled until the next Planning Council meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director