

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 22 September 2020

Council Members Present: Allen Van Anda, Steven Foster, & Etienne Hancock (Chair)

Council Members Absent: Joshua Goldstein, & Tom Snipp

Guests: Fire Chief Dennis DiGregorio (via phone), Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff, Dan McLaughlin, & James Brewster

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order adjacent to the Clubhouse at 441 Copley Country Club Drive at approximately 5:00 P.M.

Prior meeting minutes – Member Van Anda moved to approve the September 8th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion.

Discuss: Pending zoning changes – Planning Director Thomas said that the Selectboard voted to approve the 2020 zoning changes last night. He added that the Selectboard also directed the Planning Council to immediately commence an additional zoning change process to downzone the Fairwood Parkway neighborhood to Low Density Residential. The Council was agreeable to this change, and the timeline there for by consensus. Council Members decided to add a few other small revisions to this zoning change. Mr. Thomas said that his goal was to have a draft warning ready by Friday evening.

Discuss: Town Road Policy – The Council discussed its recent joint meeting with the Selectboard where the pavement width of the “urban road” cross-section of the 2019 Town Road policy was debated. Council Members agreed that the 24 feet of minimum pavement width now required for new urban roads was excessive, and considerably wider than most roads in the village. Mr. Thomas was asked to create a spreadsheet during the coming months of pavement widths of existing roads to demonstrate that the Morristown Road Policy would be requiring more pavement width than almost all of the Town owned paved roads in existence. It was otherwise decided to table this issue until the fall 2021 zoning change.

Discuss: §840.8 Fire Protection for Major Subdivisions – Fire Chief Dennis DiGregorio joined the Council to discuss requiring fire protection for major subdivisions. The Fire Chief said that Morrisville Fire would supply the head for any new dry hydrant. Mr. Thomas said that he would add this note to the draft bylaw. The Council and Fire Chief were otherwise amendable to the revised language, and it was decided that it would be included as part of the upcoming Fairwood Parkway zoning change.

Discuss: §340 Environmental Resource Areas (ERA) – The Council reviewed proposed changes to the existing §340 Environmental Resource Area Bylaw that would include, for the first time, protection for steep slopes. Mr. Thomas explained that if a new home, an accessory structure thereof, or its septic system was proposed on mapped slopes exceeding 20%, that DRB Conditional Use approval would be required. Dan McLaughlin

asked about driveways on these same steep slopes. Mr. Thomas responded that there was no intention to regulate the slope of private driveways. The Council was amenable to the revised ERA language, and it was decided that it would be included as part of the upcoming Fairwood Parkway zoning change.

Discuss: Definition of Accessory Apartment – Mr. Thomas recommended that the definition of Accessory Apartment be changed to allow more than a studio or one-bedroom apartment. The Council members agreed, and it was decided that eliminating the existing bedroom count specificity in the definition would be included as part of the upcoming Fairwood Parkway zoning change.

Discuss: Town Plan Chapter on Natural & Historic Resources – The Council reviewed the proposed Town Plan Chapter on Natural & Historic Resources. A brief discussion ensued regarding some of the new ideas therein, such as a demo-delay bylaw for historic commercial structures in the downtown, and a building height limitation on rural ridgeline areas. The Council was pleased with the new chapter and agreed, by consensus, to include it as part of the 2020-2030 Morrisville/Morristown Town Plan.

Discuss: (Agenda Addendum) Sign regulations – James Brewster asked the Planning Council to consider adopting local zoning to regulate signage on motor vehicles. He cited Stowe and Underhill as communities that had done this. Mr. Thomas said that he would look into if such regulation was possible.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director