MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 748
MORRISVILLE, VT 05661
Phone (802) 888-6373
Fax (802) 888-6378

Minutes of September 17, 2002

Members Present: Julia Compagna, Kevin Lane, Bill Bourne, Kelly Rogers, Bill Henchey, Sam Guy

Members Absent: Bruce Tomlinson

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator

Guests: Mike Miller (LCPC Planner), Scott Corse (Morrisville Water & Light Dept), Peter Bourne (Morrisville Village Trustee), Peter Wright (Copley Health Systems), Don Ostler (Cadys Falls Water Co-op), Pitt Despault, Chris Ransom, Eileen Toomey

Julia called the meeting to order at 7:05PM. The topic for this evening's Town Plan review is Community Facilities, Utilities, & Services.

Don Ostler, president of the Cadys Falls Water Cooperative, said his organization is happy with current zoning bylaws that protect their wellhead water sources. He noted that the area has served as a community water source since 1906, with the co-op officially formed in 1947. He said it is part of the neighborhood's heritage, bringing together their small community on a common issue. The wellhead protection area was delineated in 1988 and they feel it is clearly and accurately defined. They are concerned about possible development in the wellhead protection area coming from the planned Route 100 bypass. The bypass and any development it spurs could increase traffic, stormwater runoff, and sewage discharges. Engineering plans for the bypass take their wellhead protection requirements into account

Julia asked if there were any changes or updates to the plan section addressing the co-op and whether they were seeking any grants or system improvements. Don replied that it should state that they have a 10,000/gal per day capacity, with average daily consumption of 8,000 gallons. He said they could use any funds which might become available to help alleviate development pressures in the wellhead protection area. No system expansion beyond the 21 connections in service now is projected.

Bill Henchey asked who owns the land over their reservoir. Don said it was CCS and the Eva Perry estate. Sam asked where the primary spring is located; Don said it was behind the Hearthstone building in the Industrial District. Bill asked if they had a chlorinator. Don said they do, as it is a state requirement for community water systems, but that it is unused as the water quality, which is tested regularly by the state, is very good.

Bill asked if the water co-op would be in favor of any sewer system expansion into their wellhead protection area. Don replied that they would most likely take a "defensive" position regarding any proposal that could increase development in their area. He noted some interest among some property owners in the area in developing their lands and that there are deed restrictions limiting such development.

Scott Corse and Peter Bourne addressed issues concerning the Water & Light Department's utility services. Looking ahead five years, Scott said a looming issue was sludge disposal. Currently, 17 tons/week are hauled away to a fill site. That site's capacity is finite and other options will need to be explored. The sewage plant is currently operating at 80% of its capacity (gallons processed per day). Increasing amounts of phosphates are increasing the load on the system; some controls or reductions of these would lessen their impact. Some sort of rate adjustment scale, which would take into account the quantity and type of discharge by specific users might be a tool to address this. More effective scrutiny of permit applications to assess the proposed development's sewage needs and impacts is needed. Currently, only conditional uses are subject to review by Water & Light; permitted uses do not require any review by Water & Light. Pressure to expand the system for more commercial and industrial users needs to be monitored to gauge each successive new user's impact on the overall capacity and efficiency of the system.

Julia asked if there were any procedures to require new hook-ups to meet certain conditions (i.e., pre-treat discharge, recycle some waste water, etc.). None were noted.

Chris Ransom voiced some concern that with only 20% of system capacity left, some amount of that capacity should be set aside to accommodate additional residential users within the village boundary before more capacity is used by non-village customers.

Bill Henchy asked what options are available for plant expansion. Scott said that the first step would be to work on stormwater infiltration problems. He estimated that he could save up to 105of system capacity by reducing non-sewage treatment currently going through the plant. This would be more cost-effective than expanding the plant. Once this issue was resolved, the next step would be to look at increasing system capacity by at least 50% (less would not be cost-effective), either by enlarging the existing plant or building a new facility.

Bill encouraged Scott and the Village Trustees to start thinking of the sewage system as a town facility, not solely as a village asset. Obviously, some sort of cost-sharing formula that takes into account the village's investment over the years would be necessary. There are currently different rates for village and non-village uses. Scott and Peter said they were well aware of this concern and were working with the Select Board and Planning Commission to come up with a plan that addresses the needs of both entities. They are looking to the Planning Commission to tell them where (a specific geographic area) future growth in the town is envisioned so that they can explore options and costs to expand the sewer system in that direction. The most cost-effective expansion would be one that allowed for gravity-feed of the discharge to the plant. Any system requiring pump stations would be more expensive.

Scott stressed that the Department's improvement plan for the next five years focuses on enhancements to the current system, rather than any expansion. Any future expansion must be economically feasible and fair to the village 'owners'. If shown to be economically viable at no cost to the village, Water & Light would likely agree to expand the system into the north end of the commercial/industrial areas (how ever they may be delineated). The state wants to see any system expansion it may fund be in high-density areas to avoid any development 'sprawl'.

Scott addressed the impacts of electric power deregulation. Consumers now have "retail choice" for their source of electricity. The electricity is delivered by the local utility, Water & Light in this case. Scott said there could be legislation that would require Water & Light to sell off its power-generating plants, a prospective he viewed as adverse to the community's interests.

Peter Wright, Development Director for Copley Health Systems, told the members that Copley's Strategic Plan, currently being drafted, looks at the hospital's future facilities needs. The hospital's physical plant is over 45 years old. Addressing the text on the hospital in the current town plan, he said statistical information needs updating. He noted the hospital's expanding affiliation with local and regional health care providers and enhanced local outreach services. They are also looking at improving their emergency and disaster response capabilities. He said they are concerned with the prospect of a major change in ambulance service for communities outside Morristown and were monitoring ongoing discussions which might lead to a greater role for Morristown Rescue Squad.

Bill asked at what capacity for medical services is the hospital today. Peter replied that it varies by specific types of service and patient levels, but that they are not maxed out yet

Sam moved, and Bill Henchey seconded, to approve the minutes of August 6, 2002. The motion passed unanimously. Review and approval of the August 20 minutes was deferred due to a lack of a quorum present at that meeting. The next meeting will be on October 1, 2002 at the Water & Light Department building, addressing the Land Use section of the town plan.

Sam moved to adjourn and Bill Bourne seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Leonard, recorder