

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of September 5, 2017

Planning Council Members Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Max Paine, and Laura Streets

Planning Council Members Absent: Yvette Mason, Tom Snipp, and Mark Struhsacker

Guests: Andy Lundeen of the Lamoille South Supervisory Union, and residents Melissa LeBlanc, and Ron Bomer

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: Supervisory Union school gym capital project – Andy Lundeen appeared before the Council presenting Lamoille South Supervisory Union capital project proposal. Mr. Lundeen showed a video detailing this project, which includes new kindergarten classrooms, a new gymnasium, and roadway improvements to and at the school. Chair Griswold asked about the project's financial impact on the community, including the assertion in the presentation that the cost for this project would not impact businesses. Mr. Lundeen said that he was not here to answer questions, only to present the project. Member Hancock asked about the guidelines discussed in the presentation regarding aspects of the school property that do not meet minimum standards, such as the 50 ft.² per kindergarten student. Member Streets said that the presentation should be clearer about what is a requirement versus what is a standard. She also suggested that an economic impact study, or a cost-benefit analysis be done for proposed school project. Member Hancock agreed with Member Streets and said that the standards that are not being met by the school facilities are not mandatory. The tax implications of this project on a typical \$250,000 house would reportedly range from \$192 to \$260 per year depending on the scope selected. Member Hancock also asked about additional carrying costs of the new facilities (addition staff for the additional building space, etc.). Mr. Lundeen said that these carrying costs will not be included in the above yearly tax number. Mr. Lundeen said that the overall project cost could not be determined until the project scope is settled. Chair Griswold said that he wants to see a proposed addition to the existing gym examined, utilizing the existing unused entryway to create enough room for a regulation basketball court. Chair Griswold said that this simple addition would solve the court size issues for playoff games and likely cost less than a million dollars. Mr. Lundeen said the remodeling of existing gym has not been considered because it is not practical. Chair Griswold clarified that such an addition would be allowed by the rules of the Copley Fund (as the Copley Fund built the existing gym for the community). Resident Melissa Leblanc said that she is concerned about the high cost of the proposed project, and the resulting tax impacts on the community. She questioned why the Capital Project Committee was not listening to community feedback. She gave an example of how there is no community appetite for the second floor track above the proposed gym. She questioned why the Capital Projects Committee was still including this feature within the proposed project. Ms. Leblanc said that neither the basic nor the expanded scope was

fiscally responsible in her opinion. As such, she asked Mr. Lundeen to bring back a request to the Capital Project Committee for a more bare-bones proposal. Chair Griswold said that this committee's minutes noted that the track would not be available to the public on the school days anyway. He added that he wanted the naming rights to the new gym explored as well. Mr. Thomas expressed a concern that the proposed basic scope project would destroy the tennis courts, which are a valued town resource. Mr. Lundeen confirmed that only the expanded scope would restore the tennis courts. Member Streets said that if the tennis courts are being disturbed during construction of the gym, that they should be replaced by both the expanded and the basic project scopes. Resident Ron Bomer questioned how equitable it was to place the tax burden for the school capital proposal only on homestead residents, with businesses and developers not paying a share. The Council thanked Mr. Lundeen for his time and presentation.

Discuss: Public art DRB zoning bonus consideration – The Council discussed the Community Development Coordinator's public art zoning proposal for a final time. Resident Ron Bomer said that the Council should vote this proposed zoning change down because it was outside the scope of what a local government should be doing. The Council decided that the newly included 25% additional dwelling unit bonus should be capped at a maximum of two residential units. It was also decided that the recently deleted sentence about community groups weighing on the durability and desirability of the public art proposal should be added back into this zoning bonus language. Member Hancock stressed that he wanted the DRB to more or less just be checking a box after receiving a positive letter about the public art proposal from a community group as opposed to be deliberating about the merits of the public art proposal. Mr. Thomas said that the rewrite of this zoning bonus would do as such. Mr. Thomas added that this zoning bonus would be included within the next zoning change.

Discuss: Smaller ROW allowance for limited residential development – Mr. Thomas presented a proposed zoning bylaw change that could allow single-family home development via a smaller 20 foot wide right-of-way. A discussion ensued regarding the necessity for the currently required 50 of right-of-way width when the development proposed was limited in scope and on a private road. The Council agreed to move forward with the proposed language in the next zoning change that allowed no more than two houses to be developed off these smaller width right-of-ways.

Discuss: Progress on meeting Town Plan Objectives – This agenda item was tabled due to the late hour. Mr. Thomas asked Council Members to read through the Town Plan objectives that had not been met yet prior to the next meeting as a way to prioritize the group's upcoming work agenda.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Approval of each of the last prior meeting minutes were tabled due to quorum issues.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.

– submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director