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MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
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Minutes of August 29, 2006

Members Present: John Meyer, Kelly Rogers, Lauren Traister, Andrew Volansky

Members Absent: Richard Duda, Bill Henchy, Steve Berson

Guests: see attached list

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator (ZA)

Kelly called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. First on the agenda was a discussion with residents of the Mansfield Avenue and Washington Highway area on their request for a zoning change. Richard Sargent spoke on behalf of the group, who submitted a petition asking that the boundary of the Special Use (SUD) zoning district be redrawn to exclude properties on Mansfield Avenue from that district, placing them in the adjoining Low Density Residential (LDR) zoning district. The petition (copy attached), signed by twenty-four residents and/or property owners in the neighborhood, seeks this change in order to preserve the residential nature of this street.

Dick Sargent discussed how and when the SUD was established with the current boundaries. He recalled that at various times during the deliberations on establishing the SUD in the mid-90s, Mansfield Avenue was either in or out of the proposed district. He said many residents were surprised to discover it lies within the district, allowing for non-residential uses on what has been an entirely residential street.

Kelly explained how zoning bylaws are revised, noting that it usually takes several months to go through the process. She advised the group that the commission was just beginning the 18-month process of reviewing and updating the Town Plan and that this task might preclude any zoning bylaw changes during that time. She said the members would want to review the minutes from when the SUD was proposed and ultimately approved to determine what the Planning Commission's intent for Mansfield Avenue was at that time. She acknowledged that the original rationale for including Mansfield Avenue in the district may have changed since then and that the Commission would certainly consider the request.

The ZA advised that until such time as the Planning Commission formally votes to recommend a change, the current zoning bylaws and district boundaries apply to any proposed use in the area. He informed those present that he had today received an application seeking to building a health care services facility on the lot at the corner of Mansfield Avenue and Washington Highway, which would be considered under the current bylaws.

David Raphael of LandWorks provided a report (copy attached) on work to date on the review of downtown and commercial district zoning requirements and possible design standards. He has inventoried commercial buildings and signs in both districts. He noted the lack of design standards in the existing bylaws and outlined three levels or approaches to such standards, ranging from advisory standards and recommendations to specific regulatory requirements for all commercial development proposals.

Kelly said there would need to be general agreement across the community on the desirability and scope of any design standards. The standards would need to be understandable, enforceable, and equitable. She added that the DRB should weigh in on any proposals for design standards as they would be the ones responsible for applying them to new applications. She hoped the full commission would review the LandWorks report at its next meeting and discuss what guidance to give to David as he proceeds.

Michele Boomhower, Mike Miller, and Heidi Krantz presented a comprehensive outline for undertaking the Town Plan revision process. Michele provided a schedule for the next 18 months, through March 2008, that endeavors to get better public participation on the front end of the process and to do more in-depth reviews of key sections of the plan. The schedule includes a public meeting on October 17th to try to define a town 'vision' to

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guide the plan revision. Mike reviewed the statutory requirements for the plan and outlined the roles and responsibilities of various town bodies and functions (Select Board, LCPC, Planning Commission, Town Administrator, Zoning Administrator). Heidi discussed a number of ways to increase public participation, with lists of tasks for each, and gave planning commissioners a list of questions to consider and respond to by the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mark Leonard, recorder

Minutes approved on: 9/19/06