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**MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
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**Minutes of August 21, 2007
Approved September 18, 2007**

Members Present: Bill Henchey (Chair), Richard Duda, Lauren Traister, John Meyer, Steve Berson

Members Absent: Kelly Rogers, Andrew Volansky

Development Review Board Members Present: None

Guests: Mike Miller (LCPC), Steve Rae, Time Soule (LEDC), Amy Walker, Sharon Ahern, Lisa McCormack, Kevin Lane

Recorder: Chip Sawyer (LCPC)

Meeting called to order by Chair Bill Henchey at 7:05 PM.

Agenda Item:

Discuss problems/issues with current zoning & subdivision bylaws; suggestions for revisions

Due to lack of DRB presence, this agenda item was tabled.

Agenda Item:

Review & discuss Land Use chapter of current Town Plan

Mike Miller handed out the 2003 version of the land use chapter and commented that the section is still accurate up until the future land use piece at the end. Many of the 2003 current land use issues listed are still relevant today.

Bill Henchey commented on the need for a list of land use questions to lead off the discussion at the land use public forums, much like at the housing forums.

Kevin Lane commented that land use issues and implications can be found throughout the Town Plan and need to be recognized more outside the Land Use chapter.

Henchey: Land Use – specific chapter is still needed. Perhaps more in-Plan references to land use implications can be made where they are found.

Lane: More can be done in Plan to reference current land uses and advocate for their maintenance.

Henchey: That would be a good topic for the public forum, i.e. *What is the goal of land use planning?*

Discussion then focused on specific land use policies and issues to address, add and/or modify in the new version:

Henchey: Policy in chapter to “promote walkable neighborhoods where pedestrian and bicycle transportation allow for safe movement” could use some focus and re-wording.

Chip Sawyer: Need to update chapter's references to LVRT and address land use issues pertinent to the trail.

Lauren Traister: Could take another look at zoning districts, especially Rural Residential.

Miller: Explore increasing commercial/industrial opportunities in and outside the Village.

Traister: The Route 100 corridor needs some policy-attention.

John Meyer: The Airport District could also use an update.

Henchey: farmland surrounding may soon be up for sale. This could present an opportunity...

Steve Berson: Take another look at rules that allow parcels straddling zoning districts to be developed with policies from only one district or the other.

Tim Soule: Need to make a place for public safety concerns in the land use section. Also contributed some wording suggestions in specific parts of the chapter.

Henchey: Need a contingency plan in the event of a Bypass-less future.

Then goes to audience: *How important is the preservation of agricultural land?*

Walker: Should there be an agriculture-specific zoning district?

Need to do more to find the balance and future of Morristown. Would like more "meat" and concrete steps in this section.

Henchey: However a general approach provides an amount of flexibility, which can be helpful during implementation.

Walker: New Morristown-LCPC Planning Consultant agreement will provide a person to help keep folks centered on a vision. Her ideas for vision items include protection of scenic resources and providing community space in clustered developments.

Lane: Would like an opportunity to address scenic resources at the land use public forums.

General discussion ensued on how to engage public in the land use forums:

Does the 9/4 target present a feasible timeline?

Miller: Pitch the forums as a chance to make the changes that you want to make to Morristown.

Lane: Use contentious issues as leverage to encourage attendance and engagement.

Agenda Item:

Review Town Plan vision statement drafts

Henchey: Submitted the visions statement attributed to him in last meeting's minutes: "...the Town must have a well-thought out plan for that development to allow it to grow in a manner consistent with the diverse views of the community, not just unrestricted growth driven by market forces. He said the vision statement should emphasize balance between the needs for economic and residential development and preservation of existing neighborhoods and uses."

Traister: Vision to move forward in a well thought-out, productive manner that is not dominated by any one issue. Have clear regulations to minimize aesthetic impacts.

Berson: Need to apply consistent parameters to each Town Plan section, e.g. aesthetics, accessibility, recreation, natural spaces.

Set real standards and details.

Use design review.

Rail trail and other recreational potential integrated together with infrastructure and amenities.

Bylaws we have now present a “scary” vision.

Richard Duda: ‘Morristown is a community supporting rural, urban and village housing. It will encourage healthy, sustainable economic development while supporting lifelong learning, the arts and recreation.’

Meyer: Concepts: rural/urban balance, focus on long-term benefits, sustainability, more cohesion between various concepts. Vision shouldn’t be vague.

Henchey: However a general vision could be backed up by more specific components.

Sawyer: What sort of benchmarks and information can we use to measure the existence of a “balance?”

Miller: If one initiative is pursued, other, balancing initiatives should also be explored.

Henchey: What are successful examples from other communities?

Miller: There are qualitative and quantitative benchmarks that can be used.

Duda: Examples would be very valuable.

Walker: Likes Stowe commercial square footage regs.

Duda: Littleton, NH has a lot of similarities with Morristown.

Steve Rae: Continue to survey Morristown residents to keep on track.

Lane: To understand, recognize, serve and protect the townspeople’s interests: a survey would be a useful tool.

Walker: Morristown is like a campfire: need to keep the fire burning without depleting all of your fuel.

Traister: Need to develop a system to maintain the vision, including land trust activities. Use the logic model: inputs, outputs, outcomes.

Miller: #1 ingredient of success is LEADERSHIP.

Berson: Develop a vision 50 years out and then work backward to produce a road map.

Lane: Allow public forum participants to write out their own 5-year vision.

Traister: Have an example vision for people to react to and fine tune.

Berson: Take a vision and make visuals. Invite folks to “Morristown of the Future.”

Miller: Shelburne has a good example vision statement in their Town Plan.

Rae: Could spice up a grand vision with more timely examples of possible projects/initiatives to pursue right away.

Rae & Henchey: Need to do more to involve the youth.

Ahern: Sees a lack of focus. Vision statement should have been the very first item addressed in this town plan update.

General Discussion:

Need to use the Town Plan and vision to define what “growth” and “economic development” mean in Morristown.
Do we *need* to keep our youth here?

General discussion of various options to direct and control growth.

Vision should highlight successes of the past in Morristown

Berson: A good vision will “sell” zoning.

Henchey: Use the vision to build, rather than restrict.

Rae: Encourage dialogue, buy-in, and involvement (potential benchmark).

Berson: Possible all-day public event with visioning in the morning and creation of resulting visuals in the afternoon.

Approval of Minutes of 8/7/07 Meeting.

Motion: Traister, Second: Duda, Unanimous vote to approve.

The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chip Sawyer, recorder

These Minutes Approved on: _____