

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of August 5, 2014

Planning Council Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Yvette Mason, Max Paine, Tom Snipp & Mark Struhsacker.

Planning Council Absent: Andrea Caldwell

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Guests: Richard “Buckwheat” Lowe & Roy Marble

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Tegu Building on 43 Portland Street at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Discussion: Reducing the Minimum Lot Size in the AB Zone from 2 acres to 1 acre –

Mr. Thomas opened the public discussion regarding a proposal for a 1 acre minimum lot size in the Airport Business Zone. Mr. Thomas reminded the Council that he invited all of the landowners in this zone to this evening’s meeting to discuss the potential for smaller lot sizes and potentially smaller setbacks that corresponded to the smaller lot sizes. It was noted that no one from the public had decided to attend this discussion other than the proponent of the zoning change, Richard “Buckwheat” Lowe. Mr. Lowe showed a subdivision plan of his land off Goeltz Road with a proposed one acre lot thereon. Chair Griswold noted that it would be hard with the Class 3 Development in this zone to fit a well, septic, commercial building and parking all on one acre. Mr. Griswold added that he did not think it was the intent when the zone was created to have small uses on small parcels, he said the vision was closer to large business operations on large parcels. Member Snipp said that a one acre minimum lot size might draw people in who, regardless of the minimum lot size requirement, may need just an acre and a half of land to develop – less than the existing two acre minimum. He added that the Council should be encouraging business. Member Mason said that the Airport Business Zone was the gateway into our community from Stowe and she would prefer to keep this area looking rural by retaining the existing larger minimum lot size and corresponding larger setbacks. Member Griswold polled the members and a super majority of said members preferred to leave the existing 2 acre minimum lot size in the Airport Business Zone unchanged.

Discussion (agenda addendum): Bridge Street rezoning – Roy Marble joined the Council and said that he was working on a deal to sell the old Riverside Garage site on Bridge Street to a business looking for a permanent footprint in Town. Mr. Marble confirmed the zoning for this site and suggested that the zoning on Bridge Street needs to be revisited with the opening of the Truck Route. Mr. Thomas said that the Town Plan already encourages this. Mr. Marble suggested expanding the downtown zoning from the Bridge Street Bridge west to the Truck Route right-of-way.

Discussion: Conservation Commission regarding local regulation of stormwater –

The Planning Council discussed the July 21st letter written by the Conservation Commission regarding the failings of the existing stormwater bylaw. The Planning

Council decided to evaluate issues with the existing bylaw and scheduled a further discussion of this issue with the Conservation Commission on September 23rd. Planning Council members were not unanimous in wanting to locally regulate stormwater on sites less than 1 acre, but the majority of the members were open to local regulation of stormwater via a requirement to simply separate and infiltrate roof runoff. To keep the bylaw simple and usable by the DRB, Mr. Thomas suggested separating and infiltrating the roof runoff of the entire storm event – not just the first 0.4 inches (which is required now and takes drainage calculations to parse). Mr. Thomas also noted that tying stormwater regulations to total impervious cover would require square footage calculations to be done on driveways, parking lots, walkways, tennis courts, etc, which is why he preferred looking at the building footprint/roof instead. The Planning Council agreed with Mr. Thomas and the Conservation Commission that a revised stormwater bylaw should be tied to Site Plan Review and not Conditional Use. The Council was unsure of what the trigger for local stormwater regulation should be, i.e. what impervious roof/cover size should trigger the stormwater component of Site Plan Review. Mr. Thomas pointed out that Site Plan Review was required for every zoning permit in Morristown. The Council was uncomfortable with requiring a stormwater review on all new houses or additions to existing houses via Site Plan Review. The Council said that it would discuss with the Conservation Commission about where the trigger should be set on the roof size for regulation (ex. should it be 5,000sf, 10,000sf, 25,000sf, etc). The Planning Council asked Mr. Thomas to take the Conservation Commission up on its offer of having an engineer present at the September 23rd meeting so a more nuanced stormwater discussion could take place.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director