Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of July 15, 2014

Planning Council Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Yvette Mason, Max Paine & Mark Struhsacker.
Planning Council Absent: Andrea Caldwell & Tom Snipp
Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas
Guests: None

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Tegu Building on 43 Portland Street at approximately 7:05 P.M.

Discussion: Capital budget scheduling & recent Selectboard meeting – The Council resumed the ongoing discussion of how to best coordinate capital expenditures greater than $500,000 amongst the town, school and village. Mr. Thomas noted upcoming discussions with the Village Trustees on August 18 and the School Board on September 9. Due to the August 18 Trustee meeting, the Council decided to cancel its August 19 meeting.

Discussion: Capital budget scheduling & recent Selectboard meeting – Mr. Thomas updated the Council on its survey request to hear from residents of the town, specifically voters, to see if there are any town or school projects that could be built or improved to enhance the quality of life in Morristown. The Council reviewed the proposed capital survey and approved its final format. Mr. Thomas said that he would launch the survey electronically via Survey Monkey in the coming days.

Discussion: Smaller lots and setbacks in the Airport Business Zone – Mr. Thomas said that he wished to follow up with the Council regarding property owner Richard "Buckwheat" Lowe's request for a 1 acre minimum lot size in the Airport Business Zone. Mr. Thomas reminded the Council that they previously agreed to invite landowners in this zone to a future Council meeting to discuss smaller lot sizes and potentially smaller setbacks that corresponded to the smaller lot size. It was agreed that this meeting should take place on August 5. Mr. Thomas said that he would prepare letters to all the landowners in this district to inform them and invite them to this meeting.

Discussion: Conservation Subdivision Design for major subdivisions – Mr. Thomas said that he would like the Council to prioritize having him draft and propose a Conservation Subdivision Design Bylaw. Mr. Thomas added that such bylaw was a smart, economically prudent and environmentally sensitive way to develop land in the community. He added that the real intent of this proposal was to ensure that prime ag on open-space parcels was protected during development to satisfy a condition of the sewer plant's Act 250 permit. Mr. Thomas noted that such a bylaw, which was similar to planned residential development concepts, would significantly change how large subdivisions are permitted in Morristown. He added his proposal to only require

Conservation Subdivision Design for major subdivisions would ensure that a landowner or a farmer would be able to subdivide a lot or two from his large parcel to give to his offspring without going through this process. The Council set a goal for after its August capital meeting with the village for having a draft Conservation Subdivision Design Bylaw available for a primary review.

Discussion (agenda addendum): Rte 15W sewer extension & zoning – Mr. Thomas noted that a group of business owners were working on extending village sewer and water westbound on the north side of Route 15. He added that this group had approached Phil Houle about his lot behind the radio station, which had recently been filled with Truck Route cut material. Mr. Thomas said he spoke with Mr. Houle and that Mr. Houle was interested in participating in a sewer project (and its cost) if his lot was zoned commercial and added to the Sewer Service Management Area. The Council discussed this lot and decided that a commercial use was more advantageous to both the property owner in the community than the existing residential zoning. The commission decided that it would talk to Mr. Houle about this property, but that any zoning changes should really wait until after a town plan update.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director