

MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
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Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2012

Members Present: Paul Griswold, Reeves Larson, Max Paine & Tom Snipp

Members Absent: John Meyer & Mark Struhsacker

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator & Planner

Guests: none

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:00 PM.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Griswold moved to approve the June 19, 2012 meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion.

Discussion: LHP request, affordable housing density bonus – The commission discussed Lamoille Housing Partnership's density bonus request for affordable housing in the village, via section 510 Planned Unit Development. Member Griswold spoke about potential impacts to the grandlist from such a zoning change. ZA Thomas provided the commission examples of the impact to the grandlist created by the state's affordable housing law for 61 Cherry Street, 95 Park Street and the Copley House. The Commission noted that 61 Cherry Street has a subsidized value \$148,200 versus an unsubsidized value of \$226,200, with a subsidized tax bill of \$3,201.12 versus an unsubsidized tax bill of \$4,885.92. The difference between the subsidized and unsubsidized tax bill is \$1,684.80, which is a reduction of 34.48% of the unsubsidized grandlist value. Member Griswold stressed that 61 Cherry Street is only one affordable property of at least six in town. He added that the town, through the impact to the grandlist that affordable housing creates, already does it share in funding affordable housing. The commission discussed the request further and by consensus was not amenable to creating an affordable housing density bonus via section 510 Planned Unit Development. Member Griswold moved to refuse Lamoille Housing Partnership's request for a density bonus for affordable housing. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion.

Discussion: Sign size in Special Industrial zone – ZA Thomas distributed a proposed zoning change that would increase the sign size in the special industrial zone (SI), as requested by Members Struhsacker and Griswold. The commission discussed the proposed changes to section 472 and section 473 of the zoning bylaw. The commission decided that the proposed 15sf of signage in the special industrial zone was still too small. The commission agreed to increase the sign size in the special industrial zone from 6sf to 25sf, which matches the sign size for Fred's oil and propane on Route 15 E (which was previously cited as an example of appropriately sized signage). The commission also decided to increase the sign size in the special use zone (the Copley Hospital zoning district) from 15sf to 25sf, thereby matching the SI zone's newly proposed sign size. The zoning administrator said that he would include these two changes in the next zoning update, which should have a public hearing towards the end of the summer.

Discussion: Prohibition on medical marijuana dispensaries - The commission reviewed the zoning administrator's proposed changes to section 401.6 of the zoning bylaw. Said changes ban medical marijuana dispensaries. The commission approved the proposed zoning change to ban medical marijuana dispensaries. The zoning administrator said that this change would be included within the next zoning update.

Discussion: Fire Dept Knox Box request, commercial buildings – The zoning administrator noted a request from the fire department to require Knox box installation in new commercial buildings. The zoning administrator noted that Knox boxes cost anywhere from \$40-\$400. He added that he spoke to Kevin Amyot of HA Manosh, who said that he supports Knox box installations and already had them installed on a couple of his commercial properties. Member Griswold said that he is against the government requiring that businesses install Knox boxes. He added that adding another cost to doing business is a bad idea. The zoning administrator said that the point of Knox boxes is to increase response times in emergencies and to limit property damage from false alarms - doors don't have to be broken down when there isn't an emergency. Member Larson said that he thinks Knox boxes sound like a good idea but he is unsure if he wants to require them. The zoning administrator said that he would ask Assistant Fire Chief Don Hill to appear before the commission regarding this request. The zoning administrator added that he would add Mr. Hill to the next agenda, based on his availability.

Discussion: Educational Facilities Chapter of Town Plan - The zoning administrator introduced the education chapter of the town plan for discussion. Member Larson suggested that it may be prudent to wait for the November 6th school merger vote before discussing this chapter. ZA Thomas agreed and said that a merger vote could have a large impact on school facilities. The commission asked that the education chapter discussion be rescheduled to sometime in December. The zoning administrator said he would send the existing chapter to Tracy Wrend for comments before the end of the week.

Discussion: Town Plan update schedule - The commission decided to discuss the transportation chapter of the town plan at its July 24 meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Todd Thomas, ZA