

Morrisville/Morristown Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 9 July 2024

Council Members present: Etienne Hancock (Chair), John Meyer, Josh Goldstein, Wally Reeve

Council Members absent: Jamie Morris

Council Guests: Eric Besecker, Jamie Brewster, Tom Cloutier, Nick Donza, Mason Kemerer, Laura & Martin Green, David & Denis Nepveu, Alexis George Owen, Selectboard Member Chris Palermo, Ron Stancliff, Evelyn & Jerry Throne, Bob Titterton, Mary Ann Wilson,

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas, Town Manager Brent Raymond, Executive Assistant Judi Alberi, & Video Recording Operator Charlie Burnham

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order in the Community Meeting Room of the old Tegu Theatre, 43 Portland Street, in Morrisville at approximately 5:00 P.M.

Meeting Minutes: Member Meyer moved to approve the May 14th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion (Member Goldstein arrived just after this vote).

Discuss: Introduction to new Town Manager Brent Raymond

Brent Raymond, the Town's first permanent Town Manager, introduced himself to the Board and pleasantries were exchanged.

Discuss: 2024 Zoning Change update vote delay

Planning Director Thomas explained that the July 1st Selectboard vote on the proposed Zoning Bylaws did not happen upon the agreed schedule that was set by the Interim (previous) Town Manager. Town Manager Raymond explained that the Selectboard had hired a consultant to peer review the zoning changes, and it now appeared unlikely that the zoning changes would be voted on at the next Selectboard meeting on July 15th. Member Goldstein explained that the zoning approval schedule had been accelerated to the agreed upon July 1st approval date by the Interim Town Manager, so the current delay was surprising. Upon a question from Chair Hancock, Mr. Thomas explained that the delay in approving the 2024 Zoning Bylaw update already was slowing down development permitting in this office, and even stopping homeowners from surveying new lots in rural areas due to the question of what the minimum lot size was. Mr. Thomas added that further delaying the Legislative Bodies zoning vote past July 15th could push-back construction starting on recent DRB permit approvals for significant projects like the Airport Industrial Park & the redevelopment of the funeral home on Brooklyn Street (both heard under the 2024 Zoning Bylaws). A discussion also ensued regarding the sequencing of approving the 2024 Zoning Bylaws versus the 2024 Town Plan update, which Mr. Thomas suggested a legal opinion could be needed for since the 2024 Zoning Bylaws were reported on against the 2022 Town Plan. Public comments included Martin Green and Denis Nepveu questioning the Town's response to S.100. Jamie Brewster encouraged the Planning Council Members to deny any Selectboard made changes to the 2024 Zoning Bylaws that are sent back to the Planning Council. Tom Cloutier attested that the Selectboard had previously agreed to the schedule that had them voting the 2024 Zoning Changes on July 1st.

Public Hearing: 2024 Town Plan Amendment

Mr. Thomas explained that the warned Town Plan amendment was very simple, striking 3 sentences from the Transportation Chapter of the Town Plan and replacing them with 4 revised sentences. The Planning Council, after again questioning the sequencing of approving Town Plan

versus the already pending 2024 Zoning Bylaw update, took comments from the public. Mason Kemerer, Tom Cloutier, and Jamie Brewster said that they supported the Town Plan Amendment. Member Goldstein moved to close the public hearing. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion. Member Reeve moved to approve the revised Town Plan and send it to the Selectboard and Trustees for approval. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion.

Discuss: Parking improvement plans for Pleasant Street

Planning Director Thomas began the Pleasant Street parking discussion by speaking to its 41.25 foot right-of-way width, but actual pavement width that ranged from 35 feet to 50+ feet in places, with only parallel parking currently allowed on the west side of the street. Member Goldstein spoke to this agenda item being his initiative and said that he would like to re-look at adding angled parking to Pleasant Street (and to Lower Main Street which the Selectboard had already approved but not striped). Mason Kemerer suggested only allowing one-way northbound traffic on Pleasant Street to make way for angled parking along the sidewalk (west side of the street), and a 2-way bike lane between the parking and said curb. Member Meyer said that the Planning Commission discussed angled parking on Pleasant Street during his first term on the Board. Denis Nepveu said he was concerned about the safety of back-out angled parking, as well as traffic cutting-through the Copley Municipal Parking Lot to avoid the main intersection downtown. Bob Titterton asked for a dedicated loading zone in front of the Morrisville Food Co-op (MoCo), and he also asked for the Town to raise the depressed manhole structure at the intersection of Pleasant and Hutchins Street. MoCo GM Eric Besecker asked for the same dedicated loading zone for MoCo, agreed that the parking lot cut-through traffic created a dangerous situation, and said he supported the one-way road plan floated earlier in the meeting. Mary Ann Wilson said that the old that the Puffer Church is now the Education Center for the United Community Church of Morrisville and is fully rented to tenants whose clients are children and families: Wee Explorers Preschool, Little Saplings Preschool and Daycare (registered for 40 children), and the Lamoille Valley Dance Academy (130 students). These child centric educational uses have many pick-up and drop-off times throughout the day, and the southern end of Pleasant Street, especially its intersection with the Municipal Parking Lot, is a busy and dangerous village street for walking, crossing the intersection, and parking. She emphasized that more parking is sorely needed, and traffic calming is a must. Jerry Throne mentioned that he was a member of LCPC's T.A.C. group and suggested that they could assist with any road redesign. Nick Donza briefly spoke about his future development plans on Pleasant Street, and he also said that the post office parking lot should be physically separated from the Copley Municipal Parking Lot to stop the cut through traffic. Mr. Thomas said that if nothing changes, the current curb and sidewalk profile for the east side of Pleasant Street will be extended when development plans are submitted to his office for Pleasant Street Auto. Member Goldstein asked that any communication to the Selectboard encourage the idea that a broader consultant design scope is needed for an area larger than just Pleasant Street, but that he supported the previously discussed one-way traffic design, bike lanes, and angled parking. After some discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Thomas would write a draft letter to the Selectboard asking them to immediately stripe in parking spaces on the east side of Pleasant Street that has curbing with enough road width, to evaluate (perhaps with a consultant with a larger scope) the alternative one-way northbound only traffic proposal for Pleasant Street that allowed for a 2-way bike lanes and angled parking, to add traffic calming features like bump-outs or speedbumps to Pleasant Street, and to physically sperate the post office parking lot from the Copley Municipal Parking Lot to end the unsafe practice of cut-through traffic avoiding the larger downtown intersection. Mr. Thomas said he would have such a letter available for review and editing at the July 23rd Planning Council meeting.

*** The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 PM. Minutes written by Todd Thomas. ***

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TOWN OF MORRISVILLE