

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

PO Box 748 / Morrisville, VT 05661

Phone (802) 888-6373

Meeting Minutes of 5 June 2018

Council Members Present: Joshua Goldstein, Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Max Paine & Tom Snipp

Council Members Absent: Linda Greaves

Guests: Conservation Commission Chairman Ron Stancliff, Development Review Board Member Laura Streets, and Bob Heanue

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Offices at 43 Portland St at approximately 6:00 P.M. The Council added an agenda item regarding sign size in the Rural Residential Agricultural / Special Industrial Zone.

Vote: Verizon cell tower at Copley Golf Club – Mr. Thomas provided the Council with a draft comment letter regarding the proposed Verizon cell tower. He explained that it was written as a joint letter with the Selectboard at that board's request. The Council decided to delete the Selectboard request in the letter that the cell tower be disguised as a tree. The Council also decided to leave in the new paragraph added earlier in the day by Chair Griswold that questioned the legality of the underlying land-lease for the cell tower. Mr. Thomas supplied the Council with a letter from Verizon's attorney saying that the Council was outside of its scope in questioning land rights. The letter from Verizon also agreed to various other Council requests, such as powering the generator via propane (instead of diesel), and timing the weekly generator tests for dusk. Mr. Thomas counseled that leaving the paragraph in the letter that questioned the legality of the land lease and deleting out the sentence about disguising the cell tower as a tree would very likely result in each board sending its own comment letter to the Public Utility Commission (PUC). The Council, by consensus, agreed that separate letters would be necessary and instructed Mr. Thomas to send the Council's as-revised comment letter to the PUC.

Agenda Addendum: Rick White for larger sign sizes in the Special Industrial Zone – Rick White appeared before the Council asking for a larger sign sizes in the Rural Residential / Special Industrial Zone. Mr. Thomas said that the current sign size for this zone is 25ft² per business. Mr. White said that he would like to work with Napa Auto Parts to place a 48 ft² size sign on the roof of his business (Riverview Garage). Member Hancock said that 25 sf of signage, given the high rate of speed on VT Route 15E, was likely on the low side. He asked Mr. Thomas to research if there were any guidelines for sign size versus rate of speed of passing traffic. Mr. Thomas said he would research if such data exists and report back at the next Council meeting when any change could be incorporated in the zoning change tentatively scheduled for a July 17th hearing date.

Discuss: Final district descriptions for summer zoning change – Mr. Thomas went through the proposed changes to the zoning district descriptions for the tentatively scheduled July 17th zoning hearing. There were no questions on most of the zone modifications. Graham Mink was asked to come before the Council at its next meeting

regarding the change for a small portion of the Medium Density Residential Zone that would be turned into the High Density Residential Zone. Member Hancock expressed concerns about adding more non-ownership housing to this section of the Village.

Discuss: Home Occupation changes – Mr. Thomas explained that he thought a couple tweaks were needed to the Home Occupation zoning bylaw after recently going through an appeal on its wording for a Fairwood Parkway property. The Council, by consensus, was accepting of the proposed changes, which, most significantly, made Home Occupations allowed by-right under the Town's zoning.

Discuss: Ron Stancliff and Conservation Commission for larger rural lot sizes – Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff reappeared before the Council asking for larger minimum lot sizes in rural areas of the town. Mr. Thomas shared a list he compiled regarding minimum lot sizes in rural sections of other towns to see how Morristown's two acre minimum lot size compared. Mr. Thomas, per the previous meeting discussion, presented revised zoning language requiring Conditional Use approval for Development on Class 4 Roads. The Council, by consensus, agreed to this new requirement. The Council however did not agree to requiring larger minimum lots sizes on Class 4 Roads. Chair Griswold said he was opposed to larger lot sizes as the two-acre minimum had served Morrisville very well over almost the last 50 years. The Council also reviewed the carrot Mr. Thomas added into the conservation subdivision bylaw for development in the village or accessed by paved roads. The Council was amenable to this change.

Discuss: Completing a sidewalk improvement plan? – The Council discussed if there was interest in inventorying village and town sidewalks to see where improvements were needed and extensions could be made. Mr. Thomas said he would be happy to work on this plan, if desired, and he would discuss it with Town Administrator Lindley.

Discuss: Visioning for the Business Enterprise / BJAMS – Mr. Thomas and the Council again discussed the origin of the Business Enterprise (BE) Zone and how the world had changed a lot since this zone was created, with these changes undercutting the need for some of the original protections in this area's zoning. The Council engaged in some visioning for the BE Zone / Bishop Marshall School area. It was agreed that the school's open fields were a big amenity, as the local demand for outdoor recreation and tournaments had grown in recent years. The Council was disinclined to see Business Service buildings added in this area. The Council asked Mr. Thomas to invite representatives from the school to its next meeting to continue this visioning process.

Prior meeting minutes – Quorum issues prevented the prior minutes from being voted.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director