

MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE PLANNING COMMISSION
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Meeting Minutes of June 5, 2012

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

Members Absent: John Meyer

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator & Planner

Guests: Resident Etienne Hancock of George Street, Kathy Beyer of Housing Vermont and Jim Lovinsky of Lamoille Housing Partnership

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

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Struhsacker moved to approve the May 15, 2012 meeting minutes. A vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion. Member Paine moved to approve the March 6, 2012 minutes. A vote of 5-0 affirmed the motion.

Discussion: Discussion: LHP request, affordable housing density bonus – Kathy Beyer of Housing Vermont and Jim Lovinsky of Lamoille Housing Partnership (LHP) appeared before the Commission to discuss LHP's request for a density bonus for affordable housing in the Village. Mr. Lovinsky gave a presentation of the need for affordable housing in the county and the Town. He defined affordable housing as meeting the needs of a person that makes less than 80% of the county's gross median income (currently \$65,000). In answering a question from Member Griswold, Mr. Lovinsky said that LHP currently owns 58 affordable units of housing in the Village. In answering another question from Member Griswold, Ms. Beyer said that the average affordable unit is worth about 15%-20% less on the Grand List than a comparable market rate dwelling unit. The Commission thanked Ms. Beyer and Mr. Lovinsky for their time and agreed to discuss the requested affordable housing density bonus at a future meeting.

Discussion: Town Plan Utility & Facility Chapter – The Commission reviewed ZA Thomas' revisions to the existing Utility & Facility chapter of the Town Plan. Member Griswold directed a change be made in the goals section. The Commission agreed that this chapter of the updated Town Plan was complete and would be presented with the rest of the plan at a fall public hearing.

Discussion: Discuss Town Plan Energy Chapter, wind energy – The Commission began a lengthy review and discussion of the Energy Chapter as presented in the 2008-2013 Town Plan. Resident Etienne Hancock of George Street said that the revised Energy Chapter for 2013-2018 should differentiate between residential and institutional scale wind energy. Members Griswold and Paine said they did not want to place any restrictions on residential scale wind or solar energy systems. Member Struhsacker said that he is opposed to wind turbines. Mr. Hancock provided some information on what constituted institutional scale wind energy, which was a wind turbine that could not be net metered. Mr. Hancock said that the Town should support residential scale renewable

energy. He suggested the Town offer a Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program. He explained that PACE legislation allows municipalities to offer bonds to investors where the proceeds are used to finance loans to citizens and businesses for a renewable energy installation (commonly solar panels). These loans are attached to the property and repaid over the assigned term of the loan (typically 15 or 20 years) via an annual assessment on the property tax bill, thereby eliminating the upfront financing hurdle to clean energy. The Commission agreed to include the PACE suggestion in the recommendations section of the energy chapter. Member Griswold suggested that pellet boilers might be a good fit for this program.

The Commission, with the help of Mr. Hancock, discussed the viability of wind in Morristown. Mr. Hancock said that the cost of base load power is larger determinant of the viability of wind in Lamoille County than wind speed or technology. The Commission decided to support residential and community scale wind energy developments in the Town Plan, but to strongly oppose utility scale wind development. It was decided that the energy chapter should differentiate between utility scale and community scale wind by opposing wind turbine projects that were too large to be net metered.

The Commission also discussed encouraging pellet boilers, as well as outdoor wood boilers that met State air pollution requirements. Member Struhsacker said that Morristown should encourage sustainable logging practices on our Town lands, as well as State lands that fall within Town borders. He added that such practices would include selective cutting, strip and patch cuts of varying sizes to assist wildlife habitat that relies on young forest growth and to provide local sustainable wood fuel for pulpwood, firewood and wood pellet byproducts. ZA Thomas said that he would include both recommendations into the revised Energy Chapter that would be presented at the next Commission meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by Todd Thomas, ZA