Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of June 3, 2014

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

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

Discussion: Capital Budget Discussion with Town Administrator Lindley – Town Administrator Dan Lindley joined the Council for the ongoing discussion of how to best coordinate capital expenditures greater than $500,000. Chair Griswold suggested that the Council was the right body to put together a grocery list of all such projects that could then be prioritized after talking to the School Board, Selectboard and Village Trustees. He added that list would need to be approved by all three bodies after it is prioritized in order to be effective. Member Struhsacker said having a Selectboard representative like Mr. Lindley present during discussions without the School Board could make that body distrust the process. Mr. Lindley alternatively suggested having a representative of all three bodies present at capital budget planning meetings. Chair Griswold stressed the importance of having a prioritized list of planned capital expenditures to help fend off unplanned capital requests like an indoor tennis court complex, as an example. With the example request of an indoor tennis court complex being much less important to the community than replacing the failing Village infrastructure on Congress Street, as another example. Member Snipp suggested having quarterly meetings between all three bodies to talk about long-term priorities. Member Mason said that having a meeting such as this might improve transparency. Member Hancock said that this kind of planning process should ensure that planned bond issues do not fail because the public will be more educated about the importance of the capital request. Member Hancock added that the cost, benefit and length of financing all need to be shared with the voters when considering capital requests. Mr. Lindley said he was not opposed to a prioritized list of capital expenses, but he stressed it was the Selectboard's job to budget for these expenses. Chair Griswold said that a procedure for creating a prioritized capital request process should be discussed as the only agenda item at the Council's next meeting.

Discussion: MOR Zone density re/ 182 Upper Main Street – Mr. Thomas explained his ongoing conversations with the new owners of 182 Upper Main Street regarding a request for additional residential density on their property. The Council informed Mr. Thomas that they addressed the density issue for nonconforming lots that lost their grandfathered status within the last year and were reluctant to revisit the same topic. Mr. Thomas said that he would share that sentiment with the property owners.

Discussion: Review Cadys Falls SPA cell tower impact letter – Mr. Thomas presented the Planning Council with a draft letter to the Public Service Board expressing concerns about the AT&T cell tower being proposed in the Cadys Falls drinking water source protection area. The Council unanimously agreed to send the letter. Mr. Thomas said that he would have Chair Griswold sign it the following morning.

Discussion: Residential uses in the BE & INN Zones – Mr. Thomas presented the zoning changes requested at the Council's prior meeting that left the existing residential use allowance (second and third floor of structures only) in the Business Enterprise Zone unchanged only for the portion of the zone south of Morristown Corners Road. The Council approved the proposed zoning changes and said they were ready to be included within the next zoning update.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Snipp moved to approve the May 20, 2014 meeting minutes. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 6-0-1, with Member Griswold abstaining. Member Caldwell moved to approve the May 27, 2014 meeting minutes. The motion was affirmed by a vote of no 6-0-1, with Member Hancock abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director