Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

PO Box 748 / Morrisville, VT 05661
Phone (802) 888-6373

Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 25 May 2021

Council Members present: Allen Van Anda, Steven Foster**,** Joshua Goldstein, Etienne Hancock (Chair), and Tom Snipp
Council Members absent:
Guests present: Fire Chief Dennis DiGregorio, Laura Nepveu, Conservation Commission Members Kristen Connolly and Ron Stancliff
Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order adjacent to the veranda of Copley Country Club at approximately 5:05 P.M.

Prior meeting minutes – Member Foster moved to approve the May 11th meeting minutes as proposed. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion (Members Van Anda arrived shortly after this vote).

Discuss: Cul-de-sac diameters for ladder vs. engine trucks – Fire Chief Dennis DiGregorio appeared before the Council in regards to the zoning proposal that would tie minimum cul-de-sac dimeters to the size of the fire truck that would be responding. The Fire Chief explained that the smaller engine truck would be used primarily for remote fire calls, and this truck only required a 70-foot cul-de-sac diameter. The ladder truck, which requires a 100-foot cul-de-sac diameter, would be used in the village and in more developed commercial and industrial areas. The Fire Chief and the Council Members were fine with the zoning change as proposed. Member Goldstein asked that the zoning change also clarify that the cul-de-sac not be oblong as a way to skirt the rules. Mr. Thomas said he would make this change, and the revised bylaw would be included as part of the next zoning change.

Discuss: Cluster mailboxes for new neighborhoods – Mr. Thomas presented a proposed zoning change requested by Postmaster Jess Herring that that would require cluster mailboxes for new multi-family dwellings and apartment neighborhoods. The Council was amendable to this zoning change as proposed. Mr. Thomas said that it would be included as part of the next zoning update in the fall.

Discuss: Conservation Commission steep slope regulation proposal – Conservation Commission Members Kristen Connolly and Ron Stancliff appeared before the Council proposing an alternative approach to steep slope regulation. Chair Hancock clarified that a zoning change meant to protect steep slopes had already been agreed to, and was scheduled to be included as part of the fall zoning change. Mr. Connolly walked the Council through her two page alternate zoning proposal that provided more complete steep slope protections. She said her proposal was copied and assembled from the zoning bylaws of other Vermont towns. Council Members discussed how this proposal would regulate private driveways for the first time. Chair Hancock suggested that any proposal be revised so some single-family homes proposed on steep slopes can be approved

administratively, as the prior Selectboard pushback to steep slope regulation seemed to center a reluctance to require Development Review Board approval of single-family homes. After a cost discussion, it was decided that engineered plans would be needed for all steep slope development, which would be defined as slopes of 20% or more, as shown on ANR's Natural Resource Atlas. A three-part approach to regulating steep slopes was decided on, where development on 20%-24.9% slopes could be approved administratively, development on slopes of 25% to 29.9% would need Development Review Board approval, and development on slopes of 30% or more would be prohibited. It was also decided that this new steep slope regulation would only be applicable in the Rural Residential Agricultural Zone, and that driveways less than 100 feet in length would be exempt from any steep slope regulations. The Council asked Ms. Connolly to work with Mr. Thomas to draft a rewrite of the Conservation Commission's steep slope regulations that better comport with the evening's discussion.

Discuss: Solar farm expansion at 1529 LaPorte Rd – The Council discussed a minor solar farm expansion at 1529 LaPorte Road. It was decided that a letter would be drafted to the Public Utility Commission that cited the requirement in the existing Zoning Bylaws for ground mounted solar arrays 15 kw or greater in size to be screened from roadside and abutting property owner views. Mr. Thomas said he would draft such a letter for Chair Hancock's signature.

Discuss: Intersection of Congress St & Cherry Ave – Mr. Thomas noted that the Selectboard's discussion of this intersection did not seem to be very fruitful, as no action resulted therefrom. Chair Hancock said the Selectboard said that budget concerns would prohibit an immediate action on the requested safety improvements at this intersection. Mr. Thomas suggested that the Council send this letter again in the fall during budgeting season so the small cost to make the requested safety improvements could be properly allocated by the Selectboard. The Council agreed to do as such.

Continued Public Hearing: 2020-2030 Town Plan comments – Mr. Thomas led the Council through various Town Plan language changes that we agreed on at the previous Council meeting. The Council, by consensus, was also agreeable to new language being inserted into the plan about the Village's golf course property, as well as new language being inserted into the plan that supported eliminating existing slip lanes throughout town (with the slip-lane from Washington Highway coming onto Maple Street being the prime example that was cited during this discussion).

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director