

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Commission
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Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2013

Planning Commission Members Present: Andrea Caldwell, Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Max Paine, Tom Snipp & Mark Struhsacker

Planning Commission Members Absent: Reeves Larson

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator & Planner

Guests: Selectboard Chair Bob Beeman & Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff

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

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the April 16th Planning Commission meeting minutes. A vote of 5-0-1 affirmed the motion, with Member Caldwell abstaining.

Discussion: Reorganization – Member Struhsacker moved to elect Member Griswold chair of the Planning Commission. A vote of 6-0 affirmed the motion. Member Struhsacker moved to elect Member Paine as vice chair of the Planning Commission. A vote of 6-0 affirmed the motion. Chair Griswold formally welcomed Member Caldwell to the Commission.

Discussion: Conserved land with the Conservation Commission – Mr. Thomas provided a brief overview for new Member Caldwell regarding the subject agenda item. Mr. Thomas said that the Planning Commission sent a letter to the Selectboard asking that the Conservation Commission be directed to provide the “inventory of conserved land” that was stated as being one of the primary objectives of the Conservation Commission in its bylaws. Mr. Thomas added that the Selectboard asked the Planning Commission to meet with the Conservation Commission to discuss this request. Conservation Commission Chair Ron Stancliff appeared before the Planning Commission. Mr. Stancliff noted various properties of conserved lands throughout the Town, including examples of direct ownership by the Town and State, as well as private lands subject to conservation restrictions. Mr. Stancliff noted that he believes that Morristown has 3,000 acres of agricultural land in Land-Use and 9,000 acres of forest land in Land-Use. Chair Griswold spoke about the Planning Commission’s 5.4% gross calculation of lands zoned for business in Town. He noted that significant portions of these lands are actually not developable due to environmental constraints like deer yards, floodplains and wetlands. Chair Griswold said that it was very important for the Conservation Commission to provide a total acreage of lands in Town where development is prohibited due to environmental restrictions. Mr. Thomas said that he believed the best party to define what would be considered as “conserved land” would be the Conservation Commission. Member Hancock said that he believed obtaining a percentage of conserved lands, as suggested by Village Trustee Ed Debor, was a worthy endeavor for planning purposes. Mr. Stancliff said that he had not previously read the

Conservation Commission's bylaws and that he would speak to Steve Rae directly about the inventory of conserved lands required therein.

Discussion: Signage for the Bijou Theater – Mr. Thomas noted that Bijou Movie Theater owner Bill Jarvis was scheduled to meet with the Planning Commission regarding signage in the downtown, but called to say that he may not be able to make it. Mr. Thomas explained that the Commission's previous signage discussion with Sam Guy resulted in a zoning violation being sent to the Bijou's regarding its signage. He explained further that Mr. Jarvis was hoping that the Commission could create an exemption in the sign bylaw for movie theatres in the downtown, like the existing time & temperature sign allowance for Union Bank. Commission Members discussed signage and decided that flashing signage was undesired. They agreed to ask Mr. Thomas to research how other Town's in Vermont regulate signage for their downtown movie theatres. Mr. Thomas said that he would email these findings out to the Commission.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, ZA