

FILE COPY

**MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 748
MORRISVILLE, VT 05661
Phone (802) 888-6373
Fax (802) 888-6378**

Minutes of April 16, 2002

Members Present: Sam Guy, Bruce Tomlinson, Kelly Rogers

Members Absent: Julia Compagna, Bill Bourne, Bill Henchey, Kevin Lane

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator

Guests: Mike Miller (LCPC Planner), David Pelletier (LCPC Transportation Planner), David Whitcomb (Morrisville/Stowe Airport Manager), Jared Thompson

Sam Guy, co-chair, called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. Lacking a quorum, this would not be an official meeting of the Planning Commission, but would gather information for the Town Plan update.

David Pelletier addressed the current Transportation section of the Town Plan. He suggested the revision include more information on bikes and pedestrians in the context of local transportation. He said some towns have recently received grants to help expand bike and pedestrian paths and access. He suggested getting input from Mike Stafford of the Trails Committee in this area. He commended the recent projects in the downtown area to enhance sidewalks. He said the previous language in the plan regarding the railroad is virtually unchanged since 1998. Any use of the railroad corridor awaits action and/or decision by the Legislature.

With regard to the Morrisville Alternate Truck Route (aka the bypass), latest word from the Agency on Transportation is that the updated Environmental Impact Statement is complete and approved by the federal agency with jurisdiction on this project. AOT is moving into right-of-way acquisition. The project is still funded in the federal and state highway budgets. Anticipated construction start at this point is Spring 2004, with 18-24 months to complete the project.

On the subject of the airport, David said there had been numerous studies on expansion options conducted over the past few years. All have concluded there would be local economic benefits from an airport expansion. A 10-year Master Plan update is currently underway. The most likely expansion option to be considered would be to lengthen the 3,700' runway to 4,000'. The major obstacle to any longer runway extension is that Ryder Brook runs past both ends of the runway. Any expansion which encroached on the brook would likely face opposition from environmentalists and state agencies responsible for water resource management.

David Whitcomb, who runs the airport under contract with the state, said a small runway extension would still be expensive and would not significantly increase the size of aircraft or number of users. A 4,000' runway would still have restricted operating limits. Whitcomb Aviation provides airport functions from 8am to 6pm. Since Sept 11, insurance premium increases have curtailed Whitcomb Aviation's ability to provide flight instruction and aircraft maintenance. Without being able to provide these services, the state is contemplating taking over operation of the airport. This would supplant David's contract. In David's opinion, any state-run operation of the airport would not be as advantageous to the local community as a local contractor.

David Pelletier addressed town roads and infrastructure; he said there is good data available on roads, bridges, and traffic analysis. This data is helpful in submitting highway grant applications. Most of this information will soon be accessible in GIS format. David wants to review the Morristown Capital Program for highway

improvement projects, the Town Road and Bridge Design standards, and the last downtown parking study. He noted that Morristown's cost per mile of highway maintained is higher than that of surrounding towns. He said LCPC has the ability to analysis traffic data to identify high accident locations and potential improvements.

Both Mike Miller and David Pelletier suggested that the revised Town Plan include clear statements on the town's positions regarding the rail corridor, the bypass, and airport expansion.

Jared Thompson, a student at Peoples Academy, addressed the Commission on the need for more public transport. He said he had only just recently been made aware of the existing Rural Community Transportation service (note: RCT was invited by letter to attend this hearing, but was not represented). Jared said there needs to be more publicity about the RCT service (routes, times, marked bus stops) and that routes should be evaluated to determine adjustments which might better serve young people without their own vehicle access. The service now is primarily geared to seniors and serves the village areas (shopping centers, hospital area, downtown) adequately. More service to outlying areas such as Elmore and Wolcott (where students attend PA) and Stowe for part-time employment opportunities and other activities would be helpful.

The next meeting will be on May 7, 2002 at the Water & Light Department building on Elmore St. It will address the Natural Resources section of the town plan.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Leonard, recorder

Cc: Town of Morristown Select Board
Morristown/Morrisville Development Review Board
Town Clerk