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MORRISTOWN
PLANNING COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 748
MORRISVILLE, VT 05661

Minutes of April 15, 2008
Tegu Building, Morrisville
Approved on: 05/06/08

P.C. Members Present: Andrew Volansky; Bill Henchey, Chair; John Meyer; Max Paine; Kelly Rogers.
Absent: Lauren Traister; Steve Berson.

Also Attending: Mark Leonard; Heidi Krantz; Bill Rossmassler; Bob Beeman; Greg Sargent; Polly Manosh; Tara Beeman; Sondra Sanborn; Maureen Anne Allen; Bob Heanue; Ron Stancliff; C.C. Turley; Erik Olsen; Sharon Bailey; Dana Wildes; Kenneth A. Harvey; Donald Blake; Sam Guy; John Kaiser; Judy Kaiser; Jaye Stein; Deb Slayton; Joanne Harrison; Sharon Bateman; Pall Spera; Emile Willett; Barry Coffin; Susan Low; Judith St. Aubin; Susan DeColaines; Leon Whitcomb.

Recorder: Mike Adams, LCPC

Downtown RFP Selection

Heidi Krantz – gave a brief overview of the traffic flow analysis project. Two proposals have been submitted in response to the RFP that was distributed. The main purpose of the study will be to focus on the Portland / Pleasant St. area and Heidi invited anyone that was interested (especially those that were located in the project's study area) to participate in the review of the proposals and / or the subsequent process. Krantz also announced the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail April 24th presentation and invited all that are interested to attend.

Mark Leonard –The Business Office Park (BOP) boundaries were described. Created in the mid-late 90s, this new district was meant for non-residential use. Expanding the BOP is now being considered. It is an area adjacent to the village, has access to Rte 100, and available water / sewer. The purpose is to accommodate campus style development. Landscaping, parking, colors, walkways will all be in the New England campus style. Mark Leonard described BOP boundaries. The area separated by Ryder Brook is difficult to use. The northern boundary is along Bridge St. The Alternate Truck Route will bisect the BOP. Allowable uses were then explained.

Public Comment:

Bill Henchey – What uses will be allowed in BOP? Who could move there?

Mark Leonard – A description of light industries was given. The distinction between light industry and commercial was explained. Uses that are not allowed include retail sales and restaurants to avoid development like in the north end of town.

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Dana Wildes- Would the BOP not include retail business services?

Mark Leonard- The description of allowable uses and conditional uses was read.

Dana Wildes- If an approved business moves in and sells to another business altering its use, would it need to be re- approved?

Mark Leonard describes change of use. If a change of use doesn't take place, reapproval is not necessary. A change of use would require re-approval.

Greg Sergeant- Can I expand my parking lot? Do I need a permit? Am I in the BOP?

Tara Beeman- I would like to see zoning allow more uses and expand down Rte 100, and specifically her property at 945 Laporte Road, due to exposure. It's a good place for businesses. More businesses would decrease the tax burden in Morrisville. The BOP should expand road frontage all the way down to Stowe.

John Kaiser (adjacent land owner) Currently, the noise is bad early in the morning.

Bill Henchey – What type of activities will go on at night for light industries?

Mark Leonard – Currently, there are no restrictions on the time of operation. New conditional uses can be created if concerns arise.

Bill Henchey – What about expanding the BOP to the opposite side of the road?

John Kaiser –The field adjacent to Stagecoach Rd. (Leos area) has the potential to be developed.

Jim Mahoney (Lawyer who represents Bishop Marshall School) – The Bishop Marshall school proposes an expansion of BOP designation and allowable uses. The BOP originated during the construction of the school. The inability to have a retail component makes it harder for the school to get the adjacent area developed. The school wants to develop the adjacent area. A mixed commercial district would be good because it would allow retail sales. Rezoning should be considered in this area. Adding conditional uses will have no undue impact.

Bill Henchey –Does Morrisville want a new retail center?

Jim Mahoney – Maybe, it's hard to plan for results. Flexibility in conditional uses should be considered to allow for retail sales.

Bill Henchey – The tax basis needs to be addressed. Manufacturing jobs pays better than retail. What percentage of the mix should be retail? Planning should go for desired effects. We should not let anything go in and see what happens, maybe retail should go in.

Kelly Rogers. Can you explain industrial 3? Is retail ok?

Mark Leonard describes industrial uses. Commercial use of industrial property is ok.

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Pall Spera – The BOP should make a consideration to offer an enterprise zone for threshold for jobs. Tax incentive can be given to bring in jobs. This area needs more opportunities.

Bill Henchey – The selectboard would decide that issue. The Planning Commission could make a recommendation.

Bob Beeman – I support the idea of the BOP.

Kelly Rogers – if purpose of attracting business is to help reduce tax burden, how does tax break play in?

Dana Wildes – Infrastructure is more important than tax incentives.

Mark Leonard - Who pays for infrastructure?

Dana Wildes- Possibly grant money? The Town should consider a bond. The benefits would outweigh the costs.

Barry Coffin – Campus style is a good idea. Be careful not to limit uses too much. Manufacturing with retail pays great and are good businesses.

Bill Henchey - Why hasn't this taken off? It's too broken up and a coalition should be formed. The property is underutilized.

Mark Leonard – There is the geographic issue. Water and Light department's land is wooded and contains wetlands. This creates a barrier to connect parcels.

John Stancliff – Would the traffic be too much for the school kids? Retail uses would create steady traffic.

Mark Leonard – A tenant not related to use would not be allowed.

Sonny Sanborn- Doctors and lawyers generally come from outside the community. They spend their money outside the community. The guidelines of the New England style campus are too strict on appearance.

Tara Beeman – Developing the other side of Rte 100 should be considered.

Leon Whitcomb – I own some historic buildings which are apartments now. It would be nice if the BOP was expanded to include the buildings so offices could be installed. The historical integrity is always maintained, the septic is adequate for 5 residential units. Supporting local business has always been a priority.

John Stancliff – Would the appraised value for lots adjacent to the BOP be adjusted?

Mark Coty – I have 12 tenants in cold storage “chicken coops”. There is a list of people who want to move in. Start up businesses should be a priority.

Ken Harvey - Businesses could come to the DRB with proposals. Can we make certain land uses work?

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Dana Wildes – The Town needs to provide incubator space at a reasonable cost. Without subsidy, incubator space can't be developed. Example – Microsoft started in garage.

Ed Debor – The best use would be mixed commercial. Compromise would protect the community. It would create a complementary partnership with the north end of town. The BOP should not be zoned too strictly. Mixed use is best. The DRB can decide on individual uses anyway.

Jim Mahoney – Setting a percentage of uses of the BOP as a whole is a slippery slope. Who gets to develop?

John Stancliff – The elevation of the land is a challenge on the Water and Light department's land.

Ken Harvey - Access to the Bishop Marshall School is important.

Leon Whitcomb – Is there a noise ordinance for Morrisville?

Mark Leonard – Conditional use determines that. Time limits can be placed on hours of acceptable noise. Adding insulation can help to reduce noise.

Bill Henchey - The board will now ask landowners questions.

Max Paine – We have heard all land use issues from landowners. They are all good ideas, and it's hard to develop a plan to meet everybody's needs.

Kelly Rogers – The retail issue needs to be looked into, Whether it's part of light industry, on its own, or a square footage issue. 50-60,000 square feet is about the limit of square footage people have wanted when asked in a poll.

Mark Leonard-60% of people polled want to see limits on square footage. Brooklyn Street has a 2500 square foot limit.

Joanne Harrison – Spoke against extending the BOP down both sides of Rt 100 to Stowe. Also spoke against fast food restaurants in the proposed BOP. Retail should only be allowed if it is part of a business. Retail should stay down town, and there should be no fast-food restaurants. It is important to preserve the character of Vermont.

Dana Wildes – Two separate buildings of the same store could be a loophole to total more than the allowable square footage.

Kelly Rogers - Strip mall style is not the intended plan. Campus is the desired style.

Andrew Volansky – We should avoid Wal-Mart's and fast food restaurants. Doctors and Lawyers live in Morrisville and spend money here also. Retail should be included as part of an industrial use. The Rockart Brewery and Precision Woodworks are good examples of industrial uses that include retail aspects.

Lee - Baggy Knees is a good mixture of uses.

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John Meyer –We have been considering increasing the number of allowable uses and expanding the size. How important is infrastructure availability?

Dana Wild – Infrastructure should go in now to be an incentive for businesses to move in.

Ken – The BOP should maximize the use of the area.

Mark Coty –There are good gravels and sands there. Some of these resources should be extracted before development.

Smart Growth Collaborative

Bill Rossmassler – what does the board want help with from SGC? All of the boxes on letter except for the first box: “beginning to end handholding”.

Bill Henchey – We want a growth center. The community should respond. We don’t want someone to run the meetings for us.

Bill Rossmassler – We should leave the door open to designation.

Mark Leonard – Are the National Guard or government facilities potential BOP uses?

Bill Rossmassler – said yes they could be, but they wouldn’t increase the tax base.

With regards to the earlier discussion about caps on retail square footage, Rossmassler said fairness could be achieved by setting limits on retail percentage of each parcel or building rather than retail percentage of the district as a whole.

Bill Rossmassler – reminded everyone that the Joint Municipal Official meetings regarding the creation of a Town Sewer Service District will be resuming on Tuesday, 4/22/08 at 6PM at Morrisville Water & Light. The PC strongly encouraged there be an outside facilitator for these future meetings.

Approval of minutes from 4/1/08

Approved by board.

Max Paine moved, seconded by John Meyer.

Adjourned.