

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Commission
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Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2013

Planning Commission Members Present: Paul Griswold, Etienne Hancock, Reeves Larson, Max Paine, Tom Snipp & Mark Struhsacker

Planning Commission Members Absent: None

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator & Tricia Follert, Community Development Coordinator

Guests: Jim Pease, Dick Sargent and Ron Stancliff of the Conservation Commission and residents Mike Paritz, Joni Lanphear, Polly & Charles McArthur.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:05 P.M.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the March 19th Planning Commission meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0-2 affirmed the motion, with Members Larson & Snipp abstaining.

Discussion: Village Trustee review of Town Plan on April 1st – ZA Thomas led the Commission through the changes to the draft Town Plan requested by the Village Trustees on the evening of Monday, April 1st. He noted that Trustee Peter Bourne requested a broader array of energy sources be noted in the Town Plan. There was also a discussion on the stated objective in the plan about the Conservation Commission should consider acquiring land in floodplains for protection. The Planning Commission and the Conservation Commission debated if this language should be removed as suggested by the Village Trustees, but at the Conservation Commission's insistence, it was decided that the language was relatively innocuous and could be left in the Town Plan.

Discussion: Conservation Commission Town Plan letter – The Planning Commission discussed the letter received from the Conservation Commission dated March 17, 2013 regarding comments and objections to the proposed Town Plan. ZA Thomas opened the discussion by going over each comment or objection contained in this letter and comparing it to what was in the Town Plan. The following decisions were made by the Planning Commission regarding the Town Plan after discussing the Conservation Commission's letter thereon.

- * It was decided that a vision statement was not needed because the Planning Commission was trying to shorten the Town Plan and Member Griswold said that the information the vision statement was based on was a decade-old and that he thought the vision statement should emanate from the Selectboard.

- * It was decided that the Planning Commission would leave its language about evaluating lands for new business zones unchanged. The Planning Commission discussed the failure of the Business Enterprise Zone and a dearth of new land available for companies that wanted to purchase lands to move to or expand in Morristown. The Conservation Commission objected to opening new lands for business zoning or extending infrastructure thereto as long as undeveloped properties remained in the Town, such as

the Nepveu Building and the DeCart Building. Planning Commission Members agreed that these properties were underdeveloped, but said they were not available for someone to reasonably purchase. The Planning Commission decided that as long as there was no land available for reasonable purchase, they would consider supporting creating new business zones and extending infrastructure so companies could grow in, or relocate to, Morristown. The Conservation Commission conversely, was opposed to these measures as long as underdeveloped properties remained in the Town (regardless if they were for sale or not), even at the expense of companies not being able to locate or expand in Morristown. The Planning Commission conversely wanted to explore all opportunities to find land for these businesses.

- * The Planning Commission, at the request of the Conservation Commission, agreed to strengthen language regarding the Special Use Zone by saying that the line between it and the residential zone should not be changed.

- * The Planning Commission agreed to clarify the language about keeping the area south of the airport rural and agricultural by specifically citing that the two parcels that were flagged as a potential site for business zoning were being specifically exempted from this otherwise strict statement.

- * At the request of the Conservation Commission, the Planning Commission agreed to study prohibiting development above 1500 feet in elevation.

- * At the request of the Conservation Commission, the planning commission agreed to study prohibiting development on lots with grades in excess of 15%.

At the conclusion of the Town Plan discussion Mr. Thomas read comments on the meeting submitted by Village Trustee Ed DeBor. Conservation Commission Member Ron Stancliff responded to Mr. DeBor's letter by saying that they don't know the proper percentage of land that should be zoned for business versus conservation and that the Conservation Commission has about \$30,000 in the bank which could be used to purchase land or conservation easements. The Commission also said that it was not interested in spending these funds to help preserve the Noyes House Museum.

Discussion: Schedule Town Plan hearings – The Planning Commission instructed Mr. Thomas to make the agreed-upon changes to the Town Plan and get it ready for hearings.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, ZA