

**Morristown/Morrisville Planning Commission
with the Morristown Selectboard
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Meeting Minutes of March 19, 2013

Planning Commission Members Present: Paul Griswold, Etienne Hancock, Max Paine & Mark Struhsacker

Planning Commission Members Absent: Reeves Larson & Tom Snipp

Selectboard Members Present: Bob Beeman, Min Cote, Brian Kellogg, Steve Rae, & Mickey Smith

Selectboard Members Absent: None

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator & Planner

Guests: As noted on sign in sheet

Call to Order: The joint meeting of the Morristown Selectboard and the Morrisville / Morristown Planning Commission was called to order at approximately 7:05 P.M.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the March 5th Planning Commission meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0 affirmed the motion.

Discussion: Review Town Plan jointly with Selectboard – Zoning Administrator Thomas opened the evening's discussion by addressing the large audience that came to question a proposed zoning change for the Green Mountain Arena parcel contained in the Town Plan. Mr. Thomas said that the Planning Commission did not intend to change the zoning for this parcel as long as there was a viable recreational use thereon. He added that, the reference to the zoning change in the Town Plan was only to ensure that the Commission could act quickly with the zoning change if the building became vacant. Selectmen Beeman said that he preferred to take this proposed zoning change reference out of the plan and to redo the Town Plan if the building were to ever become vacant. Planning Commission Member Struhsacker said that the references to new land to be zoned for business purposes in the Town Plan were in response to the development pressure that currently exists in Morristown, at a time when there is also little developable land for sale. Resident Lisa Previ spoke against the proposed zoning change and submitted 297 signatures asking that the Green Mountain Arena parcel stay zoned residential. Resident Heather Bellavance said that the Town should be looking to support its children and recreational outlets such as the arena where positive healthy activities can take place. Planning Commission Member Griswold said that the reference to the zoning change regarding Green Mountain Arena should be removed from the Town Plan. Selectmen Cote agreed. Mr. Thomas said that he would remove the zoning reference about Green Mountain Arena from the Town Plan.

Mr. Thomas proceeded to lead the Selectmen and Planning Commission Members through the Town Plan "Summary of Policies and Objectives." Members of the Commission and the Selectboard made various minor changes to the language contained therein, including "prioritizing" the zoning of new land for business use and also

“prioritizing” investigating the viability of a municipally owned industrial park. The possibility of utilizing the Graded School Building for municipal office space was also discussed. It was agreed that the language suggesting a group be formed to study the feasibility of using the Graded School Building for non-educational purposes be moved from the Education Chapter of the Town Plan to the Utility and Facility Chapter. Commission Members and Selectmen spent a considerable amount of time discussing the current height limitation for development in Morristown of 2,500 feet, as well as a proposed request to prohibit development on property with grades in excess of 15%. Conservation Commission Member Ron Stancliff suggested a much lower development height threshold, possibly at 1,500 feet to match Elmore's new development height prohibition. Selectman Cote said that he thought zoning was a good thing, but disagreed with zoning regulations that told someone that they could not utilize their land. Selectmen Beeman agreed. Selectmen Rae and Commission Member Griswold said a more thoughtful approach was needed than to just arbitrarily pick an elevation number if the current 2,500 foot development limitation were to be lowered. Mr. Thomas said that he would insert a sentence into the Town Plan calling for an investigation of a lower development elevation height.

At the conclusion of the Town Plan review, Mr. Thomas suggested that Members of the Selectboard and the Planning Commission review the letter dated March 17, 2013 submitted earlier in the evening from the Conservation Commission. Mr. Thomas pointed out that this letter called for significant changes to the proposed Town Plan, including eliminating most lands identified as possible places for new business zoning. Commission Member Struhsacker commented that this letter was very late in the process. Selectboard Member and Conservation Commission Member Rae said that the letter was simply the Conservation Commission's comments that came out of the special Town Plan review meeting that the Conservation Commission held on March 14th as requested by the Selectboard on March 5th. Member Rae added that he thought the comments were timely, as they matched the requests at this March 19th meeting. Member Griswold agreed that the requested process had been followed, but said that it was still very late for the Planning Commission to be receiving such substantial comments on the Town Plan. ZA Thomas said that time could be allotted on the Planning Commission's April 2nd meeting agenda to review the letter from the Conservation Commission received earlier in the evening regarding the Town Plan.

Discussion: Village Trustee review of Town Plan on April 1st – ZA Thomas stated that he was scheduled to review the draft Town Plan with the Village Trustees on the evening of Monday, April 1st. He added that he would share what transpired at the Commission's next regularly scheduled meeting of April 2nd.

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