

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of March 4, 2014

Planning Council Members Present: Andrea Caldwell, Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock & Yvette Mason

Planning Council Members Absent: Max Paine, Tom Snipp & Mark Struhsacker

Staff: Todd Thomas, Planning Director

Guests: None

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

Discussion: Proposed zoning change package – The Council did not have any questions about the proposed zoning change package scheduled for a hearing on April 1st.

Discussion: Proposed 2014 meeting schedule – The Council reviewed the proposed meetings schedule for 2014 and suggested no changes.

Discussion: Changes to the existing lighting bylaw – The Council and Mr. Thomas reviewed the existing lighting bylaw. All agreed that the 20 foot maximum height of parking lot lights should remain in the revised lighting bylaw. The Council discussed if it wanted to regulate the cone of the light being dispersed. Mr. Thomas suggested that requiring compliance with the International Dark Sky Association (IDSA) standards would be easy for applicants to understand and for him to enforce, as one would only need to submit an IDSA complaint lighting cut sheet with an application. Mr. Thomas noted that the DRB routinely requires that all lighting be LED, down shielded and utilize a cutoff fixture. The Council was amenable to exploring regulations that codified this simple approach, provided that visible light remains on the subject property from which it emanates. Mr. Thomas said that he would propose a revised lighting bylaw for the Council's next regular meeting.

Discussion: Conservation Subdivision Design – Mr. Thomas introduced the Council to the concept of Conservation Subdivision Design. Mr. Thomas noted that he implemented this alternative subdivision permit scheme with good success in a previous community he practiced in. He said that Conservation Subdivision Design was designed as a way to be at least density neutral with respect to the number of lots that a landowner could create, but also permanently protect significant amounts of open space by requiring the clustering of homes. He said that Conservation Subdivision Design, when done properly, was a win for developers, a win for the town and a win for the prospective homeowners – who end up with a more valuable house because it borders permanently protected open space. The Council seemed amenable to exploring this concept and suggested that Mr. Thomas work to replace the existing §510 Planned Unit Development Bylaw. The Council Members said that they were open to providing a density bonus to developers within a Conservation Subdivision Design, but that this bylaw should only be applicable to major subdivisions. The Council and Mr. Thomas also spoke about the existing

Conditional Use requirements for stormwater that he was hoping to revise. Member Hancock was reluctant to change the existing language without further study. Mr. Thomas pointed out that the existing bylaw was only required for Conditional Uses and not Site Plan Review, when it should be the opposite (as Site Plan Review is always required). He also noted that the applications received by the zoning office / DRB do not contain the detail needed to ensure compliance with the §638 Stormwater Treatment. He opined that these circumstances combine to make a well-intentioned stormwater bylaw a “cider house rule.” Mr. Thomas said that this topic would be discussed in more detail at a later date when he had time to complete and prioritize the requested study.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Hancock moved to approve the March 4, 2014 meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director