

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2016

Planning Council Members Present: Etienne Hancock, Paul Griswold (Chair), Yvette Mason, Max Paine, Tom Snipp & Mark Struhsacker

Planning Council Members Absent: Andrea Beeman

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Guests: Kevin Kelley, Richard "Buckwheat" Lowe, Rick Swanson, Bob Heanue, Dick Kreamer, Deanna French, Leah Hollenbergr, Scott Thompson, Laurie Cunningham, Lisa Desjardains, Bill Besette, Scott & Amy King, Rabbi David Fainsilber, Mary Elfer, Marilyn Zophar, Michael Pelletier, PJ & Gail Beck, KC Colt, Kathy Knapp, Armand Altman, Polly & Charlie McArthur, Max Neil, Peter & Ellen Waldman, Blair & Scott West, Jonathan Mogor, Dennis Collins, Ed Loewenton, Jane Gandy, Ben Charette, Judy Nepveu, Stephanie Veit, Arlene Marrinan, Shannara Johnson, Sarah Draper, Sarah Stutz, William & Sharon Rowell, Seth Abbene, Dan McLaughlin, Mary Black, Graham Mink, Alan Church, Joe & Amanda LaRock.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the auditorium of the VFW on Pleasant Street at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Discussion: Zoning for a homeless shelter – Planning Director Thomas opened the public forum regarding the Patchworks homeless shelter proposal. He asked guests to keep public comments no longer than 3 minutes each. Armand Altman said that he had managed homeless shelters both in India and U.S. and that successful shelters do not allow guests to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol and the shelter should have paid staff 24 hours a day. He added that shelters established in downtown locations have historically high failure rates for both patients and the respective host business district. Buckwheat said that he is opposed to sex offenders and substance abusers being welcomed into Morrisville and that we should help people that want to help themselves. Laurie Cunningham from Capstone Community Action said that there were 30 hotel placements and Lamoille County this winter for people seeking shelter. Bob Heanue cited the Lamoille County Planning Commission Regional Plan which used HUD data to state that there is only one chronically homeless person in Lamoille County. Ed Loewenton asked for Patchworks to articulate what population they want to serve and by what policies the proposed shelter will be governed. Richard Pelletier echoed these comments and said there has not been a plan for the shelter articulated and that concerns him greatly. Gail Beck asked if there is a more current homeless population information for Morrisville so we can all better understand what the needs of a homeless shelter might be in our community. She also asked about Patchworks funding availability to reimburse police and other municipal costs incurred by the shelter. She added said that Capstone Community Action did not get their requested \$100,000 in state funding this year because they did not have a location secured for a shelter. Scott Thompson says that alcohol and drugs should not be allowed at the shelter or on the guests, but that he supports the shelter. Shanarra Johnson said that she is opposed to sex offenders and people being high or drunk being welcomed into a homeless shelter in Morrisville. Graham Mink asked the

Council to delineate between a low barrier and a dry shelter in any regulation that they write. He said he could support a well-managed dry shelter, but that he was opposed to the Patchworks low-barrier shelter. Jon Mogor said that we need to support the continued revitalization of Morrisville and he is opposed to a homeless shelter, especially one that harbors sex offenders or substance abusers. Amanda LaRock said that she is opposed to a homeless shelter and a proposed location in downtown Morrisville would cause her not patronize the stores therein as she would fear for the safety of her children. A multitude of other people in attendance commented that the homeless shelter is not desired downtown and that if the shelter was located in Morrisville, that its population should be capped so it does not grow to seek to solve problems from outside the community. Ed Loewenton said that the \$100,000 in funding that Patchwork's was seeking from the State should be instead allocated to the United Way's successful transitional housing operation on Portland Street. Various other people instructed the Patchworks team to start small with a dry shelter proposal by helping the people that want help and then build in scope from there, but to ensure that they do not create a magnet facility for outsiders. PJ Beck highlighted that there was not a Morrisville resident in the room tonight that spoke of supporting a homeless shelter that allows substance abusers or sex offenders inside its doors. Dan McLaughlin said that has seen homeless people in the community. Rabbi David Fainsilber said that his Patchworks Group was present to listen and gather information about how they could best serve the homeless population in the community. Chair Griswold thanked all the guests for contributing to the evening's public forum and said that the Council would consider all the feedback given from the public. Mr. Thomas closed the forum to comments and instructed the audience that a five minute recess would now commence before the Council moved onto the next agenda item.

Discussion: Solar Farm near 2739 Randolph Rd – After a five-minute recess, Mr. Thomas asked the Council what changes they would like to see made to his draft letter regarding the proposed Randolph Road solar farm project. He noted that he heard from a property owner that lives to the northeast of the proposed site that he would like the view of it screened from this property. Council members said that the solar farm should be screened from the view of abutting property owners who desire as such and also screened from the road if possible. Mr. Thomas said that he would revise the project comment letter to the Public Service Board as such.

Discussion: Greaves Master Plan Support Letter – With William & Sharon Rowell present, Mr. Thomas introduced the Council to his draft letter of support for the Greaves Farm Act 250 master planning process. After a brief discussion, there was a general consensus to keep medical uses within the Village's Special Use Zone, which was contrary to the applicant's request. Council members were supportive of the letter as written, as were the Rowells. The Council authorized Mr. Thomas to send this support letter to Act 250, inclusive of future minor revisions requested by the engineer of the Greaves Farm development and conservation project that were agreed to by Mr. Thomas

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the February 16, 2016 minutes. A vote of 5-0-1 affirmed the motion with Member Snipp abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director