Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 25 February 2020

Council Members Present: Allen Van Anda, Steven Foster, Etienne Hancock (Chair), and Tom Snipp
Council Members Absent: Joshua Goldstein
Guests: Chair of the Conservation Commission Ron Stancliff
Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Old Tegu Theatre, 43 Portland Street, at approximately 6:02 P.M.

Prior meeting minutes – Member Van Anda moved to approve the January 7th meeting minutes. A vote of 3-0-1 affirmed the motion, with Member Foster abstaining. Member Foster moved to approve the February 4th minutes. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion

Discuss: Conservation Commission Density Exclusion Request – Chairman Ron Stancliff appeared before the Council to discuss the two zoning changes he previously submitted on behalf of the Conservation Commission that were intended to reduce density in rural parts of the town. One proposal would significantly alter how density is calculated for zoning purposes, by requiring a site plan to locate and subtract the size of certain natural resources, including mapped wetlands, aquifers, deer-yards, prime agricultural soils, slopes greater than 25%, and the 100 year flood plain, from the parcel's otherwise allowed density. The Council chose to focus on the Conservation Commission's original proposal, which would create a 10 acre minimum lot size in the area being called the foothill of Elmore Mountain. Member Foster suggested that the Conservation Commission, or a Land Trust, should be directly preserving the land in this area, versus the current request to use the Town's zoning powers to back into the same result. Mr. Foster also suggested that Mr. Stancliff talk to his neighboring property owners regarding this proposal. Planning Director Thomas suggested, and the Council agreed, that he would write letters to the impacted property owners, informing them of the Conservation Commission's proposal, and invite them to the March 10th Planning Council meeting for a discussion thereof. Mr. Thomas said that such letters would be in the mail prior to the end of the work week. Mr. Stancliff said that he would also have the results of the Conservation Commission's Town Meeting questionnaire available at the March 10th Council meeting to help with this discussion.

Discuss: Letter from School Board regarding Town Plan Education Chapter – Mr. Thomas said he recently received a letter that was sent by the Chair of the School Board to the Planning Council. Chair Hancock noted that with the recent school merger, the School Board understandably does not appear to be focused on the needs of individual towns in the district. It was decided to table this discussion, and table finalizing the Education Chapter of the Town Plan, until the School Board replied with the results of the facilities study that was referenced in their letter. It was also decided that if the

School Board did not reply to the Council's January 7th letter prior to the Town Plan being finished, that the Council should be prepared to finalize the Education Chapter, with its singular town focus, without the input of the School Board.

Discuss: Commercial Firewood Processing – The Council reviewed and tentatively approved the proposed zoning regulations for commercial firewood processing businesses. Mr. Thomas said that these changes would be included as part of the next zoning update.

Discuss: Preview zoning change warning – The Council previewed the draft warning, and set a March 24th hearing date for the following list of proposed zoning changes:

a. §204.4 Increase maximum waiver allowance from 15% to 25% and update criteria language
b. §204.5a Revise "use matrix" to add the Firewood Processing use
c. §204.5a Revise "use matrix" for Healthcare use in the Hospital Zone from Cond. to Permitted
d. §204.5a Change definition of Lodging or Rooming House to Short-Term Housing
e. §204.5b Change Minimum Lot Size in the Commercial zone to 10,000 ft2
f. §206 Housekeeping & and require front porch for certain multi-family & commercial uses
g. §207 Increase maximum front setback allowance & change historic preservation criteria
h. §323 Only require free-board for substantial improvements in the flood hazard area
i. §344 Change to only regulate development lot, not soils and drainage of adjoining lots
j. §401.1 Restate permit exemptions found elsewhere in the definition of Structure
k. §402.1 Tie permit expiration language to the approved use changing
l. §404 Housekeeping for Other Permits and Regulations regarding Act 250
m. §405.4 Delete 2nd reference to "Lot Line Setbacks" from 405.2, see definition of Structure
n. §422.c Clarify that a 20' right-of-way can be used for 2 single-family homes or 1 duplex
o. §423.4 Alter the way accessory apartment size is calculated, change is otherwise deminimis
p. §451 Housekeeping changes to clarify submittal requirements for parking waiver
q. §453 Alter minimum parking ratio for CB & HDR Zones & short-term rental name change
r. §470 Alter permit process for signs, housekeeping, including clarifying prohibited signs
s. §485.8 Allows DRB to consider extension of a non-conforming gravel operation
t. §490 Add limited lighting exemption for public art on public property
u. §505 Housekeeping changes for landscaping standards
v. §510 Various changes to conservation subdivision purposes & open space requirements
w. §622 Increase zoning fines to mesh with current State statute
x. §635.6 Delete affordability requirement for on-site property manager housing
y. §840.3 Tie required sewer line expansions to specified distances in the sewer ordinance
z. §900 Definitions: Housekeeping change for the Home Business definition, Subdivision definition, and Sale of Goods Produced On-Site definition, Setback definition, clarify the Building Height definition, change Lodging or Rooming House definition and rename it Short-Term Rentals, add Firewood Processing use, and delete unnecessary definition for Open Space.
aa. §1000 Housekeeping for Low Density Residential Zone along meadow Drive.

Discuss: Town Plan Utility & Facility Chapter – Since a revised draft of the Utility & Facility Chapter was not available until the evening of the meeting, discussion of this Town Plan Chapter was postponed until the March 10th Planning Council meeting. Mr. Thomas said the he would work on the Flood Resiliency Chapter of the Town Plan next.

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The meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director