

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of February 20, 2018

Planning Council Members Present: Linda Greaves, Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Max Paine, Tom Snipp, and Laura Streets

Planning Council Members Absent: Mark Struhsacker

Guests: Ron Bomer, Scott Thompson, and Richard "Buckwheat" Lowe

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Town Offices at 43 Portland Street at approximately 7:00 P.M.

Discuss: Parking lot banners for a health care facility – The Council again discussed the request of Kevin Kelley, CEO of Community Health Services of Lamoille Valley (CHSLV), to allow health-related banners to be hung on the parking lot light poles of CHSLV's new medical building. Mr. Thomas, as discussed at the previous Council meeting, spoke about a proposed revision to Section 479b of the zoning bylaws to allow such signage for non-profit institutions looking to advertise pro-community and pro-community health messages. Member Greaves said that she spoke to her colleagues at the Department of Health who were supportive of these types of banners and messaging. Chair Griswold explained that he had visited this site since the last meeting and that he was now opposed to this proposal, as the banners would be highly visible to traffic heading down Washington Highway towards to hospital. The large amount of non-profits in the community that could utilize the proposed revision to Section 479b of the zoning bylaws was also discussed. Member Paine suggested a compromise position to allow smaller banners. Member Snipp and Member Streets both said that they did not want to set precedent by dovetailing the zoning to a sign proposal after-the-fact. Member Griswold moved to include the proposed changes to Section 479b of the zoning bylaws as part of the next zoning change. The motion failed to carry by a vote of 2-4.

Discuss: Uptown Crosswalk approval for VT Route 15 – Mr. Thomas shared with the Council that VTrans wrote the Town saying that a crosswalk can be legally placed across Route 15 by its intersection with Route 100.

Discuss: SSMA changes for Sunset Dr. & Langdell Road – Mr. Thomas said that the Council previously declined to look at changing any zoning north of Route 15 until the aforementioned crosswalk was allowed. With this Route 15 crosswalk now allowed, and likely to be put in place as part of the redevelopment of the McMahon's Chevy property, Mr. Thomas presented a plan to expand the Sewer Service Management Area (SSMA) to include about 21.4 acres, centered on the Sunset Drive neighborhood, but also including Langdell Road. Richard "Buckwheat" Lowe said that there was no reason that his Sunset neighborhood should not be allowed to have sewer service. He explained problems with individual septic systems in this neighborhood. Mr. Thomas said that sewer service is always a friendlier environmental alternative than septic. Mr. Thomas said that he would address the zoning of this area at a later meeting. Upon a motion made by Member Paine,

the Council agreed to add the Sunset Drive area, as depicted in the meeting package, to the designated SSMA so sewer service could be added to this neighborhood in the future.

Discuss: Spilt Com zone on Brooklyn Street by Munchies – Mr. Thomas explained that during the last zoning change, he brought the Commercial Zone down into the village along the west side of Brooklyn Street. In doing so, he used the rear/west property-line of these lots to separate the Commercial Zone from the adjacent Medium Density Residential Zone. He explained that these commercially zoned Brooklyn Street lots used to be split by the residential zone, which gave the property owner the ability to apply for local permits under either the residential zone or the commercial zone. He said that maintaining this flexibility may have been a better outcome, while using the former Munchie's restaurant site as an example of an underutilized commercial property that may be better off being redeveloped residentially. The Council discussed bringing back the split zone along the west side of the commercially zoned village section of Brooklyn Street. The Council did not feel strongly about this proposal in either direction and instructed Mr. Thomas to replace the split zoning at some point in the future when doing so would benefit this area.

Discuss: Final proof for hART Walk historic plaques – Mr. Thomas asked Council Members to look over the proposed plaques for the Morrisville History and Art (hART) Walk. He said that most plaques were in their final form so that any typos or historical inaccuracies should be pointed out in the coming days. He thanked Members for reviewing the plaques.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Hancock moved to approve the February 4th meeting minutes. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 6-0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM.

– submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director