

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of Tuesday 8 February 2022

Council Members present: Steven Foster, Joshua Goldstein, Etienne Hancock (Chair), Tom Snipp, and Allen Van Anda

Council Members absent:

Guests present: Nancy Banks, Jamie Brewster, Nina Church, Kristin Fogdall, Jason McArthur, Dan McLaughlin, Chris Ransom, Brook Scatchard, Development Review Board Member Christy Snipp, and Jacob Walker

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Call to Order: Chair Hancock called the meeting to order in the Community Room of the Old Tegu Theatre at approximately 5:02 P.M.

Prior meeting minutes – Member Snipp said that the word “dilapidated” should be removed from the description of the Norm’s Furniture Building in the draft meeting minutes, and replaced with the word “unoccupied.” Member Goldstein moved to approve the as-revised January 25th meeting minutes. A vote of 4-0 affirmed the motion, with Member Foster abstaining.

Discuss: Morrisville/Morristown 2020-2030 Town Plan – Planning Director Thomas cited a very minor change made to the Town Plan at the most recent Selectboard meeting. He added that with this change in place, the Town Plan in front of the Selectboard now perfectly matched the Town Plan in front of the Village Trustees. The Council was amenable to the Town Plan change. Mr. Thomas said that final Town Plan comments were pending from LCPC, and absent any surprises, he anticipated final Town Plan hearings in late March, and final Town Plan approval votes in April.

Discuss: Add Historic Preservation Criteria to additional village streets – The Council discussed expanding the area of the existing §207 Historic Preservation Criteria zoning to Foundry Street, Copley Ave, and Park Street. Chris Ransom, long-time owner of the old foundry, said that there was nothing left on Foundry Street of any historical significance. The Council Members agreed by consensus to extend the Historic Preservation Criteria so it was required on Copley Avenue and Park Street, but not on Foundry Street.

Discuss: New zoning to protect contributing structures in the Historic District – Mr. Thomas provided a comment letter from the Morristown Historical Society regarding architectural details that would be appropriate in the Morrisville Historic District (MHD), and should be regulated in §207, Historic Preservation, of the Zoning Bylaws. Chair Hancock said that he would like new buildings on the main thoroughfares in the MHD to look architecturally similar to the remaining contributing structure in the MHS. He added that existing contributing structures in the MHS should be repaired, or replaced in-kind for at least the façade and the front half of the subject lot. Chair Hancock used 50 Upper Main Street as an example of a building that was well intended, but needed more help via

prescriptive zoning regulations to ensure accurate architectural details, such as the correct width of trim boards, corner boards, freeze boards, properly proportioned windows, a front entrance with a portico, a front porch, and no vinyl siding. Kristin Fogdall added that the exterior stairs on the apartments of the corner of Bridge Street and the Truck Route were a very poor design, and should be banned in any new zoning update. Julie Nepvue said that stamped metal should be an appropriate façade treatment in the §207 Historic Preservation Criteria. It was suggested that the Morristown Historical Society could produce a pamphlet that explained Morrisville’s architecture, while also offering suggestions for appropriate architectural details, and even colors, for new development within the MHD. Mr. Thomas said that he would continue to work with Chair Hancock on an architecturally descriptive and definitive revision to the §207 Historic Preservation Criteria. Council Members were encouraged to actively submit revisions and ideas for how to improve the existing §207 Historic Preservation Criteria prior to the next Council meeting.

Discuss: Filling gaps in Jersey Heights sidewalk that will be constructed in 2022 – Mr. Thomas spoke to the Planning Council’s agreed upon initiative to plan for and fund the 2023 construction of gaps in the sidewalk on Jersey Heights and LaPorte Road (that would be created in the summer of 2022 by disconnected developer constructed sections of sidewalk). Mr. Thomas said that Town Administrator Dodge agreed to share the \$2,000 cost estimate update to complete this sidewalk with developer Graham Mink, who previously offered to matching the Town’s \$1,000 contribution. Jason McArthur of 511 Jersey Heights submitted a letter stating opposition to the proposed Jersey Heights sidewalk being located on his side of the street due to negative impacts with the 4 roadside maple trees that run along the front of his property. The Planning Council agreed that if the sidewalk was to be moved to Mr. McArthur’s side of the street as a cost savings initiative, the Selectboard should vote to do so, since that Board originally agreed to cantilever the sidewalk over the ravine on the other side of the road to avoid impacting the 4 maple trees. Mr. Thomas said he would add this sidewalk item to the Planning Council Agenda again when he was in receipt of the updated cost estimate.

Discuss: Christy Snipp for additional light pollution zoning – Development Review Board Member Christy Snipp appeared before the Council asking for a zoning change that would make commercial and multi-family housing developments submit a lighting plan to prove compliance with Section 490 of the Bylaws (Exterior Lighting). Jamie Brewster noted multiple commercial properties throughout town that did not currently comply with Section 490 Exterior Lighting requirements, including exterior lights on after 10pm at Local Electric and The Boat Barn. Mr. Thomas said he would send a zoning inquiry to these property owners to have the alleged lighting compliance issues remedied, including the Upper Main Street LLC apartment complex owned by Graham Mink. The Council agreed to add the requested lighting plan submittal requirement to §206 of the Zoning Bylaws as part of the fall zoning change process.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM, submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director