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MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
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Minutes of February 5, 2002

Members Present: Julia Compagna, Kevin Lane, Bill Bourne, Sam Guy, Bruce Tomlinson, Kelly Rogers, Bill Henchey

Members Absent: none

Recorder: Mark Leonard, Zoning Administrator

Guests: Eric Beckstrom, Mike Miller (LCPC Planner), Paul McGinley (Town Administrator), Heidi Krantz (Community Coordinator)

Julia Compagna, co-chair, formally called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM

Eric Beckstrom, architect, explained that his firm had been hired by the Lamoille Family Center (LFC) to explore options for expanding the Center's facilities. He said that the Center was trying to adopt a model program in use in Middlebury that provides parenting and related life skills classes and offers on-site day care for up to 25 children of those attending classes. LFC's current facility on Cadys Falls Road (in the Rural Residential with Agriculture district), which is permitted for up to eight children in day care, is too small. They are looking for possibly 10,000 square foot, with an outdoor play area and adequate parking. They own an adjacent parcel across the creek which lies in the Business Office Park (BOP) district; however, the deep ravine between the two properties precludes them from expanding onto this lot. They have spoken to Ken Harvey, owner of a lot on the top end of the BOP district, across Bridge St from the CREW property, regarding building on his land. The problem lies with the fact that the proposed facility is not on the list of conditional uses in this district. The mixed nature of the facility (part office, part classroom, part day care) presents zoning problems in all districts other than Neighborhood Commercial, where no suitable location readily presents itself. Their timeframe for starting construction for a new facility is 6-12 months.

Julia stated there may be state statutes that address zoning restrictions with regard to state-licensed day care facilities and asked Mark to research the statutes. She advised Eric that the Planning Commission had been approached on a number of previous occasions by parties wishing to modify the list of permitted or conditional uses in the BOP and had been turned down. She felt that there needed to be a broader conditional use category that would allow other uses similar in nature to those currently listed. She said this should be discussed with the Development Review Board as they would be charged with determining which applications could be approved under such a category. She also asked Mark to check with VLCT on any "catch-all' conditional uses they may be aware of.

Mike Miller from LCPC spoke on the game plan for executing the $8,000 grant the town had received to revise the Town Plan. He said the grant would fund approximately 200 hours of work from LCPC. He said his goal was to have a first draft of the new plan by December 2002 in order to be able to have it reviewed, warned, and adopted by the end of March 2003. He asked what were the Commission's expectations for the contract and the Town Plan. What are the members' views of the current Town Plan and what do they wish to see added or changed in the next version?

Kevin said the current plan was less specific than desired and that the new plan should lay out more specific, action-oriented goals. Mike added that the plan should draw on information already gathered from various other studies that had been done in recent years.

Sam asked how Morristown's current plan stacked up with others Mike had reviewed. Mike felt it was better than most in the county, but that we could do more to link the Town Plan to the Zoning and Subdivision

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Bylaws.

Bill Henchy said the Commission needs broader public input to the plan development. They need to know what direction the public wants to move in. He suggested developing a survey that could be provided at Town Meeting and in other forums to gauge public sentiment.

Julia said she feels there have been more than enough studies done, we need to use data already gathered. Key issues which the new plan must address include land use, municipal sewer system extension and infrastructure, Copley's strategic plan, economic development (especially in the downtown area), stormwater treatment, and community facility requirements. She said the Commission should review one or two chapters of the plan each month and pass inputs on them to Mike who will edit, warn, and publish the final product. At the first Planning Commission meeting in March, Chapters 4 and 6 will be reviewed.

Paul McGinley echoed Julia's comments regarding sewer system expansion, downtown development, and the need for a comprehensive survey of the town's requirements for municipal services facilities. He is in the early stage of forming a committee to review the latter issue. He said there is some money available to contract an outside planning consultant to aid in the Town Plan development effort.

The proposed revision of the zoning and subdivision bylaws was reviewed by the full Commission. The proposed bylaw addressing access to properties by emergency vehicles was discussed. Most members felt that the town should not require private property owners to meet any specific driveway criteria and that existing bylaws and state permitting requirements ensure access to public buildings are adequate. The proposed addition was dropped, with direction to the ZA to draft a disclaimer for access permits advising private property owners that the town assumes no liability in the event their driveway is inadequate for emergency vehicles to access their property or home. Such language will be coordinated with the Highway , Rescue, and Fire Departments.

On a motion by Bill Bourne, seconded by Sam Guy, the Commission voted unanimously to accept the proposed changes as discussed. The Commission will review any other possible changes, including changes to uses and boundaries in the Neighborhood Commercial District and possibly amending the list of conditional uses in the non-residential districts, and finalize the draft amendments at the next meeting. Once finalized, the amendments would be warned and public hearings held with the Select Board and Village Trustees.

The ZA briefed the members on the preceding day's Select Board meeting. An AOT representative advised that funding for engineering work and right-of-way acquisition for the Route 100 Bypass was still in the state budget and that the revised Environmental Assessment was due to be signed by the designated federal official within a matter of days. Provided there were no cuts to the project funding, construction could begin in Spring 2004. The Select Board voted to discontinue Spring Street. They accepted the ZA's review of other towns' permit fees and a proposed revision of Morristown's fee schedule for further consideration. They advised the ZA that past experience with attempting to control and/or eliminate private junkyards and junk vehicles had proved time-consuming, expensive, and ultimately fruitless. Consequently, the ZA will not pursue adoption of either a town ordinance or new bylaw on this subject.

The next meeting will be on February 19, 2002 at the Water & Light Department building on Elmore St. Agenda items will include: Final Review of Bylaw Amendments and discussion with Marcy Niesenholtz on the subject of business development and recruiting.

Sam moved and Bruce seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting; motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mark Leonard, recorder

Cc: Town of Morristown Select Board
Morristown/Morrisville Development Review Board
Town Clerk