MORRISTOWN/MORRISVILLE
PLANNING COMMISSION
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Minutes of February 1, 2011

Members Present: Paul Griswold, Bill Henchey, John Meyer, Max Paine, Lauren Traister & Andrew Volansky

Members Absent: Reeves Larson

Staff: Todd Thomas, Zoning Administrator (ZA)

Guests: Chris Ransom (resident), Mel Patashnick & Leah Hollenberger (Copley Hospital)

Call to Order: Chair Henchey called the meeting to order at 7:05 P.M.

Discussion: Central Business zoning district final changes (Health Care Facility) – ZA Thomas introduced Mel Patashnick & Leah Hollenberger from Copley Hospital. ZA Thomas explained that he recently met with Mr. Patashnick to speak about the hospital's concern with Health Care Facility being added as a Conditional Use to the CB zoning district (§208.h). Mr. Patashnick spoke to the Commission about the local importance of the hospital as a health care provider and as a jobs creator. Mr. Patashnick asked the Commission to remove the proposed Health Care Facility Conditional Use from the CB zoning district. Chair Henchey asked how the Commission could justify removing Health Care Facility as a conditional use solely to eliminate competition from the hospital. Mr. Patashnick said that adding certain competing health care uses in the downtown could damage the financial viability of the hospital. ZA Thomas distributed a report stating where health care like uses could currently be permitted throughout town through a combination of defined uses, including: uses for Research and Testing Facilities and Commercial Use. ZA Thomas explained that the allowances for Research and Testing Facilities in the BED and IND zoning districts were undefined. He also explained that that Commercial Use allowed in most business districts was used by the DRB as a way to permit applications that do not cleanly fall into an otherwise defined use. The Commission, ZA Thomas, Mr. Patashnick and Ms. Hollenberger agreed to explore altering the definition of Business Services to include dentists and other non-traditional medical services therein, so as to avoid excluding such uses from the downtown if the Health Care Facility use was removed therefrom. ZA Thomas said that he would have a revised definition for Business Services ready for the next Commission meeting. Member Traister also said that she would like to look at eliminating the Commercial Use use from various zoning districts during the next zoning update. ZA Thomas said that the undefined Research and Testing Facilities uses in the BED & IND zoning districts should also be evaluated at that time. The Commission agreed to decide

on the Commercial Use and Health Care Facility uses in the CB zoning district at its February 15th meeting. The Commission decided to look at health care like allowances outside the CB zoning district after the downtown zoning update so it could go through a public process before any decision making.

Discussion: Streets for form requirements §209.3 – ZA Thomas asked the Commission to review the streets in the CB zoning district that were proposed to have minimum form requirements with the pending zoning changes. Member Volansky said that the proposed streets with form requirements were streets that he considered to be more commercial in nature than other streets in the downtown. The Members of the Commission agreed with this observation and said that they were comfortable with the proposed form requirements on Bridge, Hutchins, Lower Main, Pleasant & Portland Streets.

Discussion: Definitions – ZA Thomas led the Board through the proposed changes, additions and eliminations from the definition section that accompanied the pending zoning changes. Member Volansky questioned if Planned Residential Development should be eliminated. ZA Thomas said that he would move forward with the proposed definition changes after he revised the proposal to retain the Planned Residential Development definition.

Discussion: Feb. 18th meeting & presentation at the VFW – The Commission discussed the February 18th downtown zoning change presentation at the VFW. The Commissioners agreed that the meeting went well and that they were happy to receive the feedback.

Discussion: Review March 15th public hearing packages – ZA Thomas asked Members to review the Reporting Form and the proposed hearing notice for the downtown zoning changes, both as proposed in the March 15th public hearing package that was distributed each Commissioner.

Discussion: Resident / landowner notices for zoning changes – ZA Thomas asked the Commission where notice requirements should be sent for the pending downtown zoning changes. The Commission instructed the ZA Thomas to notice the same area notified for the Feb 18th informational hearing at the VFW.

Discussion: Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Act 250 letter – ZA Thomas said that he drafted a letter from the Commission supporting the LVRT during the Act 250 permitting process. The Commission approved the letter and instructed ZA Thomas to mail it.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Upon a motion by Member Paine, the minutes of the January 4, 2011 meeting were accepted as presented. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 5-0, as Member Traister left the meeting after the February 18th VFW discussion.

Respectfully submitted: Todd Thomas, ZA