

Morristown Conservation Commission
January 20, 2022

The meeting began at 6:35. It was held at the Tegu Building and available via Google Meet.

Attendance: Ron Stancliff, Brent Teillon, Jenifer Andrews, Dave Stevens, Richard Sargent (online) Kristen Connelly, Mariah Keagy, Jess Zehngut, Jim Pease (online)
Guests: Evelyn and Jerry Throne, Theresa Snow, Etienne Hancock Chair of Planning Council.

A motion was made to approve the December meeting minutes as a second order of business with one change: Kristen met with Eric Dodge on the Digital Documents subject. Meeting minutes will be reviewed 10 days after they are sent or revised by the Chair at the next meeting.

Guest Discussion with Etienne Hancock

Brent discussed the amount and type of growth evident in the Village is an issue of concern. He also mentioned that the setback for buildings from the public sidewalk is getting smaller and is not adequate.

Ron discussed the Conservation Bylaw and that it is a good idea but has problems. Ron mentioned the Percy development near the Stowe line which has been to the DRB 3x and has 6-8 houses with a conservation easement. The weakness in the bylaw is this easement includes undevelopable land such as wetlands and steep slopes anyway. Ron believes these natural resource lands should be excluded from the easement. The development should not be allowed to have increased housing density in exchange for lands that already protected. Ron asked a second question about whether the PC would do a questionnaire like MCC did. MCC did get good feedback. He expressed concern that once was 2-acre minimum zoning was now 80,000 Ft² minimum zoning which is a decrease and that the zoning was going backwards. Ron also mentioned a rumor that Brooklyn St zoning may be changing.

Jennifer discussed that none of the new housing in the Village has any architectural benefits. She also mentioned that the housing density and setbacks impact the public's ability to recreate in the village.

Etienne responded that the PC will be looking at architectural benefits this week. He agreed that we should look at strengthening the conservation Bylaw, but the PC would like to know if it has been productive over the past few years. He also agreed that the PC should review the setback requirements. He said the PC is always talking about ideas like the changes in the Brooklyn St zoning and that we should not criticize discussion; that is their role in the Village. Any proposed changes come from any number of people and discussions. He did say we should extend the historic designation area up Brooklyn St.

Ron stated that the Village Trustees should not make any decisions outside the Village boundary. Etienne responded that they do, and we can't do anything about that.

Kristin asked what the next step is, and Etienne responded that he would write up a list of the discussion bullets and then to the MCC. He thought the MCC should make proposals from this list to address problems in the zoning.

Old Business:

1. **Wake Boats** – Jennifer discussed the fact that the wake/wave from the boat causes problems including shoreline erosion, disruption of fishing activities and disturbance of loons. The boat is designed to create a wake for surfing behind it. We really don't want this type of boat in shallow waters of lakes or ponds or rivers. They should have a designated area in waterbodies. She has drafted a letter. Ron made a motion to send the letter to the Selectboard. The motion passed unanimously.
2. **Bryant Pond Parking Lot** – Brent reported that the Selectboard signed the license and returned it to the Dept. of Forest, Parks and Recreation. We should hear back soon. We might be able to use State ARPA funds from FPR for the project.
3. **Town Meeting** – Town Meeting has been moved to Australian Ballot due to the pandemic. We do have a map of the Town Forest Trails from Mariah and we will look for a place to display it.
4. **Digital Documents** – Kristen reported that we can use the Town computer drives to store our files.

New Business:

1. Ron reported that there is a new house and septic proposed in the Morrisville wellhead source protection area on Rte. 15A.
2. We discussed the creation of a large map of the Town that will allow residents to place sticky notes showing the most important lands to them it should indicate the location of good views, favorite areas, wildlife zones, etc... Kristen will review the map and compare it to the state Natural Resource map to see if there are any new unprotected lands marked by residents.
3. Brent reported that the state just acquired development rights on 6500 acres on Rte. 12 (Worcester Woods) for public recreation. The land will go to the Vermont Land Trust who will sell it to private landowners with no development rights, but other uses would be allowed. He also mentioned that the land on Woodbury Mt in Hardwick will be preserved as Wilderness with no logging or management allowed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Jim Pease