

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council

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Meeting Minutes of January 3, 2017

Planning Council Members Present: Paul Griswold (Chair), Etienne Hancock, Yvette Mason, Max Paine, Tom Snipp & Laura Streets

Planning Council Members Absent: Mark Struhsacker

Guests: Marci Young, Kevin Petrochko, Scott Thompson, Richard "Buckwheat" Lowe, Marjorie Ward, Melissa and Chris Leblanc

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: Site Plan Review landscaping longevity guarantee – Mr. Thomas presented the Council with revised landscaping Bylaw requirements that changed the existing one year landscaping longevity guarantee. Richard "Buckwheat" Lowe said that a three-year guarantee was an accepted industry minimum standard. Chair Griswold polled the Council and the consensus was to change the Bylaw's landscaping lifespan guarantee requirement from one year to an unlimited timeframe. The Council directed Mr. Thomas to clarify in the Bylaw that the replanting of dead landscaping was required within the same growing season and to also change the Bylaw's tree caliper height measurement height to 18 inches per Buckwheat's recommendation. Mr. Thomas said he would make these landscaping Bylaw changes and include them within next zoning Bylaw update.

Discuss: Firewood processing in rural areas – Planning Director Thomas proposed new Bylaw regulations for commercial firewood processing in rural residential areas. Board members debated what reasonable hours of operations should be for these firewood processing operations. Scott Thompson said that he works firewood processing jobs from 8 AM to 8 PM in the summer. Chair Griswold polled the Council regarding proposed hours of operation and it was decided, by consensus, to limit such small scale firewood processing hours to 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday and from 9 to 2 on Saturday. It was also decided by consensus that the following definition of Firewood Processing would be included within the next Bylaw update and be allowed in the Industrial, Special Industrial, Airport Business, Low Density Residential #2 and Rural Residential Agricultural Zones:

Firewood Processing – The processing of less than than 300 cords (or board foot equivalent) per calendar year of firewood from off-site logs for commercial purposes by 3 or fewer employees. Said small-scale processing, including the delivery of logs and other wood processing, manufacturing, mulch grinding and fencepost making, shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday and from 9am to 2pm on Saturdays. Processing of 300 or more cords of wood per year shall not be a Permitted Use and shall require Conditional Use approval.

Discuss: Add Brewery definition to replace Bar use in IND Zone – Planning Director Thomas recommended that the Bylaw be revised to include the definition of Brewery to differentiate that use in the Bylaw from a bar. He explained that Lost Nation Brewery could only be currently allowed in the Industrial Zone under the Bar use. He added that the Town may want to see another brewery in this zone, but not necessarily a bar. Marjorie Ward recommended that the proposed definition for Brewery be reviewed in regards to how the Vermont Department of Liquor Control defines a brewery. Member Streets suggested that the definition for Brewery be expanded to include vinous and fermented products in addition to brewing, distilling and hard cider. Mr. Thomas said he would make such a change to this definition and present it at the Council's next meeting.

Discuss: Minimum parking ratio changes – Mr. Thomas spoke to the proposed revisions to the Town's minimum parking ratios that were distributed to Board Members at their December meeting. Mr. Thomas explained how the Bylaw's current minimum parking requirements created too much parking. He said the new parking requirements for retail uses reduced minimum requirements by approximately 40%. The proposed minimum parking requirements for auto repair business were questioned by various Board members as being too high. Mr. Thomas was asked to talk to Vianore Tire about their new location to better determine how much parking was actually needed. Chair Griswold said that reduced parking minimums should also be available for senior housing. Mr. Thomas said he would have revised ratios for the Council's next meeting.

Discuss: Bedroom creation, tiny houses and community impact – Planning Director Thomas explained that he permitted a tiny house built on a utility trailer the previous week, but he did not require a pad and skirting as he normally does with a mobile home. He recommended that the Board eliminate the Bylaw's existing pad and skirting requirement for mobile housing units so all forms of housing would be treated uniformly. The Board unanimously agreed to such a change. A broader discussion about tiny houses and how they should be regulated followed. Melissa Leblanc said that the Bylaw should encourage tiny houses. She said that rental tiny houses, like the ones she was planning to build on her property, would bring tourists and money into the community, much like the apartment above her garage that she currently rents short-term on Air BnB. Member Hancock said that he was open to reviewing a Bylaw change that halved regular minimum densities for tiny houses less than 300 ft² in size. It was discussed that this change could create more affordable housing. Mr. Thomas said that he would attempt to draft a Bylaw that does as such for the next Planning Council meeting. He added that he would include uniform language requiring permits for all mobile housing like trailers, campers and tiny houses on utility trailers if they remain on the same parcel of land for 180 days or more.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Member Paine moved to approve the December 6, 2016 meeting minutes. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 5-0-1 with Member Snipp abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director