



**TOWN OF MORRISTOWN PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING NOTICE & AGENDA
COMMUNITY MEETING ROOM
43 Portland St. Morrisville, VT 05661
5:00 PM Tuesday, July 22, 2025**

[Join Zoom Meeting](#) or by phone join via conference call (audio only): 1 (646) 558-8656 | Meeting ID: [810 342 4528](#) | Passcode 05661

The meetings will be live-streamed on the Town of Morristown's website: <https://www.morristownvt.gov/community/page/meetings-agendas-minutes>

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

III. APPROVE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

1. Approve minutes from 7/8/25

IV. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on ZA's Review of the Morristown Zoning and Subdivision bylaws.
2. Review new draft schedule for bylaw updates.
3. Work on integrating priorities from Etienne's list into draft schedule.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discuss legal review process

VI. CORRESPONDENCE/NOTICES

VII. ADJOURN



PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 8, 2025

Members: Etienne Hancock, John Meyer, James Morris, Wally Reeve

Absent: Joshua Goldstein

ADMINISTRATION and STAFF: Tyler Machia, Zoning and Planning Administrator

PARTICIPANTS/GUESTS: Jerry Throne

CALL TO ORDER

Etienne Hancock called the Planning Commission Meeting to order at 5:00 PM at the Tegu Building.

AGENDA CHANGES/ADDITIONS

The agenda was changed by deleting item #4 and substituting a report on the Zoning Permits.

Motion made by Wally Reeve to modify the agenda by deleting item #4 and adding a Zoning Permit report.

Motion seconded by John Meyer. Motion carried (4/0).

APPROVE PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

1. Approve Minutes of 6-26-25

Discussion regarding the minutes of the 6/26/25 joint meeting of the Selectboard and the Planning Commission ensued. Tyler extracted language from the Selectboard meeting for use in this capacity. There was disagreement regarding the necessity of the Planning Commission to approve the minutes from the Selectboard meeting. It was noted that the only reason the Selectboard meeting was also warned as a Planning Commission meeting was because there was a quorum of Planning Commission members present at the Selectboard meeting. Given the ambiguity as to the necessity to approve the minutes from the Selectboard meeting the board opted to table this to the next meeting.

Motion made by John Meyer to table the minutes from June 26th to the next meeting. Motion seconded by James Morris. Motion carried (4/0).

NEW BUSINESS

1. Review educational materials.

Tyler introduced the packet of informational materials on the Planning process for the committee's review and use as a resource. The first document in the packet was The Municipal Plan: State Planning Manual 2017. Next was the Municipal Planning Grant 2025 on pages 137-147. The following document, named "So you've just become a member of your town's Planning Commission, Zoning Board, or Development Review Board", was found on pages 148-157. Last in the packet was the Essentials of Local Land Use Planning and Regulation. Tyler suggested the members keep these documents to use as questions arose. He added that page 191 has a Flow Chart of Adoption and Amendment of Bylaws (Regulations), which he recommended the Commission members start to review, as well as page 148.

There was a brief conversation about Planning Grants, which Etienne said had not been pursued in the past, yet interest in them remained. Tyler explained there was information about grant availability that he had not been able to research. Jerry Throne requested that if the Planning Commission moves forward with applying for a grant to that they reach out to the Conservation Committee to explore the possibility of applying for grants useful to conservation efforts.

2. Discuss public hearing of 6/26/25.

- 1. Comments about the meeting.**
- 2. Discuss timeline for Selectboard Review.**
- 3. Discuss any concerns with review process.**
- 4. Why other legal reviews.**

The members of the Planning Commission were frustrated that the Selectboard sent the Zoning Bylaws back for a review by the legal council for another review of the changes. Etienne wants a policy that clearly defines the path for approving Zoning Bylaw amendments through the Planning Commission, legal department, Trustees, and the Selectboard. Many Commission members were concerned with what they felt was poor communication between the Commission and the Selectboard and asked Tyler to facilitate improving communications between the Commission and the Selectboard. Tyler noted that he would talk to Brent about the Planning Commission's concerns and make sure the process for approving any new future bylaws is mapped out beforehand so the Planning Commission and Selectboard are on the same page.

3. Consider a timeline for revisions of the Zoning Bylaws.

Tyler solicited the members' response to the idea of each member having an assigned task to bring to the committee. Etienne did not approve of members writing legal guidelines, and would rather have staff bring the correct language to the committee for revision and comments. He suggested the committee continue in the same manner as done previously, whereby Tyler does the research and brings the topics to the committee. Tyler noted that he has not had as much time as he would like to devote to planning because of the volume of zoning work he has had to do as summer is a particularly busy time of the year for zoning.

4. Discussion of Lamoille County Planning Commission land use maps and how our zoning districts fit inside them.

Zoning Office Report-Tyler reported that 39 permits were issued and 10 DRB meetings. Tyler explained that he has been focused on his zoning work due to the number of applications he has received. He noted that spring and summer are particularly busy times of the year for zoning work. Tyler noted that as fall approaches he should have more time to direct towards planning work.

OLD BUSINESS

None

CORRESPONDENCE/NOTICES

None

ADJOURN

Motion made by Wally Reeve to adjourn. Motion seconded by James Morris. Motion carried. (4/0)

Meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm

Submitted and filed this 7/11/25 .
Bonnie McDermott, Scribe

Please note all minutes are in Draft form and are subject to approval at the next Planning Commission meeting.



To: Planning Commission Members

RE: Notes on Proposed Changes to Morristown Zoning and Subdivision Bylaws

Overview: The focus of this memo is to offer a broad overview of the Morristown Zoning and Subdivision regulations and identify the areas where it can be improved. Rather than a granular review of the regulations this memo will identify several ways the regulations could be improved initially. These first items stem from my initial experience of interpreting our regulations. The solutions to these issues will be fleshed out in detail as we start to redraft the regulations.

Reorder Existing Regulations Sections for Continuity: In order to make the regulations easier to interpret the regulation should be reorder. In their current configuration the regulations require the reader to move between sections. To reduce this necessity the regulations should be reorder to minimize the amount of times it takes to find relevant sections. I will not go into designing this new order in this memo but It would be my first planned change to the regulations.

New Use Tables: One of my main focuses is breaking out the use table into tables based on the individual zoning district rather than keeping them in one table. To do this I take the zoning district boundaries descriptions in Section 1000 and break them out into their own sections. I would then create a use table for that district which notes allowed uses, dimensional standards, and other applicable information for each zone. This would allow the user to quickly identify the specific regulations for a particular district.

Expand the Definitions Section of the Regulations: As the regulations currently stand our definition section is not particularly expansive and we should look to have more things codified in our regulations. It is important to remember that as a Zoning Administrator I am required to interpret our regulations literally as noted in 24 VSA 4448(a). Having a comprehensive definition section is critical to ensuring that our regulations are being interpreted correctly. In its current configuration the Morristown regulations have 10 pages of definitions. By comparison Hyde Park and Stowe both have 18 pages of definitions, Richmond has 14 pages, and Waterbury has 17 pages. A robust definition section makes the regulations easier to administer and less subjective. Some of the definitions in our regulations are quite broad, while having some expansive definitions is not inherently bad we should examine our current definition to make sure they are not covering more than they should.

Regulations for Multiple Uses on a Lot: In its current configuration Morristown's regulations do not regulate multiple uses on a lot. Therefore, it is unclear how multiple uses on a lot are supposed to be permitted. It is also unclear if there is any cap to the number of principal uses on a lot. I recommend looking into how communities of a similar size to Morristown go about permitting multiple principle uses on a lot. Often multiple uses on a property is a use in and of itself. Sometimes it is a permitted use other times it is a conditional use. We can decide what we feel would work best but we need to establish a process for permitting multiple uses on a lot.

Rework PUD Section: Our current PUD section does not appear to meet the definition of a Planned Unit Development found in VSA 4417. State statute notes that PUDs allow for multiple uses on a property or



allow for denser development so long as a portion of the existing lot is conserved. In contrast our PUD regulations are only focused on subdivisions. Any major subdivision is automatically considered a PUD and is subject to the PUD Regulations noted in Section 510. Minor subdivisions can be a PUD if the applicant chooses. We should consider making changes to this section to bring us in line with state statute, this could also be the vehicle we use to permit multiple uses on a lot. We should also consider not requiring all major subdivisions to be PUDs .

Rework Subdivision Regulations: Our current subdivision regulations are broken into two types, Major and Minor. Per the last round of zoning changes Minor subdivisions can contain up to three lots (2 new and 1 original) and can be approved administratively. Major subdivisions involve the creation of 4 or more lots and are automatically subject to the PUD regulations noted in Section 510 which contain mandatory conservation requirements. However, there is no limit to how many times a property can undergo an administrative subdivision and there is no prohibition on back-to-back minor subdivisions which seems to defeat the purpose of having major subdivision review at all as a property owner can keep doing minor subdivision so long as the 3 lots or less requirement is met. In addition, our bylaws allow for one step approval of final subdivisions. Other towns require sketch plan and preliminary subdivision reviews prior to issuing final approval for a subdivision. It also allows the Zoning Administrator to issue sketch plan approval for a subdivision, which is nonbinding and advisory. While it appears, this is allowed per state statute I do not believe it is the norm. Our regulations also combine sketch plan and preliminary subdivision approval into one process rather than having them as separate processes.

Reworked Site Plan Requirements: As currently written our site plan requirements do not require that site plan submittals be prepared by a licensed professional or land surveyor. This can lead to situations where applicants make a site plan that may not be to scale or based on a recent survey. To improve the overall quality of the application materials submitted to the Development Review Board It makes sense to have site plans prepared by a licensed surveyor or other qualified professional. However, there are certain instances where a professional site plan may not be necessary. I would like to give the Development Review Board the ability to waive this requirement at their discretion provided the applicants submit this request in writing prior to a hearing with the Development Review Board. The applicants would need to make the case as to why they should not be required to submit a professionally prepared site plan from a surveyor or other qualified professional.

Changes to Flood Hazard Overlay District (FHOD) Regulations: Our current flood hazard overlay district regulations do not appear to be as robust as other towns in our area. In order to comply with NFIP standards we are only required to meet minimum FEMA standards. However, many other towns have their own dedicated FHOD regulations with its own use table and definitions that are specific to the FHOD. We should review this section to make sure our definitions meet NFIP minimum. We should also create a use table of permitted and conditional uses for the FHOD.

Consider Requiring Certificates of Occupancy: Currently Morrisville does not require Certificates of Occupancy (CO) to close out open zoning permits. COs give me the ability to inspect a project to make sure it was built according to the plans submitted with an application. It can also limit further



development of a property until any applicable conditions are met. There are additional requirements that are placed on a applicant in order to get a certificate of occupancy such as supplying a residential building energy standards or commercial building energy standards form with their CO application.

Conclusion: These initial notes are based on issues that have come up during my initial few weeks of working with our regulations. As we move forward with redrafting these regulations there will likely be additional issues that will surface and we may come back and review the issues I noted above. As we move forward with reviewing each section subsequent memos will be focused to the specific issue at hand. However, the issues noted above will likely take time to work through so it will be good to focus on them first.

Sincerely
Tyler Machia
Zoning and Planning Administrator

Timeline for Zoning Bylaws Redraft 2025				
Day	Date	Time	Description	Completed
August				
			Reorder existing regulations for continuity	
September				
			Use tables by district	
October				
			Expanded the Definitions Section of the Regulations:	
November				
			Regulations for permitting multiple uses on a lot	
December				
			Update PUD Section	
Timeline for Zoning Bylaws Redraft 2026				
January				
			Update Subdivision Regulations	
February				
			Update Site Plan Requierments	
March				
			Update FHOD Regulations	
April				
			Certificate of Occupancy	

PC Priorities:		
	1. Ron's proposed zoning overhaul- items deferred by PC during April zoning review	target 1-2 years to release
	2. Legal counsel recommendations- items deferred by PC during April zoning review	target 1-2 years to release
	3. Tyler's review if other items are significant.	target 1-2 years to release
	4. Town Plan implementation list	
	5. items above (town maps, enforcement, development def, sidewalk decision matrix, etc.)	

date added	sub item	description	notes
17-Jul-25		Ron's concern (email to Tyler & Etienne from June 11) about private airstrip regulation	
9-May-25		Brent and Ron (call with Etienne):	
	1	DRB added requirement for sidewalk (outside of policy and zoning). Cote, Laporte Rd. State required them to be a co-applicant Issue: SB or Town Manager should approve before DRB can require at permit hearing. Other property owners subject to sidewalk requirement coming forward to get out of it. Awareness	
	2	Development definition. Sec 102: Stricter law supersedes looser law.	
	3	Enforcement PC role is in zoning enforcement.	
	4	Official infrastructure map. Big topic. Planning grant opp.?	
	5	Rock extraction (Hirchack industrial park)	