

Morristown/Morrisville Planning Council
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Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2015

Planning Council Members Present: Andrea Beeman, Paul Griswold (Chair), Yvette Mason & Max Paine

Planning Council Members Absent: Etienne Hancock, Tom Snipp & Mark Struhsacker

Staff: Planning Director Todd Thomas

Guests: Terry Hirschak, Julia Compagnia, Richard Duda & Village Trustee Ed Debor

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order in the Community Meeting Room of the Tegu Building at 43 Portland Street at approximately 7:20 P.M.

Discussion: Change Lot Size definition for private ROWs – Planning Director Todd Thomas proposed changing the definition of Street to remove right-of-way areas there from and to further define a Street as serving three or more properties. He said that this definition change would allow property owner Jim Bradley to get a third apartment on his Wilkins Street property and ensure that Morristown taxpayers get to use the land under a right-of-way that they pay taxes on for zoning density purposes. Mr. Thomas also submitted a similar change for the definition of Lot Size. Member Paine moved to accept the revised definitions for Street and Lot Size and to include them with the next zoning change. The motion was affirmed by a vote of 4 to 0.

Discussion: Clarify sign size change for BE & LVGC Zones – Mr. Thomas asked the Council if the previously discussed changes for maximum sign size related to all properties along the Truck Route or simply the Commercial and Industrial Zone – as he had written up for the meeting package. Members confirmed that the state statutory maximum 150 ft.² sign size was desired along the entire length of the Truck Route. By consensus, it was also confirmed that increasing sign heights to 20 feet from 15 feet was desired. Mr. Thomas said that he would include the above changes within the next proposed zoning update.

Discussion: Split NC Zone into MDR & Com Zone? – Mr. Thomas said that when he was correcting the updated zoning map submitted by the Lamoille County Regional Planning Commission, he discovered that there was an overlap between the Medium Density Residential Zone and the Neighborhood Commercial Zone on the village section of Brooklyn Street. Mr. Thomas added that in his ongoing efforts to simplify the town's land use regulations and to reduce the number of zones, he thought it would be prudent to evaluate eliminating the Neighborhood Commercial Zone by dissolving it into the surrounding zones. He said that this could be accomplished by adding the existing commercial enterprises on the north end of Brooklyn Street within the village to the adjacent Commercial Zone in the town and by including Bridge Street (east of the Truck Route) into the downtown's Central Business Zone (the Bridge Street change as discussed in the Town Plan). He noted that the area between the Commercial Zone and the Central Business Zone on Brooklyn Street in the village would remain zoned

residentially (eliminating what he thinks to be an incorrect Neighborhood Commercial Zone overlap for this area in the Bylaw's district descriptions). Council members said they would like to study this idea in greater detail. Chair Griswold asked for a blowup of the map showing the zoning changes for the existing Neighborhood Commercial Zone. Mr. Thomas said he would provide a before-and-after zoning map for this area for Council members within the next week.

Discussion: Merge LVGC Zone into BE Zone? – Mr. Thomas explained that when he was looking to consolidate the Neighborhood Commercial Zone on Brooklyn Street into the surrounding zones, he also looked for other consolidation opportunities. He said that one such opportunity was potentially folding the Lower Village Gateway Commercial Zone into the Business Enterprise Zone. Mr. Thomas said that the design criteria for both zones were similar, but that the Council was happier with the revised Business Enterprise Zone design criteria language that was recently approved. He noted that the Lower Village Gateway Commercial Zone had uses, like the retail use, that would need to be protected for the area east of the Truck Route for this zone merger proposal to be sported by underlying landowners. Village Trustee Chairman Ed Debor said that he was opposed to merging the Lower Village Gateway Commercial Zone if such a change would jeopardize currently allowed retail activity and other uses like the restaurant use in said zone because they were not allowed in the Business Enterprise Zone. Mr. Debor was very skeptical of the proposal and said that he thought it was a bait and switch tactic. Mr. Thomas reiterated that there is no intent to take any of the existing uses away from the Lower Village Gateway Commercial Zone and that this proposal is simply a result of the desire to reduce the number of zones in town. Mr. Debor said that simply providing Commercial Zone regulations for the Lower Village area, like what was already on the books for the North End / Uptown, made the most sense to him. The Council and Mr. Thomas said that they would discuss this topic again in March after having additional time to think about it.

Discussion: Zoning for storage facilities (Paul) – Chair Griswold reiterated his earlier desire to have less valuable uses like storage units located off the town's main roads. He said that properties in close proximity to roads like Route 15 or the Truck Route should support operations that produce more jobs and have more valuable buildings on the Ground List than a storage facility. Mr. Thomas went through how storage uses were regulated in town with the Council again. Mr. Debor said that the Council should tread carefully because much of what Butternut Mountain Farms did could fall under a storage use. Mr. Griswold closed this discussion by asking everyone to think about this topic in greater detail.

Approve prior meeting minutes – Approval of the January 20th meeting minutes was tabled due to member attendance issues.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM – submitted by Todd Thomas, Planning Director