



Minutes
Moretown Planning Commission
Wednesday, March 20, 2024
-Approved-

The meeting was held in person at the Moretown Town Office and online via Zoom.

Members Present: Clark Amadon, Deb Carroll, Karen Horn, John Schmeltzer, Dave Stapleton (Chair)

Staff Present: Carol Chamberlin, Zoning Administrator

Others Present: Bob Sargent, Deb Sargent, Albert Tomasso, Amy Tomasso, Tony

Dave called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm.

Public Comment

Deb expressed her interest in joining the Planning Commission, noting that she had been on the PC when the last iteration of the Town Plan was developed and adopted. PC members explained that the matter of increasing the number of members to seven would need to be discussed with the Selectboard.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of February 21, 2024 were approved.

Campground Ordinance Discussion

Dave provided some introductory information regarding the PC's work on a draft ordinance regarding campground regulations, planned for interim adoption.

Deb offered some comments regarding the process of adoption, the suitability of campgrounds in the Preserve District, and other aspects of the proposed ordinance, including:

- Town Plan review and updates, including a survey, preceding adoption of zoning regulations
- Impacts to Preserve from allowing campgrounds
- Campsites could be up to 40 per acre, where currently dwellings are only allowed at 4 units per 2.5 acres
- Traffic increases related to multiple campsites
- Other traffic-generating uses not allowed in Reserve

- Difficulty for DRB in imposing conditions without specific standards with which to comply

Amy asked if there has been interest expressed by other landowners in developing campgrounds, nobody present spoke of any potential campgrounds of which they were aware.

Amy then explained her background in planning, and noted that she and her brother are hoping to not have to sell the property for the purpose of developing 'McMansions,' but rather to balance protection of natural resources with development to tie in with the growing recreation economy. She agreed that density limitations in the Preserve area would be suitable. Dave indicated his understanding that the Tomassos plan to put a portion of the 600 acres into conservation status.

During the course of the meeting, there were also conversations regarding the Selectboard adoption process for zoning bylaws and interim bylaws; the distinction between impacts created by activities such as hiking and hunting on private land and those created by campgrounds; the implications of Moretown's Zoning Regulations' silence on the development of campgrounds; and continuing work on the draft ordinance in conjunction with the ongoing Town Plan work.

Amy provided more details regarding the plans for the property, outlining that a well-built gravel road already exists, along with a large former quarry area that could serve for parking. It is anticipated that the yurts/huts to be placed in the existing field would be accessed by foot, and the entire site will be a pack-in/pack-out operation. Year-round access is anticipated, with winter parking to be closer to the access point on Stevens Brook Road.

Albert commented on some aspects of his and Amy's plans and how they relate to the current draft of the ordinance:

- They have spoken with the Hut Association regarding the possibility of accessible yurts, to be located just off the planned parking area
- Road widths standards might be reduced for campgrounds that do not allow RVs
- Leave-no-trace campgrounds such as they are planning typically do not provide on-site trash receptacles, but possibly should require bear proof containers for use for the duration of stays

It was agreed that potentially pull-offs rather than wider roads would be suitable for emergency vehicle access; Dave noted that the PC will be seeking input from both the Fire Department and the DRB.

Points made by PC members during the discussion included:

- Campgrounds do not appear to be out of line with Town Plan goals
- Limiting density in the Preserve area as it relates to campgrounds may be more suitable than restricting the use entirely
- Interim Bylaws may be extended, and may also be incorporated in the Land Use Regulations in the future
- The public hearing process must be followed for adoption of Interim Bylaws

- The draft language may be tightened up to provide for:
 - Density compatibility with the Preserve District
 - Limitations on the use of RVs
- Related question(s) will be included on the Town Plan survey which is being developed
- Agreement that more specificity may be appreciated by the DRB; input from that Board's members will be requested before the draft is finalized
- Outdoor recreation is a growing part of the area's economy, and related uses should be encouraged in a thoughtful manner
- The need to balance growth with protection of natural resources is an important focus of PC work
- Related discussions might be pertinent as part of the conversations taking place at Legal Trail and Class 4 Road Committee meetings

It was indicated that the next step will be to revise the draft ordinance based upon the feedback received. Those in attendance will receive copies of those updates when they are available.

Carol confirmed that the Bliss Ridge treehouses have now been permitted as an Accessory on Farm Business.

Annual Reorganization

Elect a Chair

Dave accepted a nomination to serve as Chair and was elected unanimously.

Elect a Vice-Chair

Karen accepted a nomination to serve as Vice-Chair and was elected unanimously.

Establish Newspaper of Record

It was agreed to use the same newspaper as designated by the Selectboard.

Review Rules of Procedure

The Rules were reviewed; two minor typographical errors were corrected; no substantive changes were made.

Updates and Other Business

Town Plan Survey

Carol will recirculate the survey so that feedback can be provided in advance of the next PC meeting, when an updated version will be reviewed.

Village Wastewater

Clark provided an update, noting that the committee continues to meet, and will be holding a public forum on April 16 in order to report on their progress and present the 60% PER to the community, and seek feedback on how to proceed with the project. He indicated that further test pits will be explored at the soccer fields and other locations. John asked if a legal review of the ownership of the fields (Town or School District) has begun, and offered to follow up with the town attorney. Clark also explained that there is some movement at the State level to

reallocate ARPA funds to those towns who are closer to a shovel-ready project, potentially reducing the amount which has been awarded to Moretown.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Chamberlin, ZA