

Burlington Planning Commission

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Atiya Harris, Youth Member
Andrew Saba, Youth Member



Burlington Planning Commission Minutes Tuesday, November 10, 2009 - 6:30 pm

Present: R. Montefusco, A. Montrroll, P. Potts, A. Saba, W. Senville

Absent: B. Baker, Y. Bradley, D. Cain, A. Harris

Staff: D. White & S. Thibault

I. Agenda

No changes.

II. Public Forum

P. Potts – Opened the public forum at 6:34pm.

S. Bushor – She made comments on the UVM Grove Street parcel rezoning at a previous meeting and would like to restate some comments. There is a need for more housing for UVM faculty and students. Perhaps the Trinity Campus could accommodate some staff housing, which would help with the supervision of 1st year students now being housed there. That would bring more stability to the Trinity Campus. UVM also recently received approval for additional height in its core campuses and that is where housing should be concentrated.

P. Potts – Closed the public forum at 6:40pm.

III. Report of the Chair

The Chair presented the following report:

- He will be absent for the meeting on December 8, 2009. Vice-Chair Baker will preside.
- The topic of historic building materials will be back on the agenda for November 24, 2009. Associate planner, M. O'Neil will present the economic impacts/analysis related to changes of historic materials.
- He attended a lecture by William Fleissig at UVM on sustainability in Burlington.
- He received a letter from a Ward 1 resident concerning the Municipal Development Plan, the 198 East Avenue Project and other issues. He will write an answer back.
- He needs to fill out a form for the two new youth on board members.
- For Channel 17 to regularly tape the meetings there would be a \$50 cost per hour, which is not included in the budget. Volunteers could tape the meetings and alleviate that cost.

S. Bushor – If the Commission is serious about having all its meetings taped, the department should include that cost in the budget.

A. Montrroll – The City has a certain number of meetings allocated every year that can be taped for free. It's a matter of identifying priorities.

IV. Report of the Director

The Director presented the following report:

- He did a presentation in Austin Troy's class at UVM this past week.
- Yesterday, the planning staff got a tour of the Moran Plant by CEDO staff. There is an amazing enormity of space and views from the top floor are irreplaceable.
- The department is hosting a group from Sallaberry-of-Valleyfield on Thursday for a presentation and tour of our downtown and waterfront.

V. Burlington Transportation Plan

P. Potts – Dan Bradley, transportation planner, is here to make a presentation on the Transportation Plan tonight.

D. Bradley – The transportation plan was completed two years ago and today is a quick presentation to recap the main elements of the plan. The Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee (TEUC) of the City Council have been discussing the plan during their last four meetings and will forward comments/concerns to the Commission for consideration. Downtown and residential parking is an issue that the TEUC members are particularly concerned with. (Presentation available at: <http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/planning/pc/index.php>)

A. Montroll – Planes, trains and ferries are missing from the transportation choices list.

D. Bradley – It was decided that the airport is much more competent to plan for air travel. The City has very little control over rail and ferries so it should play more of an advocacy role, which is discussed in the plan. These modes of transportation are addressed in the appendices.

W. Senville – Does the parking software take into account transit and rail?

D. Bradley – Yes, there are many variables that are interchangeable. For example, the connection between premium transit and a buildout of the downtown would be possible to analyze.

W. Senville – Does the plan have recommendations for residential parking?

D. Bradley – Yes. It was found that residential parking reduces the inventory during the day when the residential parking is less needed. Perhaps residential parking should be designated only for specific periods of the day or portions of streets.

A. Montroll – The major issue with parking in the city is the idea of “shared parking”. Residential parking should be provided only if needed by the residents who don't have off-street parking. Is that described in the plan?

D. Bradley – The idea of shared parking is not specifically discussed in the plan.

A. Montroll – The clearer we can be in the plan the better because this is what drives the ordinance changes. The ordinance now requires on-site parking in the downtown when other alternatives could be possible.

D. Bradley – Perhaps there could be work done on the parking piece while the plan is reviewed by the Commission.

P. Potts – He is not keen on the idea of providing resident parking during the day, but understands the rationale of some residents wanting/needing to park in the street by their homes.

D. Bradley – The battle to create resident parking was long fought and it would likely be the same now. What were we trying to accomplish is the question.

A. Montroll – Summit St is the best example where residents have extensive driveways and there is really no need for it there. It depends on the ultimate goal for resident parking.

W. Senville - In Ward 1, parking is complicated by students and the UVM parking policies.

D. White – The transportation plan looks at city-wide issues, but the downtown plan might be a better venue to deal with more specific issues. What are parking issues in other parts of the city?

A. Montroll – The plan should include a broad statement about the philosophy of shared parking.

P. Potts – The argument for demand management for parking in the downtown was eye-opening.

W. Senville – Is truck traffic discussed in the plan? That was an important issue for Ward 6 during the Neighborhood Improvement Nights.

D. Bradley – The City has done a lot of work on truck traffic with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) over the years to find out that the percentage of truck traffic is actually minimal in the City. The main issue is the weight limits on the interstate highway. State roads limit is higher, but there is no local solution to this problem. Deliveries in the downtown for businesses will also require more studying.

P. Potts – How should the Commission proceed from now? Can staff walk commissioners through sections of the plan in details?

D. White – The Commission needs to review the plan and decide if changes are needed. Then, the Commission can begin the process for the amendment of the Municipal Development Plan.

A. Montroll – Parking is the one issue that needs to be discussed.

D. White – Articulating the goals to be achieved is essential.

D. Bradley – There is a lot of work to be done to study parking further. Residential parking also relates to the downtown plan work.

P. Potts – Would it be helpful for the Commission to hold a joint meeting with the Public Works Commission?

D. Bradley – Yes, to discuss what the issues are. The PW Commission administers parking and a discussion on the larger picture would be good to have with them.

D. White – How does the TEUC fit in with this joint meeting?

D. Bradley – The TEUC would like to see the work done, but will likely be ok with not participating.

W. Senville – He would like some time to read through the document and discuss issues that the Commission and staff might have.

D. Bradley – He will forward summaries of the appendices that were prepared for the TEUC for discussion purposes.

R. Montefusco – The long range planning committee is developing a scope of work for the downtown/waterfront plan and has heard from the businesses that more parking is needed downtown.

D. Bradley – They also refer to the 2003 downtown parking study that was prepared and they use the buildout numbers. This study also didn't look at shared parking and the capacity of roads coming into the city. How to get people downtown with that buildout is the question and that is why the downtown Transportation Management Agency (TMA) was so important, to reduce parking demand from employees.

P. Potts – The Commission will get summary material from D. Bradley. He will talk to the PW Commission chair for a joint meeting.

VI. City's Wetlands Map

S. Gustin – Last year, the Conservation Board requested an update to the wetlands map and the department was able to secure a supplemental budget item. A Request for Proposals was sent out this past summer and a consultant was hired. The study was completed last month and the Commission has a summary in their packet. The old map only identified class 1 and 2 wetlands. The new updated map also identifies class 3 wetlands, which represents an increase of 30% more wetlands. The Conservation Board is looking for changes to the ordinance to make reference to this new map instead of reference to class 1 and 2 state wetlands.

A. Montroll – What is the significance of the classes again?

S. Gustin – Class One and Two wetlands are “significant wetlands” and therefore are protected under the state rules. Class One wetlands are those wetlands which are determined exceptional or irreplaceable in their contribution to Vermont’s natural heritage and merit the highest level of protection. Class three wetlands are not protected under the state rules however; they may be protected by other federal, state or local regulations. The state is changing the conditional use permit requirements for state wetlands (class 1 and 2). The city could request for all wetland classes to be under state jurisdiction.

W. Senville – What would be the advantage to have them under state jurisdiction?

S. Gustin – The state has more professional staff for inspection.

D. White – If the city was to rely on the state’s work then it would be an advantage, but there are often conflicts with the state’s and the city’s decision.

W. Senville – Did the consultant do some spot checking for the wetlands delineation?

S. Gustin – Yes, the consultant did walk most of the sites.

P. Potts – S. Gustin to email Commission members the two maps in color.

R. Montefusco – When will the Commission hear back from the Conservation Board on the ordinance changes?

S. Gustin – Their next meeting is on December 7 and the request is simple so it should be sent to the Commission quickly after that.

VII. Proposed Zoning Amendments

P. Potts – These are three ordinance changes that were sent by the ordinance committee.

A. Montroll – There were only two committee members present at the meeting last week so the committee didn’t vote on this. There are mostly technical changes that staff identified. The first one, ZA-10-01 refers to the height of parallel signs allowed in the Enterprise Zone (ELM).

D. White – In other mixed-used districts, there are exceptions to allow signs higher than 14 feet but not to exceed the higher level of the first floor. The language that restricted signs above 14 feet in the ELM zone is removed here. Many buildings in the ELM have a high floor to ceiling height, like Great Harvest Bakery.

W. Senville – Is there a max height?

D. White – The maximum is the ceiling height of the first floor.

P. Potts – The change makes sense and is already allowed in downtown, transition and NAC.

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by R. Montefusco, the Commission warned ZA-10-01 for public hearing on December 8, 2009.

A. Montroll – ZA-10-02 is adding a provision for clear site setback within Article 5 Citywide General Regulations. The change specifies that there cannot be fences, signs, or landscaping above 3 feet high as shown in the diagram. For corner lots, the committee changed the requirement to be from curb to curb instead of from property line. This is meant for cars and not pedestrians.

P. Potts – He would be willing to give the change a go.

D. White – What will happen at street intersections where pedestrian improvements are made and curb is brought into the street?

A. Montroll – The requirement calls for a 25 feet triangle, so there would still be a 25-foot distance.

W. Senville – What is the 25 feet distance based on? If it was based on property line and we are now going to the curb, perhaps you need more than 25 feet.

D. White – This is a requirement that was carried over from the old ordinance.

W. Senville – Staff should ask the city engineer to review the 25-foot curb to curb requirement.

A. Saba – It is important to see around the curb, for safety purposes.

W. Senville – Why was “landscaping” added to Section 6.2.2 and not Section 5.2.5.? The language should be made consistent with using “landscaping” versus “shrubs.”

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by W. Senville, the Commission unanimously warned ZA-10-02 as amended for public hearing on December 8, 2009.

D. White – Section 3.5.3 provides a blanket exemption from Conditional Use and major impact reviews for all 5 types of development listed, which means that there could be a single-family home that should be subject to Conditional Use or could have changes in use that would require a conditional use permit.

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by W. Senville, the Commission unanimously warned ZA-10-03 for public hearing on December 8, 2009.

VIII. Committee Reports

The executive committee is meeting on November 17 and will finalize the director’s evaluation, discuss further tasks for the strategic plan implementation, etc.

The next ordinance committee meeting is December 3, 2009 at noon.

The long range planning committee is still working on the Scope of Work for the downtown/waterfront plan which should come to the Commission November 24.

IX. Commissioner Items

W. Senville – Was Frank Sampson’s death mentioned at the last meeting?

D. White – Ken Lerner attended the service.

W. Senville – Frank was chair of Commission for a while in the 90s. He was a good and dedicated Commissioner and was always very gracious and welcoming to new members.

X. 2010 Planning Commission Regular Meetings Schedule

R. Montefusco – Is this schedule final?

D. White – If the Commission adopts a meeting schedule they become regular meetings.

On a motion by R. Montefusco, seconded by A. Montroll, the Commission unanimously adoption the regular meeting schedule for calendar year 2010.

XI. Minutes/Communications

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by R. Montefusco, the Commission unanimously adopted the minutes from October 27, 2009 and accepted the communications and placed them on file. W. Senville abstained.

XII. Executive Session

On a motion by W. Senville, seconded by A. Montroll, the Commission unanimously voted to enter into executive session to discuss personnel matter.

On a motion by W. Senville, seconded by A. Montroll, the Commission unanimously voted to leave executive session at 9:31 pm.

XIII. Adjournment

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by W. Senville, the Commission unanimously adjourned the meeting at 9:31 pm.

Peter Potts, Chair

Date

Sandrine Thibault, recording secretary