

Burlington Planning Commission

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Yves Bradley, Chair
Bruce Baker, Vice-Chair
Andrew Saba
Lee Buffinton
Harris Roen
Andy Montroll
Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur
Vacant, Youth Member



Burlington Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, April 23, 2013 - 6:30 pm

Present: Y. Bradley, L. Buffinton, H. Roen, J. Wallace-Brodeur

Absent: B. Baker, A. Montroll, A. Saba

Staff: S. Thibault, D. White, E. Tillotson

I. Agenda

No changes.

II. Public Forum

Y. Bradley – Opened the public forum at 6:35 pm.

J. Speidel: He commented that the proposed development on George and Pearl Streets will contribute to a significant increase in density and height which is a good thing. How are people notified? Landlords in Burlington are business owners and potential developers who often own several properties. Can the City influence landlords to take care of outstanding issues before new zoning permits are approved? Lots of young people including students live in these properties, and there are frequently issues with maintenance, etc.

D. White: A notice is sent to adjacent owners before the DRB hearings. Business owners are accountable for other outstanding violations but those aren't normally tied to other property. Information is provided to the clerk's office re: licenses, and can be an influence but in a different context.

J. Speidel: Is there precedent to require business owners from other towns to clean up issues?

J. Wallace-Brodeur: Agrees that the opportunity for leverage should be explored.

Y. Bradley: This is a good subject for discussion. He closed the public forum at 6:41pm.

III. Report of the Chair

The Chair presented the following report:

- There is an upcoming conference the middle of May concerning new stormwater regulations, which will be an opportunity to examine the influence on development. He was asked to speak.
- The Chair requests that several Commission members attend the Ordinance meeting on 30th and gather some people to speak about the proposed parking change.

IV. Report of the Director

The Director presented the following report:

- The Director, S. Thibault, Comprehensive Planner, and S. Gustin, Senior Planner all attended the National conference in Chicago this past week, a really good conference with many great ideas.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on June 11, 2013.

- Next Monday night is the first hearing on planBTV, the second is scheduled for May 6th. It is critically important to have lots of people to support plan and there needs to be a plan to contact all of councilors previous to the meeting.
- The parking amendment will be discussed by the City Council Ordinance Committee next Tuesday evening. At the Chicago conference the planners heard ideas and support for the parking approach being proposed for all the same reasons.
- He has met with Jess Oe Bridges, Park and Recreation Department to speak about a proposed zoning amendment to address coverage in City Hall Park. The desire is make changes to RCO-RG to address intensity of development and density in the city. He will create a draft for the Planning Commission to examine.

V. Go for Gold Blueprint

A presentation was made by Local Motion representative, Jason Van Dreische

His background includes a contract with funding from the CDC with a goal of increasing emphasis on the built environment. Creating walkability and bikeability are the goals, as well as discovery of barriers to access parks and recreation areas. Burlington is already a silver level community and it now seems that it is very likely with the existing and continuing work in place that the City could qualify for the gold standard. Burlington City is roughly comparable except for infrastructure.

Following is his list of projects progressing well and opportunities for improvement.

- He has worked to organize the document into themes and it meshes well with the plans from city leadership, planBTV, and transportation plan.
- He has worked with community leadership groups.
- And he has also worked with the Regional Planning Commission taking an active role in planning.

Burlington does a great job of providing walking support. Sidewalks are plowed, crossing guards provided, crosswalks in place, etc.

Burlington is starting to lag behind other communities in the provision of biking facilities. The city layout is good; the investments in biking infrastructure are older. Other transportation modes are well provided for since there is great transit and the college street shuttle are all a great help to walking and biking.

Possible opportunities for improvement:

- New investments in walking infrastructure which are highlighted in planBTV, with the pedestrian a priority at crosswalks.
- More and safer mid-block crossings are needed and are crucial to address.
- Creation of new pedestrian specific areas needs to be addressed. Pedestrian exclusive or pedestrian dominant streets are needed.
- New investments in biking infrastructure such as bike storage and parking, better bike lane marking and maintenance.
- Changes to city wide parking policy is supported including a shift from design speed to target speed. It is important to implement strategies constraining traffic to flow smoothly.
- There are innovative new programs, trial installations, an emphasis on public art and seductive design all of which echo the goals of planBTV.
- It is important to create emphasis on bike events with a wide spectrum of activities.

In May the Mayor will officially unveil the proposed plan which consists of two tracks which will turn the plan contents into actual goals, the concept level scheduled for summer and fall.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on June 11, 2013.

Second, the vision will build a campaign for a world class, gold level biking City. Burlington could be the first city east of Madison, Wisconsin to obtain gold status.

L. Buffinton: It is fabulous that this being worked on. It would be helpful to mention that we are not meeting in our air quality standards. The clean air issue needs to be brought into the mix. Walking and biking merit equal emphasis. City maintenance is very important. It seems it would be a good idea to present to the NPAs.

H. Roen: Has a concern about geography and biking. Is the fact that the hill is straight down an issue?

J. Van Driesche: Doesn't think so. There are a variety of other options relating to transit resources.

L. Buffinton: Maybe alternative routes for biking? And what about skateboarders in lanes?

J. Van Driesche: There are a variety of options for bike lanes on streets proposed in the bike/walk master plan. Car doors are an issue. There are creative solutions for cars/parking, will be hard choices

J. Wallace-Brodeur: Is struck by the excellent documents on planBTV and the master plan for the city. They are the right ideas but have lagged. It is necessary to educate the public about projects going forward and how this project ties into the overall goal. North Avenue is being considered for complete street status. It will take a lot of work and is a great goal.

VI. Historic Building Materials

D. White: Presents a summary of the working group meeting. The emphasis is to strike the reference to materials and retain appearance/features. References to the Secretary of Interior standards will not be retained. There is a need for more exact definition, too generic as exists. Materials will be edited out of the ordinance.

L. Buffinton: Materials can be a little muddy, one change 5b example. Reference old brick vs new brick may need to retain color. Deteriorated should be included. Renumbered number 8 creates the opportunity that the new work shall be differentiated from the old. She is concerned about forced differentiation of old and new.

H. Roen: The first point changing from materials to features is okay.

Y. Bradley: The Commission agrees that owners should have larger flexibility. Think we are very close. Differentiation should be up to the owner.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: Agrees.

L. Buffinton: Take out phrase "new work shall be compatible".

D. White: The goal is differentiation, not to create mimicking of an old building.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: This hasn't been implemented in a subtle way.

Y. Bradley: A building should be allowed to evolve. He is not comfortable that it should be called out.

E. Bergman: It would be good to be careful in terms of trying to cut this too closely, keeping it simple would be better. Eliminate the second sentence if you wish to clarify.

L. Buffinton: Agrees with Y. Bradley that massing, spatial relationships, size, scale, proportion are the keys and that massing and spatial relationships should have priority.

Y. Bradley: We are trying to give greater flexibility as well as respect integrity of design, size and height.

L. Buffinton: It is important to respect the integrity of a building.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: There is too much squish in the definitions.

D. White: Spatial relationships are defined as the space between buildings. This is a different context than an addition to primary building.

Y. Bradley: The new work shall be compatible with the existing structure.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on June 11, 2013.

On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously amended Number 8 to read as follows: "New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will minimize impacts on historic features while maintaining the size, scale and proportional spatial relationships that characterize the property."

L. Buffinton: What about the issue of brick?

Y. Bradley: And # 6 matching reveal?

J. Wallace-Brodeur: The whole point is to provide flexibility but retain the look. The point was to try to match the existing including the reveal.

On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously amended number 6 to read as follows: "Where materials are to be replaced, the replacement material shall be visually compatible with the original material. Visual compatibility shall include, but is not limited to matching design, texture, and size, and having a similar reveal of the original material. The replacement material shall also be durable."

Y. Bradley: The point is to retain the distinctive architectural features.

D. White: The issue was the standards but sometimes materials are distinctive.

H. Roen: Standards should apply to any distinguishing character.

D. White: The question is what is it that makes a particular building distinctive or eligible?

On a motion by J. Wallace-Brodeur, seconded by L. Buffinton, the Commission unanimously chose the second definition offered for character defining element or feature.

Economic feasibility, means affordable for whom?

J. Wallace-Brodeur: The retention of features represents a societal benefit and a personal benefit.

D. White: It is important to understand that it is not to be confused with economic hardship or economic optimization. The viability of a project is defined in Article 5.4.8.

On a motion by H. Roen, seconded by J. Wallace-Brodeur, the Commission unanimously agreed to the following definition for economic feasibility: "The viability of a project based upon the expenses incurred to meet the Sec. 5.4.8 (b) standards, weighing whether the costs are greater than the benefits. Economic feasibility is not the same as economic optimization, which assumes maximum net benefit among a range of choices, with minimal expenditure."

On a motion by J. Wallace-Brodeur, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously agreed to the following definition for technical feasibility: "An assessment of the probability, possibility or potential that a product or design can be made."

On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously warned a public hearing for ZA-13-12 for Jun 11, 2013.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: So does the policy document no longer exist, is it all in here?

D. White: Correct.

VII. Committee Reports

Executive Committee – Has not met.

Long Range Planning Committee – H. Roen met two weeks to review the Urban Agriculture report from the Conservation Board.

Ordinance Committee – Has not met.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on June 11, 2013.

VIII. Commissioner Items

L. Buffinton two weekends ago she attended the form-based code workshops which examined light and heavy form based code. Interesting and helpful.

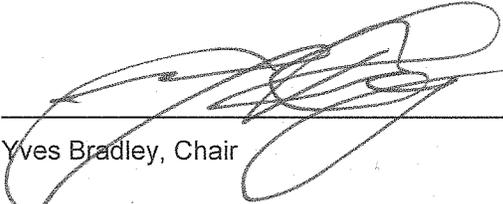
Y. Bradley: He is proud of the Commission, it was a great discussion tonight and they did a great job of making decisions.

IX. Minutes/Communications

On a motion by J. Wallace-Brodeur, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of April 9, 2013.

X. Adjourn

On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:26 pm.



Yves Bradley, Chair



Date



Elsie Tillotson, recording secretary

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