

Burlington Planning Commission

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Vacant, Youth Member



Burlington Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, October 8, 2013 - 6:30 pm

Present: B. Baker, L. Buffinton, A. Montroll, H. Roen, J. Wallace-Brodeur, Y. Bradley

Absent: E. Lee

Staff: S. Thibault, E. Tillotson

I. Agenda

No immediate changes.

II. Public Forum

No participants.

III. Report of the Chair

The Chair provided the following report:

- He is continuing to work with South Burlington on their FBC (form based code). The group has decided to apply the new FBC regulations to the City Center area only, similarly to what Burlington is doing.

IV. Report of the staff

S. Thibault, Comprehensive Planner presented the following report:

- The Director, D. White, is away traveling until the 21st, and the Comprehensive Planner will be working remotely starting Thursday of this week through next week, but will be available via email and Skype for potential phone calls.
- Staff is working on the FBC, and the think tank is continuing with a couple of meetings still scheduled. Last week there was a good meeting which addressed the development review process and other processes while examining implementation and changes. Staff was surprised that discussion during the think tank meeting, proposing a change in the number of units which are the threshold for major impact review, was not enthusiastically received by the developers in the group. Their opinion was that the review necessary for the local process prepared them for the state review, and that arrangement is preferable.

Y. Bradley: From the state perspective, there is pressure to look at designated growth centers. At first it seemed too much of a hassle for Burlington. The state is now discussing growth centers, not act 250 review. It might now be the rationale to become designated growth center.

S. Thibault: The state has been examining act 250 review applicability and she has just discussed this with the Mayor. There are three or four more meetings scheduled, and there will be more details forthcoming.

A. Montroll: It is interesting that now planBTV is finished, commercial and residential growth downtown is being re-examined in this light. Developers are going to have to show how downtown can accommodate residential growth of more than five units. Some of the major impact criteria seem to be

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contrary to the policies established in planBTV. The City has established a policy that it can handle this much growth, developers are now not slowed by jumping through hoops in the development process.

S. Thibault: Staff is having same the discussion, as well as with other departments. There will be more reports as the process moves along, stay tuned. In early December, Staff is hoping to wrap up the review and have draft of FBC ready to present to the public.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: Is the state looking at Act 250 for action this year?

A. Montroll: It seems that there is some study at the state level.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: It would be nice to know if there is a parallel time line.

- The North Avenue corridor study is about to commence with the first public meeting scheduled for October 29th. Consultants and Staff will be presenting, the study is funded by the Regional Planning Commission. The Parks Department is working on lots of projects including the Master plan and the bike path plan. There will be a public meeting on October 15th at the Police Department to discuss bike path.

Y. Bradley: And on December 10th there will be a joint meeting with the Development Review Board.

V. Continued Public Hearing ZA-14-02

S. Thibault: A few things to note since the last meeting: this is the third public hearing concerning this proposed amendment. There is a quick memo from S. Gustin, Senior Planner, in relation to the Conservation Board's meeting last night where the amendment was unanimously supported. J. Bridges will be here imminently from a previous meeting to address the Commission and public. The amendment has been redrafted to reflect the input from previous meetings and is included in this week's packet. There is in addition, a statement of support from Megan Moir, stormwater manager. In the amendment itself, table 4.4.6.1 should read 5% because some non-city owned properties area zoned RCO-RG and should remain at 5% lot coverage.

L. Buffinton: In the same table, footnote 3, we should lose the apostrophe.

S. Thibault: J. Bridges has also supplied a table of parks, with a grouping of parks with the same percentage coverage. Under d 3 exemptions relating to stormwater are included. M. Moir will be happy to work with Parks to address stormwater implementation.

G. Sousa: Could he have a copy of the amendment provided to the Planning Commission? Provided.

L. Buffinton: Thanks J. Bridges for a good piece of work which reflects that he listened well to the public and the Commission and consequently she offers strong support. Is the last section concerning tree removal going to be relevant considering that there are new shoreland regulations kicking in which are strict on tree retention, pending buffers, and tree removal in shoreland areas.

S. Gustin: Up to 25% tree removal is permitted in our current shoreline regulations in Burlington. Parks does have approval as long as they are compliant with their tree maintenance master plan.

J. Bridges: Parks has done some work but it was already permitted.

L. Buffinton: It is important to consider the impact of trees. Burlington has been the Tree City of the USA for the past 19 years and employs a full time arborist.

H. Roen: It is unfortunate to have this level of specificity, but it appears to be a good document. Should LID exemptions exist only for parks or for all developers? Does this belong here?

S. Gustin: He has discussed this with M. Moir and they agree it could be included in the city standards. The stormwater regulations are related, but they are not yet included but do seem to be moving forward.

H. Roen: Is pleased with infrastructure approach, likes the stormwater improvements, these should be retained.

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G. Sousa: Could Parks give an example of when there was a need for tree removal in a park in recent years?

J. Bridges: Can't think of a specific tree removal project, but Callahan Park resurfacing/turf maintenance was delayed a month waiting for a permit. The approved master plan doesn't require permit for city parks, etc.

A. Montroll: Has received an email from Carolyn Bates and asks that it be included. The changes look great, it is wise not need to re-warn the process.

S. Thibault: The amendment can proceed since it is a continued public hearing.

L. Buffinton: It has been on line and available for viewing, people could have seen it.

J. Bridges: The amendment has been reaffirmed by the Parks commission, endorsed by the Conservation board. The City Council ordinance committee will likely change it also.

G. Sousa: He doesn't believe the general public knows about these proposed changes, and especially the changes since the last meeting.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: She really appreciates the work that went in to this revision, the flexibility and the effort made to reach out to include everyone in the conversation.

L. Buffinton: To address Mr. Sousa's concerns, there will be a lot more opportunity to speak about this process.

On a motion by J. Wallace-Brodeur, seconded by A. Montroll, the Commission unanimously approved ZA-14-02, as amended, and sent to City Council for final adoption.

VI. Municipal Development Plan Amendments

S. Thibault: For background, the Commission has seen all this updates in the past few months. The Climate Action Plan and Energy Chapter were presented to the Commission back in June. The Commission sent this to the City Council last year and it was too long a process to get to approval, so the amendment process needs to start again. Two items were added to the Climate Action Plan over the summer on pages 16 and 17 incorporating a reference to the IBM Smart Cities report recommendations.

L. Buffinton: There is a missing piece. Page 5 referencing air quality impacts, should mention more than seasonal allergies. There is also ground level ozone, SO2 for example. This needs a little more flushing out. On page 8, one of the bullets addresses the emissions impact results study, and specifically measures changes in air quality. There is an omission regarding the output from the airport vehicle fleet which has had a large increase of over 200 percent in emissions.

A. Montroll: The plan looks fine, emissions is one component, the other is what are we doing to address them and adapt to the climate changes that are already happening. On page 5 impacts of climate change are discussed. At some point we have to recognize changes are happening and how are we going to address these changes. It is important to start to look at solutions/actions now.

S. Thibault: The climate adaptation plan will address these issues. Staff has been talking about doing such a plan. They wish finish the Municipal Development Plan before they begin the climate adaptation plan. Staff time is an issue. The Regional Planning Commission wants the adaptation plan to happen also.

S. Thibault: The open place protection plan was brought forward this summer. S. Gustin and H. Roen have worked closely together on it. The hope is that we have something ready to move forward to the City Council.

On a motion by H. Roen, seconded by J. Wallace-Brodeur, the Commission unanimously warned a public hearing for MDP-14-01 to be held on November 12, 2013.

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VII. Committee Reports

Executive Committee has not met.

Long Range Committee has been discussing the south end corridor project and examining the plan.

S. Thibault: Met with the Mayor this morning to talk about the scope of work and funding for the South End project. It is in essence, planBTV for the south end anticipating a three phase process, and then possibly FBC. The municipal planning grant is applied for, and more grants will be applied for. The Mayor wants to see this move forward, there will be a quick analysis, especially for housing in the area. Funding is a challenge. The study area will be from downtown to Shelburne Street and from Lake Champlain to Saint Paul Street, south to Shelburne.

H. Roen: Is this too wide an area to be focus on, what about the core area?

Ordinance Committee discussed a change in coverage in the RM zone but has decided to leave it as is. This issue may be revisited.

VIII. Commissioner Items

H. Roen: Attended the Parks master plan meeting at Contois Auditorium where there were approximately 20 - 25 people present. It was a good meeting and good to get a sense of how Burlington fits with other cities.

IX. Minutes/ Communications

On a motion by B. Baker, seconded by L. Buffinton, the Commission unanimously approved the minutes of September 10 and 24, 2013 as amended.

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by B. Baker, the Commission unanimously accepted the communications and placed them on file.

X. Executive Session – Director’s Evaluation

On a motion by H. Roen, seconded by L. Buffinton, the Commission unanimously voted to adjourn the executive session at 8:15 pm.

XI. Adjourn

On a motion by B. Baker, seconded by A. Montroll, the Commission unanimously adjourned the meeting at 8:16 pm.



Yves Bradley, Chair

11/26/13
Date



Elsie Tillotson, recording secretary

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