



## Office of Mayor Miro Weinberger

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** City Council  
**From:** Mayor Miro Weinberger  
**Date:** February 13, 2014  
**Re:** Request for Finding of Personal Hardship due to Major Change in Circumstance for CEDO Director Peter Owens

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This memo supports a resolution finding a personal hardship for Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) Director Peter Owens and allowing him an extension from the requirement to be a legal voter of the City of Burlington.

As Peter has described in the attached memo, one of his children is encountering serious difficulties, and Peter has responded by spending more time out of Burlington than he anticipated when he took the CEDO Director position. This new and unexpected circumstance, and Peter's desire to avoid any appearance of impropriety even though it is arguable that he continues to meet the technical requirements of Burlington residency, has compelled him to seek a personal hardship determination.

From my perspective, Peter is a committed employee who, in the face of an unexpected challenge leading to a major change in circumstance, is attempting to do right by his children. To me, it is clear that we should support a member of our employee team – a team that the Mayor and the Council lead together – in such a circumstance if: 1) we can; and 2) the employee's professional performance continues to be acceptable.

With respect to 1), the Council clearly has the ability to support Peter, since his status as a parent with children in school in another community qualifies him for a personal hardship determination explicitly allowed by Council Rules.

With respect to 2), as Peter's direct supervisor, I can report to the Council that I have noted no change in Peter's performance in recent months as he has spent fewer nights in Burlington. He continues to be an exceedingly hard worker who invests an enormous number of hours in the job. Furthermore, I believe Peter deserves considerable credit for the progress his department is making on numerous public projects – in particular the Champlain Parkway, the Railyard Enterprise Project, and the numerous projects contained within the Public Investment Action Plan – as well as for the new interest and energy we see from many other parties who are pursuing plans to make major investments in Burlington in partnership with the City.

The resolution before you would allow the personal hardship extension to continue as long as Peter reports annually that the need for it continues to exist. However, the Council will of course have an annual opportunity to review the acceptability of Peter's performance and take appropriate action at the time of his annual re-appointment.

Thank you for your consideration.