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2 **Resolution Relating to**
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RESOLUTION
Sponsor(s) Councilors Wright,
Paul

Introduced: 09/26/11
Referred to: _____
Action: _____
Date: _____
Signed by Mayor: _____

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7 **DEVELOPMENT PERMITTING REVIEW**
8 **AND PERFORMANCE AUDIT**
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12 **CITY OF BURLINGTON**

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14 In the year Two Thousand Eleven.....
15 Resolved by the City Council of the City of Burlington, as follows:

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17 That WHEREAS, the City of Burlington is said to have a reputation for having a burdensome
18 land use permitting process for developers, investors and homeowners alike, at least in
19 comparison to the land use permitting processes utilized by nearby Vermont communities; and

20 WHEREAS, property development and economic development are intertwined and
21 interdependent in the respect that a burdensome land use permitting process can drive both
22 employers and residents to other communities; and

23 WHEREAS, our area of the country is fortunate in that it has one of the healthier
24 economies in the nation, but in these difficult economic times, which may only worsen before
25 they improve, the City must be sensitive to anything which may negatively impact upon
26 Burlington's economic development and health; and

27 WHEREAS, the land use permitting process is an outflow of the requirements within the
28 City's Comprehensive Development Ordinance (CDO) which have been established in order to
29 respect the character and pattern of development within Burlington, which is so greatly valued
30 by so many residents and visitors to the City; and

31 WHEREAS, notwithstanding the aforementioned goal, the City articulates a theme within
32 its Municipal Development Plan (MDP) that it desires growth and development of certain types
33 and strives for balance, envisioning as follows:
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39 Burlington is at the heart of a regional population and economic
40 center that offers meaningful jobs at liveable wages; where a
41 diverse housing stock serves all income levels; with a growth rate
42 that balances jobs and housing; offering high quality arts,
43 entertainment and recreational opportunities of interest and benefit
44 to all residents; with concentrations of higher density, mixed-use
45 development surrounded by residential neighborhoods and open
46 space; and

47
48 WHEREAS, the desire for growth and development as articulated in the MDP is not
49 growth at any cost, however, as one of the goals to realize is that if the City succeeds in
50 achieving its goals:

51 Burlington’s built environment will reflect a legacy of moderately
52 scaled buildings, high quality urban design, and rich architectural
53 heritage. Unique design characteristics of each neighborhood will
54 have been retained, while new construction and public investment
55 respects the city’s historic character and architecture while
56 effectively meeting the demand for continued growth; and

57
58 WHEREAS, the concern with the City’s perceived reputation regarding land use
59 permitting is that in protecting what is important it may also be unintentionally creating a
60 situation which is detrimental for Burlington’s future prospects for growth and development,
61 along with imposing needlessly burdensome requirements upon residents whose only wish is to
62 better enjoy their homes, and if true then it is important to understand how, as a community,
63 Burlington may be able to better balance all of its stated objectives; and

64 WHEREAS, one means of obtaining information on these issues is to review how
65 Burlington’s sister communities in the region may balance their multiple objectives, why many
66 of them are perceived as being better communities in which to focus growth and development
67 and easier in which to live for residents, and why their land use permitting processes are
68 considered less onerous than Burlington’s; and

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74 WHEREAS, upon understanding what other communities do, the City may better
75 understand what might be improved in Burlington and how it might be accomplished, keeping in
76 mind that any solutions which would issue forth would have to be tailored to Burlington's unique
77 needs;

78 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Planning Commission and
79 Department of Planning and Zoning, working collaboratively with the departments of Public
80 Works, City Attorney, Fire Department, and Code Enforcement are requested to develop a
81 proposed scope of work and budget for undertaking an independent comprehensive review and
82 performance audit of Burlington's development review and permitting process including a
83 comparative study of the permitting processes including fees of nearby communities and
84 stakeholder interviews, for consideration by the City Council to take place during FY 2012; and

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Planning Commission and Department of
86 Planning and Zoning are requested to report back by the City Council's first meeting in January,
87 2012.

