



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
c/o Community & Economic Development Office
City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401
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Councilor Brian Pine, Chair, Ward 3

Councilor Karen Paul, Ward 6

Councilor Ali Dieng, Ward 7

Attendance

Committee members: Chair Brian Pine (BP), Karen Paul (KP), Ali Dieng (AD)

City staff: Ian Jakus, CEDO, Rebecca Reese, CEDO, Brian Lowe, Chief Innovation Officer, Jeffrey Glassberg, Consultant

Other Attendees: Courtney Lamdin; Dave Hartnett; Bruce Wilson; Peter Calkins, Brookfield; Chelsea Ziegelbaum, Brookfield; William Fellows, Devonwood

Wednesday, November 13, 2019

6:30 – 8:00 PM

City Hall – Conference Room 12

Draft Agenda

Meeting convened at 6:30 PM

1. Review Agenda (5 minutes)

KP made a motion to postpone agenda items #2 (Approve Agenda), #6 (Neighborhood Project) and #8 (Old North End Arts & Business Network) for a subsequent meeting. What remains on the agenda is the public forum, Brookfield and the ELI update. Unanimous approval.

2. Approve Minutes (5 minutes) 6/6/19, 4/22/19, 7/1/19, 7/22/19 - postponed

3. Public Forum (10 minutes)

Dave Hartnett said that he is a Former City Councilor. He said he has been disappointed with deception about the City Place project that destroyed the downtown. He said he was disappointed to hear about the current plans for a hotel because Brookfield updated the city council in January regarding rumors about a hotel and he was told that was not the case. He said that Brookfield and Devonwood do not care about Burlington Vermont and have not made an attempt to understand the community. He said that even though the city does not own the property they should discourage them from doing business in the city.

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contact Gillian Nanton at Gnanton@burlingtonvt.gov

Bruce Wilson said Brookfield has amazing projects in a large portfolio that are beautiful and well maintained. He said that this project would improve the blighted mall built in 1976, with badly needed residential and affordable units that will increase residency downtown. He cited benefits of the project adding through streets to ease congestion, and add more parking. He emphasized the benefits to youth, who will have a safe place to go, and it will bring the downtown up to date improving events like Jazz Fest. He said he supports the hotel, and that Burlington as the largest city in the state is the economic center of the state, and he hopes developers would be able to make some money, although that would be pennies for a company this large.

4. Community engagement plans for City Place project – Brookfield Properties (45 minutes)

Peter Calkins said that Aanen Olsen couldn't be at the meeting. They do not yet have a full PR program and they understand the community deserves to be aware of what is being planned to help the process along. They aren't looking to repeat the extent of the process of the first project. They said the scaled back project took into account economics and community sentiment and they want to figure out how to take that project forward in as expeditious and thoughtful a manner as they can. They want to deliver something that works for Burlington and solves the problem of the hole in the ground.

BP asked about the schedule of public meetings, and feedback about the proposed schedule.

William Fellows said that it is too premature to lay out a schedule. He said that as the development has been reduced by 25% they are trying to determine the changes from the original plan and create a system that will roll this out so the community can understand where it's going. They do not want to start the process over completely. He said it is not their intention to mislead the public and they need to organize themselves first before we come with a specific schedule.

Chelsea Ziegelbaum said they are working on a website for the mall and a development specific website. She said they do think there needs to be an informational session for the public outside of a city council setting.

KP noted that a resolution was passed in September, and this request for more information about public engagement should come as no surprise and expected a plan. She said that she would like to hear from the Brookfield on this issue rather than Devonwood. She said that if this plan is supposed to move forward by the 2nd or 3rd quarter there has got to be public engagement. She asked there will be an actual timeline.

Peter Calkins said that he appreciates that this came forward in August, and they have spent three months to coalesce around the current proposal. He continued that they are now at the point that they can fully engage in the program identified. He said they are not quite to the point in the process where they can point to the schedule in a specific manner.

KP asked if they knew this meeting was happening, why they didn't have more details to share. She said it sounds like it would be helpful to hear from the committee about what the expectations are for public engagement.

AD said that at the last city council meeting he asked what was next, and Brookfield said community engagement, and it's disappointing to hear there are no real plans. He asked that the developers follow up on requests by the council, so that they can engage constituents. He asked that the development team present the slides they presented to the city council to the public to get feedback.

KP referred to the success of the design charrette in the previous process that was well attended. She noted that while social media is important, in-person meetings are also important for those who don't use social media. She said that it is important that the developers not go into a public process with a foregone conclusion.

BP said that there is a lot of misinformation among constituents about amenities being reduced. He said that due to the public-private partnership, there is a certain amount of public buy-in and ownership of this project.

AD asked in the past what type of community engagement happened in the past and what would be different in this one.

William Fellows said that the past process involved almost 52 public meetings, and a public vote. This is not the kind of effort they are looking at now, but they do want to get started in this establishing a new process.

KP reiterated that the charrette in the old GAP store was well attended and there was a lot of excitement, and that needs to be reinvigorated. She said that it can't just be social media, she suggested the NPA's, and regular public meetings. She said she had received positive feedback on the slides from the city council presentation.

AD asked Jeff Glassberg for an update on the TIF funding, and whether it will be maintained.

JG said he and staff are working hard to put together a presentation for the Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC) to preserve TIF capacity. There will be an update for the council by late November for the December 2nd meeting. There is a VEPC board meeting on December 19th and there is a process to be on the agenda for that meeting. That process is for the Council to carry out a public hearing that would happen December 2nd. This would go to Board of Finance November 18th or December 7th.

BP asked if a new permit is necessary.

JG responded that there have been multiple meetings with zoning to ascertain the permitting needs. Based on that information Brookfield will determine how to proceed.

WF added that he anticipates that this will be an amendment to the current zoning permit.

JG said that staff has indicated that an amendment would be similar to a new permit in terms of the requirements.

Dave Hartnett said that the past no longer matters and the development team needs to restore public trust. He said the previous failure resulting in a reduction in height works in their favor. He suggested getting on front porch forum and communicating regularly. He said he doesn't want to see the hole in the ground, and that they must not blow their second chance.

Bruce Wilson asked why filing an amendment is the same as filing an original permit.

BP responded that there is a change of use with the hotel, and the development of Macy's is new. The Development Review bylaws requires review because the project is different.

WF said that these are all permitted uses, but the impact is less, so the studies for traffic etc... would have to be adjusted. He said it is important to communicate that overall this is a less intensive development.

BP said that they would like more communication, and silence is the enemy, and the community is hungry for information.

AD asked what the next step is for bringing a plan, when should we expect it?

WF responded that they will provide a concept not a schedule, and once it is firmed up there will be plenty of information and participation will become robust.

Peter Calkins said they can aim for mid-December.

5. Early Learning Initiative scholarship update and feedback - Brian Lowe, Chief Innovation Officer (15 minutes)

Brian Lowe and Rebecca Reese presented an update on the ELI that can be found here: <https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/Agendas/11-13-19%20-%20ELI%20CDNR%20Presentation.pdf>

BP asked if it is possible to get more home based providers to work together to provide services.

BL responded that it is possible but that the benefits are small, while incurring additional obligations.

BP asked what sufficient transportation is referring to.

RR responded that many applicants do not have sufficient transportation to participate.

BP said that there was a service for transporting kids in the past, does that still exist?

BL responded that he was not aware of any, but it is a focus for them.

RR said there is one program related to the state subsidy program, but there are very specific parameters.

AD said that the state should provide more support for family services.

BP suggested adding the amount of state dollars leveraged by the per person investment by the City.

BL said that the state subsidy is very hard to get because of the application process, but ELI is helping families get access to that.

BP asked who is providing that assistance.

RR said herself and Lets Grow Kids are providing assistance.

BP asked if there are cases where the Lead program refers families to the program.

RR said there has been crossover from both programs.

BL said there was much outreach done in the first year but they are improving it, and are working with pediatric offices. He said it will be interesting to see how much retention happens as the first year progresses and noted that there are many factors outside of their control that will influence the outcomes.

BP noted that the City is generally not in the business of providing human services.

AD asked about results from the first year and how many will be moving on to preschool.

RR clarified that the first year was just the capacity grants and this is the first year of the scholarships. The hope is that many of those children will roll over into next year before going on to preschool. Roughly 5 students may be going to preschool, and the ELI funding stops at 2 years old.

AD said that part of what he does with Parent University is help with child care subsidy. He said that the City should consider running its own child care center, and it would be able to enroll more than offering a subsidy. He said he thinks it is the City's duty to bring human services to residents in need. What I'm hearing is that the capacity is great, but the most in need are not accessing it. He said that some of the money is helping children outside of the City.

Brian Lowe responded that the ELI funding only goes to Burlington families or Burlington centers. Some centers outside of Burlington do accept Burlington children with scholarships. Having the City run a center without specialized skills to do that, dealing with the regulations, may not make sense. He added that the scholarship money is forcing the centers to increase their quality, and the capacity money creates new spots.

BP said that the City had provided child care services in the past and got out of that role quickly, because the City does not specialize in the human services. The City started it in Memorial Auditorium and spun it off as a nonprofit – Burlington Children's Space.

BL said that Burlington Children's Space was able to buy their building with the help of a capacity grant. The capacity grant numbers created 70 new 0-3 year old high quality spot in town represents about a 33% increase in spots, and while not all those spots will go to low

income families, many of them will as required when the scholarship is providing additional support. The City policy is less onerous than the CCFAP program because it only requires one parent to be working, not both.

AD said that it is important to note that the afterschool program was started with Bernie Sanders, and is now run by the school district. He said that he is glad to get clarification that the capacity grants may go to children outside of Burlington.

Dave Hartnett emphasized that this program goes to families' homes, and allows the hard work of creating those critical relationships, and that if we don't get the kids enrolled now then we miss the opportunity to help close the achievement gap for the school district.

6. Neighborhood Project timeline and CEDO staff capacity update - Gillian Nanton, CEDO (15 minutes) - postponed

8. Old North End Arts & Business Network update (ONEABN) (15 minutes) - postponed

6. Next Steps (5 min)

Next Meeting was scheduled
December 2nd 6:00PM

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 PM