

Burlington Development Review Board

Department of Permitting & Inspections
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AJ LaRosa
Caitlin Halpert
Geoff Hand
Brooks McArthur
Brad Rabinowitz
Leo Sprinzen
Chase Taylor
Sean McKenzie, (Alternate)



BURLINGTON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD

Tuesday, October 4, 2022, 5:00 PM

MINUTES

Remote Meeting

Board Members Present: All members were remote. AJ LaRosa, Caitlin Halpert, Brooks McArthur, Sean McKenzie, Brad Rabinowitz, Leo Sprinzen, and Chase Taylor

Board Members Absent: Geoff Hand

Staff Members Present: All members were remote. Mary O'Neil, Ryan Morrison, and Joseph Cava

- I. Agenda
- II. Communications
- III. Minutes
- IV. Consent

1. **ZP-22-509; 98-100 North Willard Street (RL, Ward 1E) 98-100 North Willard, LLC / Wen Dong**

Add additional residential unit to newly converted duplex utilizing Historic Building Rehabilitation Bonus. (Project Manager, Mary O'Neil)
Wen Dong: Sworn in.

AJ LaRosa: This project is recommended for consent approval. Mr. Dong, do you have any comments or questions?

Wen Dong: No, I'm good.

AJ LaRosa: Any questions or comments from the Board? Hearing none, would someone like to make a motion?

Brooks McArthur: Motioned to approve and adopt staff recommendations, Chase Taylor 2nd. Vote 6-0. Motion carries.

2. **ZP-22-512; 55-57 Howard Street (RL, Ward 5S) Patrick McHenry / Montana Burns**

Relocate medical office/acupuncture home occupation from downstairs unit (55 Howard St.) to upstairs unit (57 Howard St.). (Project Manager, Ryan Morrison)
Patrick McHenry, Montana Burns: Sworn in.

AJ LaRosa: This project is recommended for consent approval. Have you folks seen the staff report, or have any questions?

Patrick McHenry: Yes, I've viewed the staff report and have no issues with it.

AJ LaRosa: Are there any questions or comments from the Board? Hearing none, would someone like to make a motion?

Brad Rabinowitz: Motioned to approve and adopt staff recommendations, Brooks McArthur 2nd. Vote 7-0. Motion carries.

V. Other Business

1. Historic Preservation Training

Professor Thomas Visser

Mary O'Neil: I am pleased to introduce Professor Thomas Visser, who has served on a variety of regulatory boards and conducted a wide array of research.

Thomas Visser: It's a pleasure to talk about old and fresh approaches to historic preservation in the City of Burlington. There's a lot of terminology and I look forward to breaking down the nuances of the regulations that have preserved the City. These regulations seek to preserve, maintain, and enhance Burlington's historic character scale, architectural integrity, and cultural resources. Does this topic of integrity make sense?

Mary O'Neil: Yes, this is a regular part of our work.

Thomas Visser: This topic of integrity stems beyond the beautiful mansions on the hill, but the fabric and texture of the community and sense of place including markets and tenement housing. Other driving factor for preservation include the urban renewal of the 60's-70's that decimated the downtown core. The City of Burlington takes a local approach to preservation being written in its zoning ordinance to protect and adaptively reuse historic buildings. An understanding of the recent past is very much alive in the present internationally following current events like the fate of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. There is an obvious tension between preservation and new development.

Brad Rabinowitz: How do we define integrity when a building has been heavily modified, with a loss of character defining features?

Thomas Visser: It's subjective, open to interpretation. It's common to see earlier 19th century Greek Revival dwellings with late 19th century Queen Anne style modifications. One such example is Grasse Mount. It's all about the congruity and the relationship of varying styles to tell a full story rather than separate stories. This is the heritage that stems beyond written history to tell a broader context. Other buildings are noted for significant events that occurred towards broader events in history. Events could include social and political associations with the lives of significant people in history.

AJ LaRosa: I think we've dealt with a variety of these issues, and the challenge is drawing our own conclusions in the wake of landowner priorities. One such big issue before the Board has been demolition by neglect.

Thomas Visser: This raises some interesting points. Who has the authority to determine the burden of proof? Has the applicant provided us, the review committee, with answers to make the decision clearer? These are questions we need answer to fill in the gaps and determine whose responsibility it is. In regard to a demolition by neglect, if the quality and character defining features of these buildings are at risk for loss of integrity. The crunch doesn't become resources to preserve, but time as the period of abandonment is prolonged.

AJ LaRosa: It is a tough decision to weigh in on the balancing act.

Thomas Visser: We are here to make these calls.

Caitlin Halpert: The most common candidates for demolition by neglect include historic carriage barns and outbuildings that have outlived their useful lives.

Thomas Visser: It's all about the missing middle. If a historic outbuilding no longer fulfills its intended purpose, then what about adaptive reuse to fulfill other needs like housing density.

Caitlin Halpert: What can we do to encourage property owners to incentivize these buildings before it becomes too late?

Thomas Visser: As long as the adaptive reuse follows the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, then incremental steps can be taken to preserve character and give a historic building new use.

Mary O'Neil: I am glad you raised the issue of Missing Middle Housing. Sometimes zoning doesn't move as fast as we would like. The first project reviewed tonight was the inaugural exercise of a recently adopted bonus provision called the Historic Building Rehabilitation Bonus. This will allow greater density and more housing.

Thomas Visser: How much time do we have and how would the Board like to move forward?

AJ LaRosa: I'd like to encourage the Board to ask their own questions to broaden our own understanding. How do we incentivize preservation from a zoning standpoint?

Thomas Visser: Advocacy groups like Preservation Burlington are key to raising awareness and educating the masses about the potential for historic properties. Burlington has many examples of success stories to promote communication between adaptive reuse and new development. We also ask, what could have been done to improve the flow process for prospective applicants.

Brad Rabinowitz: Part of the issue is addressing economic viability of a prospective project of rehabilitating a historic building gracefully.

Thomas Visser: There are times when we have to admit that it's too late, but it's opening the line of communication before that happens. Are there other thoughts?

AJ LaRosa: People often tout just because its old, doesn't means its historic and in need of preservation.

Thomas Visser: This all comes back to significance of building(s) or neighborhoods and how they relate to the broader patterns of history. The New North End of Burlington for example is not highly surveyed which puts the integrity of whole neighborhoods at risk, and not just individual buildings. This is part of the discussion that needs to happen locally before parroting state and federal jargon to prove a point for preservation.

Brad Rabinowitz: Part of the issues that also arise is the buildings materials that were readily available in the distant past, but not so available now.

Thomas Visser: One of these materials are slate roofs which are now a specialty compared to the commonality and functionality of standing seam metal roofs.

Caitlin Halpert: I've thought about chimneys as a historic function of the structure. Some things I think about are the historic incorporation of PVC piping which has replaced the function of historic chimneys.

Thomas Visser: This is part of the mitigation between various agencies to retain historic character defining features like chimneys that tell the story of a building like Old Mill which was once three separate buildings.

AJ LaRosa: Being conscious of time, are there any additional questions from the Board?

Leo Sprinzen: Thank you for your time, this workshop has been extremely helpful.

Thomas Visser: Consistency is important, but its more than an aesthetic judgement call, and being familiar with the zoning ordinance to help assist with these conversations.

Mary O'Neil: Thank you for your contribution, Tom.

AJ LaRosa: Seeing as this was our last agenda item, I move we adjourn.

VI. Adjournment

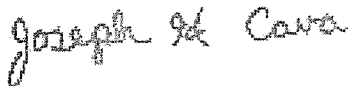
Hearing closed at 6:20 PM.



Alexander J. LaRosa, Chair of Development Review Board

10/25

Date



Joseph H. Cava, Permitting & Inspections Permit Technician

10-6-22

Date

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