



Neighborhood Planning Assembly Minutes – Full Notes

Date of Assembly: 3/17/2015
Start Time: (Commence): 7:00 PM
Finish Time: (Adjourn): 9:10PM
Location: DPW Building, Pine St.
Notetaker: Nate Orshan

Steering Committee Members in Attendance:

Alec Bauer
Bill Keogh
Hans Manske
Elisa Nelson
Nate Orshan

(1) Ward 5 NPA Steering Committee election announcement and official warning – Alec Bauer, NPA Moderator

We have a couple of vacancies for the NPA Steering Committee. If you know people who are interested, please have them reach out to us. We'll vote at our next NPA meeting on April 21.

The Steering Committee's purpose: we set agendas, find out what people are interested in talking about: public/private partnerships, etc.

Q: What would be involved?

A: we mostly email. we interface with City people, councilmembers. we deal with different issues in Ward 5 than in other wards.

Hans Manske (Steering Committee member): It's probably a couple of hours a month.

{NOTE: See the following:

Official Ward 5 NPA page:

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/CEDO/Neighborhood-Services/NPAs/Ward-5-NPA>

Ward 5 NPA Bylaws:

https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/sites/default/files/CEDO/Neighborhood_Services/NPAs/Ward%205%20bylaws.pdf }

(2) Safe Routes to School, Locust Street and Birchcliff updates
- Laura Wheelock, City Engineer, Department of Public Works, and
Roger Dickinson, Owner and Principal Engineer, Lamoureux & Dickinson

Summary:

Official presentation of proposed street design changes Locust St and to Birchcliff Pkwy as part of Burlington's Safe Routes to School project. Some audience members expressed concerns about the potential for increased property flooding at the intersection of Locust St and Caroline St.



Safe Routes to School (STRT) project – Overall site plan

Laura: We're working on City's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) project {Note: See the project's official page:

<https://www.burlingtonvt.gov/DPW/Safe-Routes-to-School> }

This is our public informational meeting as required by our grant. We're focused on changes to Birchcliff Pkwy and Locust St, how students get to school. We're working with Lamoureux & Dickinson consulting engineers.

There are four intersections involved:

- Locust St and Caroline St
- Locust St and Charlotte St
- Birchcliff Pkwy and Cherry Ln

- Birchcliff Pkwy between Cherry Ln and Bittersweet Ln

The goal is to create a safer route for school children in the Five Sisters, Birchcliff, & Shelburne St neighborhoods by connecting missing infrastructure links, addressing issues for pedestrian improvements vs. traffic calming.

In 2013, Lamoureux & Dickinson (L&D) completed the SRTS Feasibility Study. The same year, the Department of Public Works (DPW) was awarded a Bike/Pedestrian grant from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) to implement concepts from the Feasibility Study.

Project Schedule:

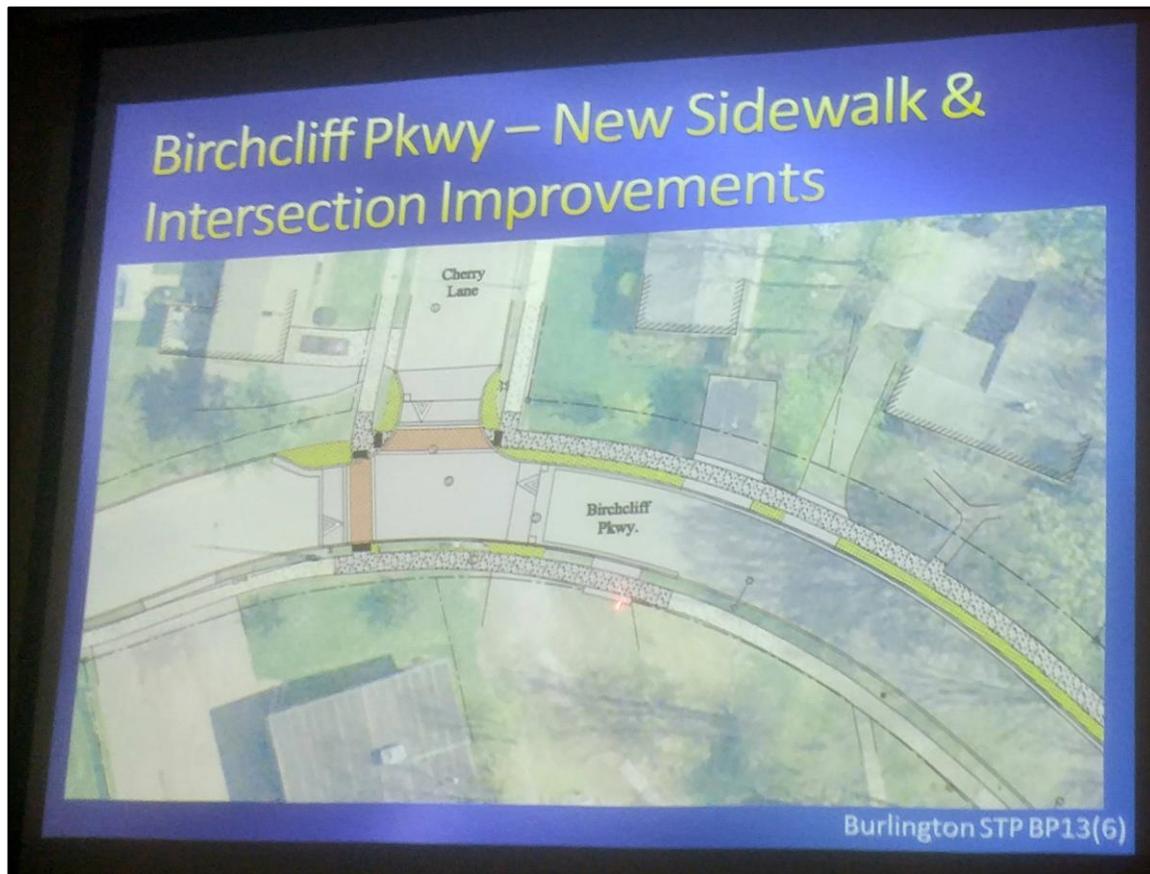
- July 2014 - L&D started design
- 2015 - Approved 25% concept plans
- March 2016 - Public information meeting
- May 2016 - 60% design submission
- August 2016 - 85% design submission for plans
- December 2016 - Bid the project out
- May to July 2017 - Construction

Q: Why aren't there plans for the intersection of Locust St & Locust Terr?

A: The grant's only for pedestrian crossings, and the park actually doesn't have an inlet at that part, i.e., there are no solid paths into the park there.

Q: Are there City funds that could be used to improve that part?

A: Not at this time. Parks & Rec is working on it, but on a "municipal timeframe".



STRT project – Birchcliff Pkwy – New sidewalk & intersection improvements

Roger: Work will start on land on Birchcliff Pkwy to narrow the roadway along the north side of the street. We'll eliminate the wide street: It's currently 30' wide, so it'll be narrowed to 22' wide. Only the north side will be redone with new sidewalk and curbing.

The Cherry Ln crosswalk will be raised, and there will be a bump-out around the corner.

Q: Will there be Stop signs installed?

Roger: No new Stop signs.

Q: What's the intent of having a 2-3" rise in that speed table at the intersection?

Roger: It slows traffic, probably down to 15-20 mph.

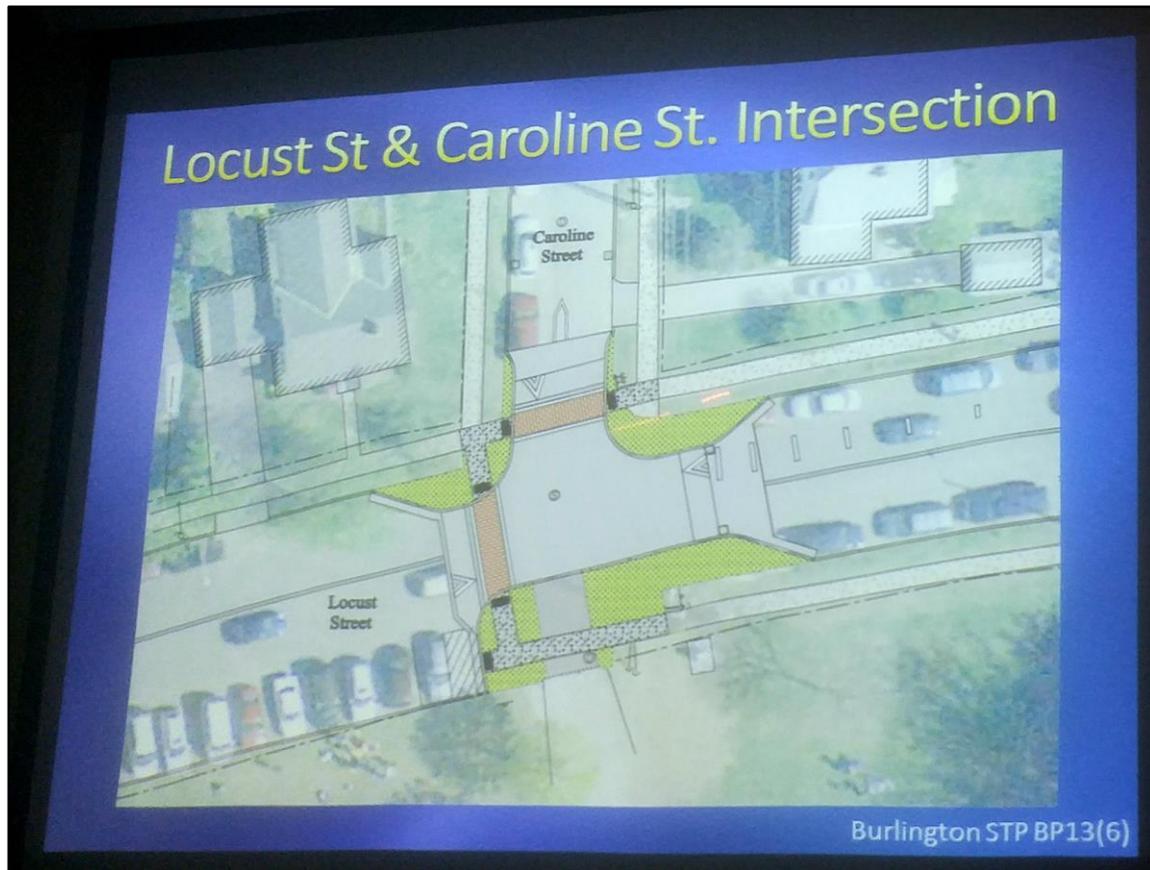
We're also employing curb extensions to reduce the length of the crosswalks and minimize the amount of time that a pedestrian is exposed to traffic.

Q: Is it possible to install pedestrian warning lights the way we currently have some on Pine St?

Laura: DPW's working on a policy. It'll be important *first* to get these improvements in place, then measure the improvement.

Q: How do you determine the need for a traffic table?

Roger: The raised-table intersections are part of the new design standards for urban streets. The idea is to create an environment where pedestrians feel safe and also are able to cross the roadways without feeling that traffic is creating a danger for them.



STRT project - Locust St & Caroline St intersection

Re Locust St & Caroline St: There's a need to create a safer pedestrian environment, slow traffic down, and have it yielding to the pedestrians.

Q (1): I live on 107 Locust St. DPW's been out a half-dozen times, because the storm sewers are mis-designed & mis-implemented, so when it rains there's flooding onto property. So when we raise the crosswalk, water will run into people's basements. Apparently that involves reconfiguring the sewers.

Q (2): My driveway's the first on the left on Caroline St. There have been times it runs down my driveway and down to my back yard. Will I have even *more* water now? A significant problem will turn...catastrophic.

Q (1): There's also a lot of heavy church traffic. In the mornings and afternoons, cars coming through U-turn right in front of my house. There's a procession of cars doing that every day.

Roger: we are installing catch-basins for the water coming down Locust St and Caroline St.

Laura: Right, and these two new catch-basins will be feeding the actual stormwater system, not the combined system.

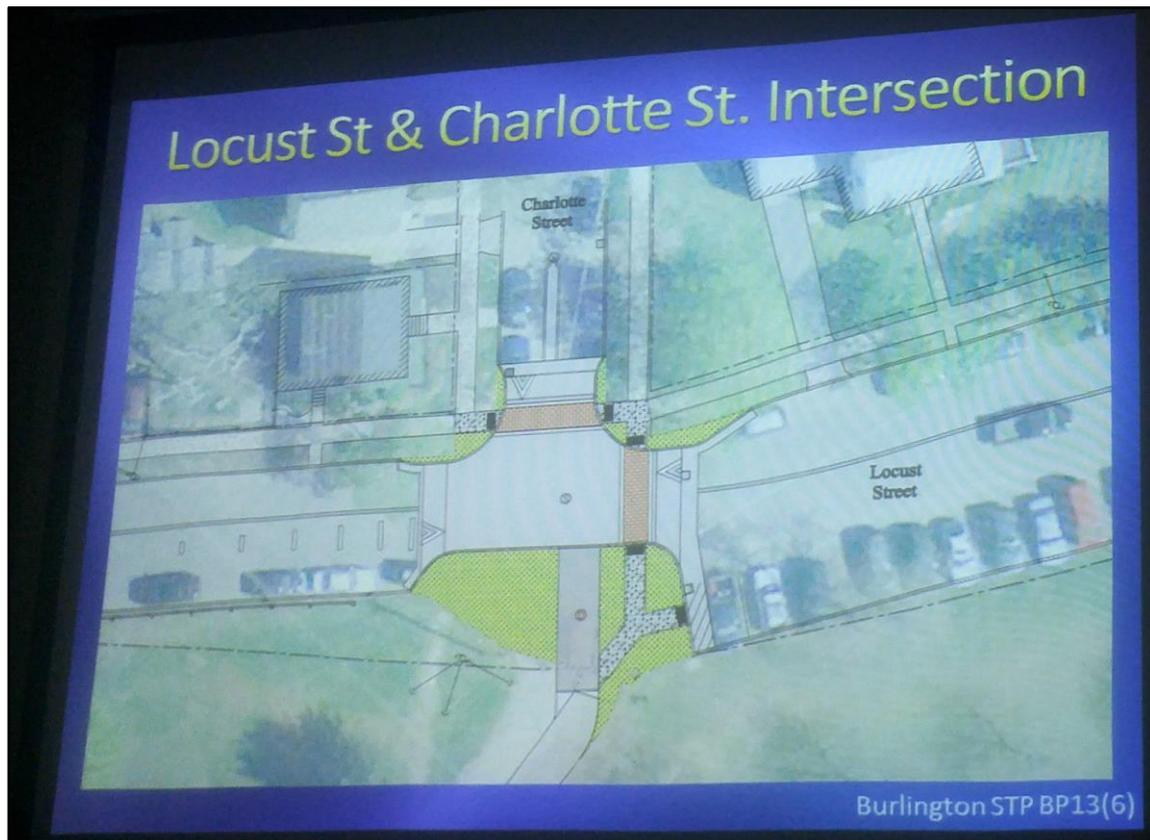
Q (1): If it rains hard enough, the fact is the "dam" at the end of Caroline will cause issues.

Laura: we can certainly look at it.

Roger: Curb extension on both sides of park. In the future, it could be used for garden space {in the design pic, the yellow area represents a grassy area}.

Q: Have you compared this design to the PlanBTV Walk Bike master plan? {Note: See <http://www.planbtvwalkbike.org/> }

Roger: Yes, we have looked at that.



STRT project – Locust St & Charlotte St intersection

Locust St and Charlotte St: Very similar design: Bump-out on all sides.

Q: Is that going to choke Little League parking?

Laura: We'll be losing a total of two parking spots, one on each end.

Q: Why in all three intersections are there only two crosswalks each?

Laura: That's in the VTrans manual: No crosswalks in close vicinity without traffic stopping. we asked L&D to allow for *future* installation of crosswalks, so we have the option.

Q: Making right turns onto Charlotte from Locust often leads to screeching tires. After this is implemented, people will have an even harder time.

Laura: That's almost by design, though.

Q: I live at the next intersection down at Locust St and Locust Terr. we see a lot of folks walking through the park through people's property to get to Pine St. If the

idea is to get kids through the park, at certain times of the year they have to walk through essentially a swamp.

Laura: The house with the solar panel a gate put into the fence to let kids be able to walk through.

Q: Also, the way these Locust intersections are set up, people will speed up once they pass Charlotte heading down to Pine.

Laura: You could petition DPW to make changes to Locust St and Locust Terr.

Q: Re speed tables, etc., they were pretty hot for a while, but I think they've become poo-pooed due to making it more difficult for plowing and maintenance.

Laura: we have them around the city. "Driver's drivers" will have gripes, and it's true that the Fire Department doesn't like them. But new designs are less obnoxious (for example, the revised speed bumps on North Champlain St).

Laura: Right now the city doesn't have plans to add second sidewalks on streets that already have one except via grant money.

Jesse Bridges (Director, Parks and Recreation): Eventually we'll have to do a master plan for Calahan Park.

Q: What's the cost of project and the city's share?

Laura: we have a 10% match. So the project is \$480,000 total, of which about \$47,000 funds come out of the City itself.

Q: Were these presented to the Ward 5 NPA?

Laura: I don't believe it went through the NPA. There was a separate, standalone meeting. It was publicly warned.

**(3) Presentation: Pine Street Deli redevelopment
- Erik J. Hoekstra, Redstone Commercial Group,
with Michael Alvanos, property co-owner**

Summary:

Presented current plans for proposed development on 316 Flynn Ave, the current location of Pine Street Deli. The proposal includes a four-story building with 30 residential units, commercial space on the ground floor, 33 shared off-street parking spaces, and bicycle storage.

Michael: My family runs the Pine Street Deli (316 Flynn Ave). We've been trying to do this project for a long time. We've been there for a decade (seems like yesterday). About four to five years ago we started process for a new building on the property. The building's been there for 30-40 years easily. It needed work years ago; the previous owners didn't do the necessary work.

We want to re-invest in the property and neighborhood. we want to look ahead. A new building's needed.

We went through development process and were approved but hit some snags. I ended up calling Erik at Redstone. He's got a great reputation for building projects that are community-oriented. My own background's also in design and architecture. we want to incorporate the contextual issues.

Erik and the Redstone guys also live in Burlington, so we liked that. They're sensitive to a lot of the issues. At this point, we're handing it off to them with the hopes it will be successful.

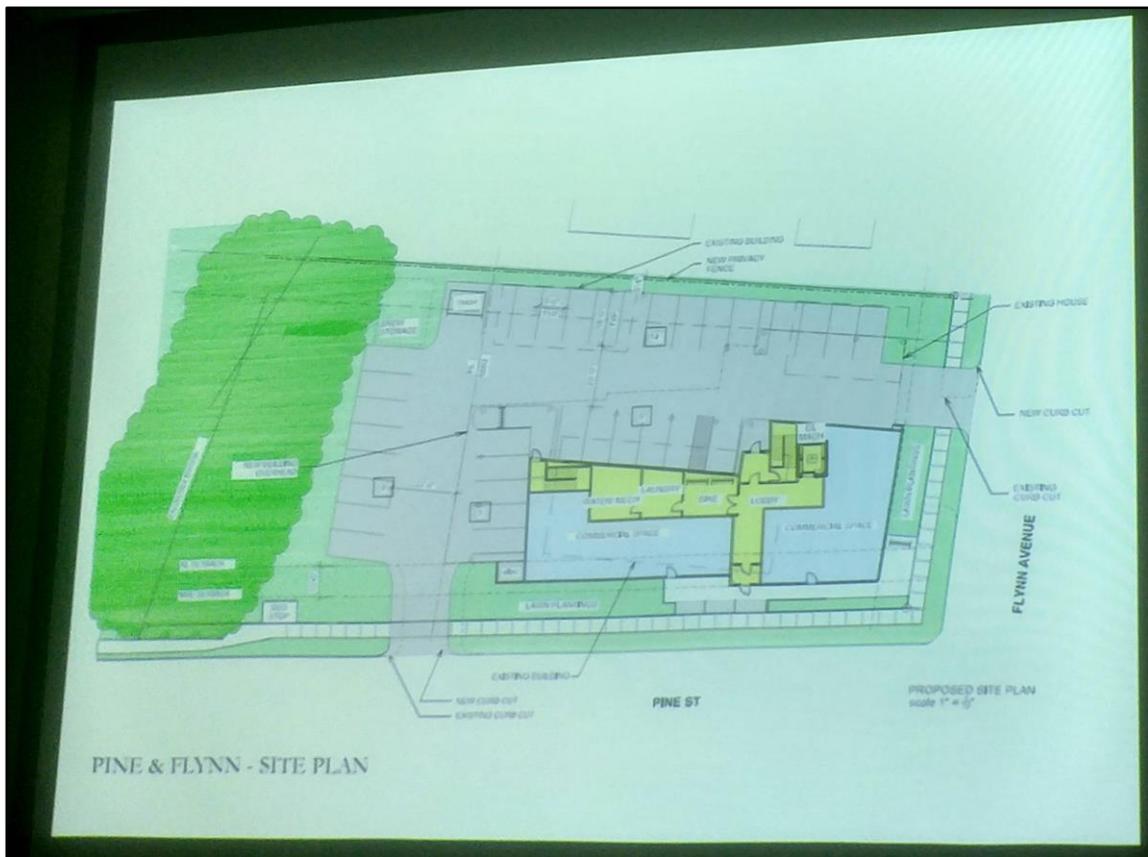
Erik: I live in the Old North End but spend time all over. I've been loosely involved with this project for the last eight years.

Mike's family and I worked on re-zoning that area. The entire intersection used to be zoned "low residential". we thought, "that doesn't make sense". On one corner, we have the Pine Street Deli site, on another there's the Howard Center, then a Church, and then residences. "Low density" means single-family homes, though!

The neighborhood is really a transition on Pine St into a more residential neighborhood heading south.

"Neighborhood mixed use" is a designation intended to allow for some commercial uses and some residential. So we worked through a yearlong process to establish a "mixed use" designation at that intersection.

Redstone has a new idea of how to redevelop the site. we looked at the Church Building, the old Champlain School that's now apartments, and nearby buildings. we want to create something that's mixed use and larger scale than single-family homes.



Pine Street Deli redevelopment – Pine & Flynn – Site plan

The new building will have commercial space on the ground, then apartments above. Part of the parking lot will be covered by the building in an overhang.

It will be at least 12 feet from the curb edges. That's the zoning setback line. There's also a 15 foot setback to the east from the building (not from the parking).

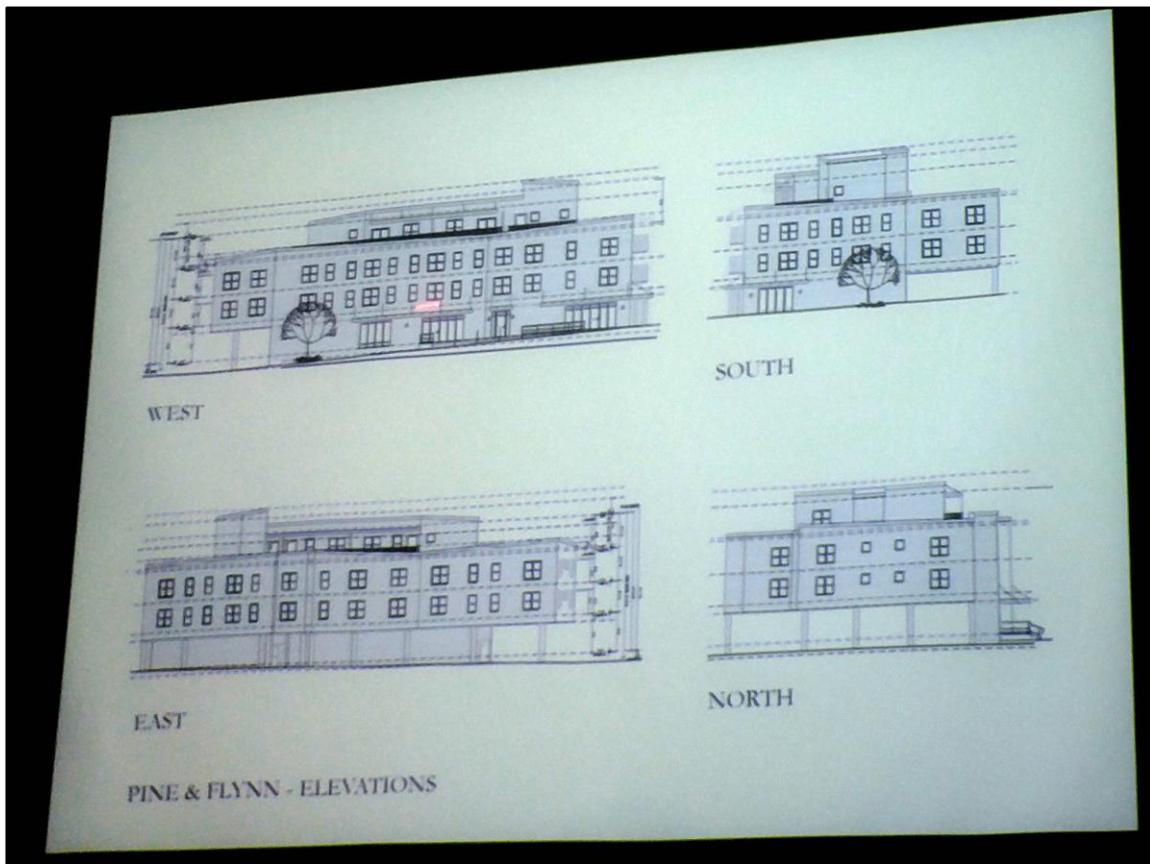
Re Englesby Brook: For years, the parking lot (a gravel lot) has extended up to the edge. Five years ago the Alvanos family discovered that they didn't own the land, but it was actually owned by the School District. The family then purchased that property. However, the new mixed-use zoning applied to the OLD footprint, not the new one, so there are different setbacks because of two separate zoning districts.

Q: Environmental rules?

A: There are stormwater considerations due to Englesby Brook. we would install catch-basins to capture the stormwater.

The proposed parking is shared-use: 33 spaces shared between the housing above and the commercial space below. we propose 30 apartments. We're also asking for a waiver of 3-6 spaces from the zoning board. 14 of apartments are small studio. Ten are one-bedroom, six are two-bedroom.

Re parking issues: We've developed other projects with this same ratio. Not everybody has a car. There will also be bike storage. And people are coming and going at different times of the day. There might be a deli.



Pine Street Deli redevelopment – Pine & Flynn – Elevations

Q: Why can't you scale it back? There are residences next door.

A: It's 0.61 acres. Majority of it's in the neighborhood mixed-use district, which allows 2.5 times the size of the lot for development, i.e., 65,000 sq ft. We're proposing 25,000 sq ft. Those are zoning ordinance ratios. We're complying with the setbacks and height limits (up to 45 feet of height). It can be up to four stories; the current design's three "and a half", which includes a smaller fourth floor with a patio for the residents to share. We're also providing more bike parking than required. The district encourages "dense and intense" development. What's more, there are few sites in the South End to build. This is one of the few sites in the South End to do this kind of development.

Q: I live on Caroline St. The way this lot is now is honestly very 1960s and suburban; what's planned here makes it more like the alive and vibrant city it is. I also work for Local Motion. we look at broader trends. It's clear that people are buying cars at a lower rate than older generations. These types of parking ratios don't make sense to people who grew up with cars, but on the other side of the "divide", they make more sense.

Q: I live in this neighborhood off Lyman Ave. There are people from Dealer.com living nearby who own lots of cars. I have serious concerns. I want to hear more about plans for parking, overflow, and accountability.

A: We require parking permits for our other properties, so we'd have certain spaces that were "residences only" and others that would be for commercial parking. we are seeing, realistically, 10% of the population living without owning cars. Note also that

we're moving the southern entrance more east, away from the intersection. We're also going to have to do a formal traffic analysis for DPW. My suspicion is we won't see a significant impact.



Pine Street Deli redevelopment – Pine & Flynn – View looking northeast

Q: I live next door. Traffic's a nightmare. We've seen two fatalities, one man in a wheelchair killed before our eyes. There was also a serious injury of a child on a bike. The addition of more cars would badly impact that intersection.

Erik: We'll look to the study.

Michael: We have video of those incidents, too. Re the child with the compound fracture: He literally biked into the intersection. The intersection has issues, but the current deli creates a lot of traffic. I don't think that the proposal would make it *more* dangerous. Bringing it up to current standards would be an improvement.

Q: Are there any issues with having the apartments over the parking spaces re heating loss?

Erik: There are some challenges, yes, but we have to follow the Vermont Energy code. We've been working with Burlington Electric Department, Vermont Gas Systems, and Efficiency Vermont to look at the thermal envelope. we pay a lot.

We're using clapboard siding, a historic character, but applying it in a modern way. We're not trying to replicate 100-year-old buildings, just nod to them.

We have to have at least 15% of the units affordable, so we'll have four out of 30 affordable. The City sets the affordability level. It's for households earning 65% of area median income.

The target is professional housing, *not* family housing. It's targeted more toward singles and couples, professionals, empty-nesters. we see the need for this type of housing.

(About seven people speak up against the size of the project.)

Erik: We likely won't build this project if we can't do this scale.

(4) Parks and Recreation and Waterfront Update and Summer Happenings - Jesse Bridges, Director, Department of Public Works

Summary:

Shared updates re Oakledge Park (including a proposed universally-accessible playground and the need to retire the current softball and volleyball fields due to their being designated Class 2 wetlands), the Bike Path, and Texaco Beach.

I'm the Director of Parks and Recreation department and a Charlotte St Resident. My wife works at Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (just down the street from the DPW building).

We just finished up a siting study at Oakledge Park (<http://enjoyburlington.com/2015/11/10/oakledge-park-siting-study/>). we looked at the park in terms of current and requested uses plus the hydrology and ecology of the park. There's a lot of very cool parts, but a lot of stormwater issues.

Takeaways:

There are two fields where there's a softball field and a volleyball field. It turns out that they should be classified as Class 2 wetlands. We're not in favor of putting amenities...in wetlands!

So we'll have a last season of softball this year, but then we'll remove it and restore and renovate, including such things as reforestation, native planting. We're working with the state.

Calahan Park has its own issues, too. we look at how parks can improve urban environment. we have 1,000 acres, more than two times the national average. we just bought 12 more acres at the Burlington College property, too.

Policy re dogs: As long as people do off-leash when there aren't sports there, it should be OK. We're exploring possibility of a small fence run at Oakledge Park.

Re the bike path at Oakledge Park: we'll rehabilitate it and move it out of the parking lot, moving it closer to the upper pavilion.

We're about to kick off design process for a new playground. This is *not* a run-of-the-mill playground. We're striving for a universally-accessible playground for people of all ages and ability levels. Color contrasts for signs, accessible walkways for people with physical disabilities, sound/audio play structures, and interactive structures. We're working with a community group which is doing fundraising. For comparison's sake: Starr Farm's recent playground was \$80,000. Our goal for Oakledge Park is about \$300,000 to \$400,000. It'll take a couple of years to build for fundraising and design.

Use of Oakledge Park has exploded in the past 5 years, and we have the numbers to prove it.

We'll have kiosks for parking. We're still looking at parking on Flynn Ave. Speaking only as a Ward 5 resident, I think it should be a bike lane, not parking.

The next public meeting about Oakledge Park will be on April 12, 5:30pm, at Champlain School.

We've looked at how we access the trail network, to enhance it where we want people to go.

Re the bike path: We're continuing with rehab work, using waterfront TIF funds. If you haven't been down to waterfront park, it's a very nice ride. It came out beautifully. We're going to be redoing the dog park, redoing the bike path, moving it west of dog park.

Re Texaco Beach: we want to use excavated soil to build up area, making it ADA-accessible, creating a new mini-park. Also, it's just south of the brand-new beach we just bought from Burlington College. The City now owns all the waterfront up to North Beach!

Motion to adjourn adopted at 9:08 PM.

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