COMMISSION MEETING DECEMBER 16, 2020

Commissioners Present: Commissioner Archambeau, Commissioner Barr, Commissioner Bose, Commissioner Gillman, Commissioner Hogan (Chair), Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanvco (Vice-Chair), Commissioner Overby.

ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Hogan called meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ITEM 2 – AGENDA

Commissioner Overby requested that Item A be taken off of the consent agenda as she wanted more information on the project. Commissioner Archambeau seconded.

Chair Hogan made a motion to pull item A off of consent and make that Item 8. Commissioner Overby accepted that as long as DPW Engineer Susan Molzon was amenable to it. Commissioner Archambeau was amenable to this as well. Vote on the agenda with Item 4A changed to Item 8. Unanimous approval

ITEM 3 – PUBLIC FORUM

Kelley Devine stated that she has received strong feedback in support to extend the date forward for removing free 2 hours parking in the parking garage.

ITEM 4 – CONSENT AGENDA

Loading Zone Adjustment Adjacent to 372 No. Winooski Ave

Commissioner Archambeau made a motion to approve
Commissioner Bose seconded
Unanimous approval

ITEM 5- SHELBURNE STREET ROUNDBOUGHT PROJECT

DPW Senior Engineer Laura Wheelock opened the presentation, with support from DPW Engineer Olivia Darisse. She noted this presentation was put together primarily by
VTRANS, and the project is being managed by them as well. The rotary is a high crash site and this project is 100% federally funded through VTRANS.

Questions & comments included:
- Driveway at the Majestic Car Rental and it was found that they need to have a driveway; it is a one-way driveway out only.
- Whether a stop sign can be put up before the crosswalk as there is a large amount of kids who use this intersection and it is a school zone.
- Traffic calming -- it was stated that there would be RRFB’s at the intersection, which will slow down traffic.
- Commissioner Hogan noted that there is a project website. He asked when we get more dates. DPW Engineer Wheelock stated that by February 10, 2021 the project will go out for bid; likely in April the contract will be awarded with construction starting in June after school lets out.

ITEM 6 – UNIVERSITY PLACE CONCEPTUAL DESIGNS

Associate Engineer Philip Peterson did presentation, along with DPW Senior Engineer Wheelock. There are two different plans under review: the basic plan and an enhanced plan. In the basic plan one lane of traffic would be eliminated, traffic will be one way north on the street, there will be bike lanes and crosswalks will go from nine feet to six feet for pedestrian safety. There will be removal of parking with the exception of the south end for the food trucks.

Enhanced plan we will narrow road from thirty feet to 22 feet, widen the sidewalk on the east side creating a crossing plaza in the middle of University Place. Food trucks will have notched parking into the curb. The north end will include drop off parking for events, and the left turn will be removed from Colchester Avenue onto University Place.

DPW Senior Engineer Wheelock stated a timeline has been presented to the City Council. We are asking for more time from the Council on this and both parties support this request.

Commissioner Barr made a motion to approve.
Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco seconded.
Unanimous approval

ITEM 7 – RUSSELL STREET & CHARLES STREET SEASONAL PARKING PROHIBITION

Associate Engineer Philip Peterson defined a narrow street as 28 feet or less. There are 17 narrow streets in Burlington without current parking restrictions. Last year, we tried a temporary seasonal restriction on Russell and Charles. We want to extend the parking restriction on Russell Street and Charles Street again this year from January 1st through
March 1st. This will help ensure emergency vehicle and plow access during winter when snow typically constricts the width of the road.

Commissioner Archambeau raised the concern for the abbreviated winter parking ban for this street as compared to the rest of the city’s narrow streets which is typically December 1st to April 1st. Senior Engineer Susan Molzon said that we look at this street by street – in this area there are several residences that have no parking and surrounding areas are residential parking only. Assistant Director/Senior Engineer Norm Baldwin stated that going until March 1st still typically captures our most extreme weather period and that we still factor in flexibility with neighborhoods. Mr. Baldwin stated that this was still a trial. Commissioner Archambeau suggested more defined guidelines when considering future streets would be important. DPW Director Spencer said these can be in place for future streets. Commissioner Overby concurred with Commissioner Archambeau. Commissioner Barr agreed this is important, but to include flexibility. A discussion ensued to determine what reasons or data could be included to determine any changes to the dates for a seasonal narrow streets parking restriction. Director Spencer offered motion language.

Commissioner Archambeau made a motion to approve traffic regulations described in the packet and to direct staff to develop written policy to inform decision on recommended duration of future seasonal parking restrictions.

Commissioner Barr seconded
Unanimous approval

ITEM 8 – EXTENSION OF 2 HOURS FREE AT MARKETPLACE GARAGE

Assistant Director Jeff Padgett referred to the memo in the Commission packet asking the Commission to extend 2-hour free parking in the Marketplace garage until April 1st due to the pandemic’s economic impact downtown and currently lower parking utilization. Mr. Padgett referenced Parking finances, and stated that the City is working with the banks to restructure the loans. Burlington High School may be coming downtown, possibly will be leasing some parking which will be helpful. Also, have a short-term tenant coming in (state of Vermont who is doing construction on their garage) which needs 450-480 spots. Despite Covid, the Marketplace Garage was full 3 times over the last 3 months, which is not a lot, but more than it has been. People are still interested in coming out to downtown.

Commissioner Barr made a motion to support request.
Commissioner O’Neill seconded.
Unanimous approval

ITEM 9 - QUEEN CITY PARK RD AND HIGHER GROUND PROPOSAL
Commissioner Overby asked for more information on the traffic documents that were provided in the report, specifically how to interpret the data on pages 12 and 13 – 2008 vs 2028 projected traffic volume. Commissioner Overby asked for more info to determine how the Department concluded there would be no impact on QCPR based on this. DPW Senior Engineer Molzon gave context to what she included in the packet: a memo including a summary of where project is based on DPW’s understanding, and DPW’s role in the development process. Additionally included a memo from June 2020 from DPW’s review of the traffic study. A conversation ensued about traffic data analysis. City Engineer offered a primer on the process, noted it’s complex.

Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco stated she wanted an update on the project – which could be “perceived as controversial”, the area is on the border of Burlington and South Burlington and she wanted a high level summary, next steps and to be better able to respond when asked about this. DPW Senior Engineer Molson referred to the December 16th memo identifying what the DRB approved, which includes DPW recommendations. There are specifics on the map of traffic study done by Burton, go to the summary pages. Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco asked about next steps and about the bicyclist and pedestrian considerations in this area. City Engineer described the quantitate and qualitative analysis for holistic transportation planning, but also the physical and financial constraints of the area.

Commissioner Overby asked for additional clarification on a data point: ‘volume to capacity ratio.’ City Engineer Baldwin and Senior Engineer Molzon responded to this – which included City Engineer Baldwind further describing the DRB process and DPW’s role. He offered further opportunity to brief any members of the Commission on how the process works.

Chair Hogan suggested the DPW role in the DRB process is of interest and this could be a future briefing.

ITEM 10 – APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES

Commissioner Archambeau asked that Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco be identified as Vice Chair on the minutes, as is currently done with the identification of the Chair.

Commissioner Barr made a motion to accept minutes with changes Commissioner Archambeau seconded Unanimous approval.

ITEM 11 – DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Director Spencer reiterated main points of the written Director’s Report, included in the packet.
ITEM 12 – COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Barr stated that some bike lanes need attention, including the Colchester Avenue bike lanes as the corridor entry in Burlington. Acknowledged things are looking good overall. Also East end neighborhood is planning some outside activities at Schamanska park.

Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco thanked the team for a great year in maintaining infrastructure.

Commissioner Archambeau stated that the dump facility by Route 127 bike path down by Manhattan Drive has been broken into and there are flammable supplies around. He asked that this be secured.

Commissioner Overby wondered if we had to circle back to approve the item that was removed from the agenda. Director Spender stated he did not think so as it was removed and put on for discussion.

Commissioner Hogan stated he appreciates DPW for moving things along. He was wondering about polling the staff for morale and their job satisfaction.

Director Spencer stated there were some surveys a few weeks ago and we are working on the areas that came out of the survey. Hazard pay was also offered last week to frontline employees.

ITEM 13 – ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING DATE JANUARY 20, 2021

Commissioner Barr made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Gillman seconded

Unanimous approval.

Meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.