COMMISSION MEETING JUNE 16, 2021
FINnAL MINUTES

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

Commissioner Absent: Commissioner Gillman

ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Hogan called meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ITEM 2 – AGENDA

Commissioner Barr made a motion to approve agenda
Commissioner Bose seconded
Unanimous approval

ITEM 3 – PUBLIC FORUM

Zoe Kennedy: Ms. Kennedy stated that she is a new commissioner and will be starting at the July meeting. She spoke in support of protected bike lanes that were presented as part of the Colchester Avenue study, and circulated a petition for support of the redesign.

Isabella Dekluyver spoke in support of the separated bike lane especially in the narrow spaces where it is not safe to travel in road. A separated and raised bike lane is needed.

Tony Redington stated that we need to improve pedestrian and bicycle travel and spoke in support of roundabouts, including the option presented in the Colchester Ave study.

Monica of Ward 2 is an advocate for the raised bike lanes. She is happy to see more bike lanes but cars still park in the bike lanes. She spoke for the need to change our culture for more biking and make it more accessible. She urged the City to invest in raised bike lanes.

Martin Wolf lives on Colchester Avenue and is in support of the bike lanes. With a raised bike lane going over the edge creates a hazard. Would like to see the bike lanes with pylons like what is on North Union Street.
Jason Stuffle is an advocate for bike transportation and would like to see a dedicated bike lane separated from the road. Burlington can be a real showcase for what can be done. And as far as youths on board is in full support feeling that a younger member’s viewpoint would be good for the Commission.

David Sidel is in full support for Colchester Avenue changes. The transportation sector is trapped in single occupancy cars. He feels that a raised and separated bike lane is a good option.

Gail Rose is pleased with all the bike lane lanes and uses her bike more. She rides on the sidewalks on Colchester Avenue as she feels it is not safe for bicyclists to be on the roadway. People will use the bike lanes when they are in place.

ITEM 4 – CONSENT AGENDA

A – Remove ADA space at 54 Pitkin Street
B – Proposed ADA space at 181 South Union Street

Commissioner Barr made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda
Commissioner Bose seconded
Unanimous approval

ITEM 5 – COLCHESTER AVENUE/EAST AVENUE SCOPING

DPW Senior Planner Losch presented along with Jason Charest from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission. The goal of this study was to identify transformational, long-term improvements along the Colchester Avenue corridor and at the intersection of Colchester Avenue and East Avenue that the re-envisions the multimodal gateway corridor following years of incremental change outlined in previous planning and design efforts. The study focused on consistent, multimodal improvements for the one-mile long corridor from the connection with Pearl Street at the intersection of North and South Prospect Streets, east to the Greenmount Cemetery, then north to Barrett Street and the Winooski River crossing. In addition, the study pursued safety improvements for the intersection of Colchester Avenue and East Avenue.

The purpose of the study was to identify and prioritize improvements along the corridor, which will enhance bicycle mobility and improve parking management while supporting local businesses and at the intersection of East Avenue, which will improve safety for all modes of transportation.

The corridor is a major corridor for transit in the city. VTrans have identified this corridor as a priority for safety improvement with three high crash locations and one HCL segment. A highway safety improvement program (HSIP) location review conducted
at Colchester Avenue and East Avenue intersection included the recommendation to realign East Avenue and update signal equipment to improve safety.

Public outreach revealed the desire for consistent and protected pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, improved accommodations at intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists, curbside access to transit and neighborhood based solutions to on street parking while supporting the high turnover parking needs of businesses.

There were plans developed to reflect the preferred corridor concepts and intersection alternative which consisted of a combination of raised and separated bike lanes along the corridor segments with targeted on street short term parking and pull outs for transit stops, delivery vehicles or other short term uses as well as new equipment, striping, a crossing on a western leg of the intersection and a dedicated bike signal for the intersection with East Avenue.

Commissioner Archambeau stated that in summery the sentiment of the community is that they are in support of the raised bike lanes on Colchester Avenue.

Jason Charest stated that we need to find the path of least resistance or design. When looking at the cost analysis there is the safety benefits with the roundabout. Roundabouts do cost more than a signalized intersection. There is less maintenance with the roundabout and there is traffic calming 24/7 as vehicles cannot fly through roundabouts.

Senior Planner Losch stated that this is the better design, there was a community process to take into consideration, the cost and safety factors. Both concepts are sound and viable at this location.

Commissioner Archambeau stated that this is on us as a community and you have done a thorough work as possible. Asked if we have data around crashes in this whole corridor.

Nicole Losch stated that VTrans has all the information on crashes and we can get this information for you.

Commissioner Barr stated he believes roundabouts are safe but that it may not be right in this intersection for cyclists. Referenced that Jeff Speck, renowned urban planner, recently spoke in Burlington, believes that modern roundabouts are not right for areas where pedestrian/cyclist vitality is desired.

Commissioner Bose stated he is in favor of the raised bike lanes. Wants broader sense of what the local residents think about this. Need more surveys from the local residents and get more data on what people think about roundabouts.
Vice Chair O’Neill-Vivanco stated that finding ways to increase engagement is always a challenge. Why are emergency vehicles, ambulances not in favor of a roundabout?

Jason Charest stated the concern received from the ambulance drivers is the amount of jostling through the roundabout as opposed to going straight through the signalized intersection.

Commissioner Overby is also in support of the raised bike lanes. She is a proponent of roundabouts. She feels people are not well educated on roundabouts and that people will learn to want different things. Not a well educated public on roundabouts and safety. Does not feel Advisory Committee had all the right information to make informed decision. Feels like financial figures are not accurate and that we don’t have enough information to make the roundabout option clear enough as a better option. The information presented needs to be accurate and complete, rather than dealing with generalities. Commissioner Overby stated that a roundabout should be considered for this location; also supports separated bike lane.

Commissioner Bose asked for an answer to the cost benefit question. Senior Planner Losch stated that this was developed by VTrans as they have projects that they compare with. The annual cost and benefits are developed by VTrans. Senior Planner Losch also stated that the signalized cost estimate is by our staff, $6,000 in capital costs per year which includes replacing the equipment down the road.

Jason Charest confirmed the preliminary costs are annualized construction costs.

Commissioner Overby stated it would helpful to more specifically label the data it would be clarifying.

Commissioner Hogan asked about the left turn procedure of a person on a bike pull over or push pedestrian signal, if this was installed whether or not the bike would have to push the button to get across. Commissioner Hogan also asked about consideration for protection at the East Avenue intersection. Senior Planner Losch stated there is not enough space for a protected/dedication bike signal. Commissioner Hogan asked about implementation of a time frame. Losch stated they were not sure yet it has to be added onto the Capital Plan, general community priorities, funding is still a challenge. Commissioner Hogan stated that if we could get more input from operators of emergency vehicles would be more helpful.

Tony Redington stated that Jason promised for second of delay during driving travel times; that data was not available online. Spoke about queues at roundabouts are far less. Recommends using stop-delay to measure fuel consumption. Conducted before/after survey for Montpelier residents who live near roundabout and 85% were favorable/neutral.
Sharon Bushor stated that she does not favor roundabouts but hear people saying they want to keep exploring this. One area to focus on is ambulance driver concerns, impacts to patient and to the hospital. On East Ave – off of University - BED has a substation with massive trucks that turn on. Not sure how roundabouts handle oversized vehicles and if anyone spoke with BED about this. Next point is that even though there were public meetings, the bike community is very well organized and out in force. Drivers are losing parking, it is very congested and not enough room for parking. Rental properties will be forced to park in backyards, taking up grass area and which creates more storm water runoff problem. Not an inclusive city for older people, renters or those with cars.

Councilor Jack Hanson stated he thinks this is a big step forward. This can be a game changer. As for the roundabout, it disrupts the level of comfort and security for cyclists to need.

Zoe Kennedy conducted public outreach about this project and there was public support from people on this corridor and they were aware of this. We have promoted petitions in the area and they are in support of the project. We want bike lanes and improvements to the intersection. Does not agree with roundabout in that intersection.

Dave Cawley stated he sent a memo out for parking management. Cemetery and East Avenue, Thibault Parkway there is room on the street for parking, I have only seen 14-16 cars on Colchester Avenue, solutions parking in neighborhoods but there is also a corner from the neighbors about parking on the streets in their neighborhood.

Jason Stuffle stated that the conversation comes down to money versus safety. Can’t put a price on safety, which should be main focus. Studies show that roundabouts are safer, slow traffic down, change people’s perception of the road. Also supports raised bike lanes study around the intersection. Does not agree with intersection being signalized.

Commissioner Barr made a motion to accept staff’s recommendation with more discussion of the East Avenue and Colchester Avenue intersection.

Commissioner Bose seconded. Shared that this is a model for something we want to see across the City, but most of tonight’s comments were focused narrowly on the roundabout.

Commissioner Archambeau is concerned with the language in the motion as it leaves an impression that things will be paused to focus on the intersection.

Commissioner Barr rephrased his motion to make a favorable recommendation to move the project forward. Recognizes debate will continue at TEUC, Council, etc.
Commissioner Bose seconded amended motion

Commissioner Overby stated she would like to have a separate motion on raised bike lanes from the intersection. Supports protected bike lanes, but not motion as worded. Wants Commission to be clear whether to move forward with a signalized intersection or roundabout.

Commissioner Archambeau – Yeah
Commissioner Barr – Yeah
Commissioner Bose – Yeah
Vice Chair O’Neill Vivanco – Yeah
Commissioner Overby stated no for reasons specified.
Commissioner Hogan – Yeah
Motion passes 5 to 1.

ITEM 6 – CONSOLIDATED COLLECTION STUDY UPDATE

Current collection of residential trash, recycling and compost in the City of Burlington is fragmented, inefficient and costly. A fully consolidated collection system will improve convenience, reduce environmental and community impacts, and save residents money. We suggest the Public Works Commission move to recommend the City Council approve a resolution that:

- Advances implementation of a fully consolidated collection system for at least 1 to 4 unit residential properties in Burlington;
- Proposes implementation of a hybrid consolidated collection model where the City continues to collect recycling and franchised private haulers collect trash and organics;
- Requests City staff initiate a resident engagement process to determine the specific service levels and options that will be initially offered and return to the City Council by March 2022 with the service level recommendations and an updated timeline.

Problems with the current system include:

- Confusing pick up schedules with households managing pick-ups of the various waste two or three different days a week;
- More truck traffic, emissions and road damage from multiple haulers servicing the same streets.
- More costly service due to multiple trash and compost haulers servicing the same streets
- Current city recycling program is under resourced which has put burden on existing recycling staff and the overall street maintenance team.

Studies have identified significant consolidated collection benefits. Reduce costs to residents and haulers through more efficient collection routes
Reduced environmental costs of excess truck traffic
Reduced infrastructure impacts and excess truck traffic
Reduced litter using wheeled carts by all residents
Reduced noise in neighborhoods
Better compliance with State and local mandates

There are four major consolidated collection options for consideration
  Franchise Model
  Franchise model with city bid
  Municipal Operation Model
  Hybrid Municipal/franchise model

Overall analysis:
  Achieves goals of a fully consolidated collection system
  Builds off the structure and capacity the City has already built for recycling
  Does not expand city’s heavy commercial vehicle fleet, only increases staff
  Creates additional union positions that can support city maintenance needs
  Funds the addition recycling program positions
  Does not appear to require Charter Changes or voter approval
  Does not require customer service teams to establish and manage billing
  Provides future flexibility to expand municipal operations of collections
  Maintains role for the private haulers while improving the efficiency and cost
effectiveness of collection system for residents.

Director Spencer stated that the city supports the hybrid option.

Commissioner Barr supports the recommendation of DPW.

Commissioner Bose supports recommendation and appreciates the options.

Vice Chair O’Neill-Vivanco supports the hybrid option. She has a note from a resident of
Burlington who doesn’t want to lose her trash hauler and that people want a choice. We
need to communicate to the haulers what our needs are as a city – safety, choice, trash
bin placement.

Commissioner Archambeau is a fan of the municipal option, but sold on the hybrid after
hearing the explanation. He is a fan of consolidated collection. Had a question about
livable wage being paid in Burlington to the franchised haulers and Director Spencer
stated that yes it would be required by the city.

Commissioner Overby stated she fully supports consolidated collection but does not
support the hybrid model. She supports #3 and would like a resident engagement
process up front. She stated the start up cost not as comprehensive as franchise 1-4
unit residents. Hauler will still be doing trash for commercial businesses and larger apartment buildings. Asks for clarity how savings are achieved for the resident.

Director Spencer stated we will be aligning routes and hauler will allocate to districts there will be efficiency, speed, less time and the savings will be passed onto the resident. City has operated recycling for decades and it costs about $1.30 each week and that represents the power of consolidated collection.

Commissioner Overby said the chart showing costs to resident doesn’t really show savings to the public. It is also not clear what the schedule for pickups would be – weekly, every other week, all streams or not, etc. Also curious why the municipal option was not part of the original study.

Director Spencer referenced the prior CSWD study, which looked at municipal options. That study did not lead to implementation due to public views, hauler opposition. 2018 resolution did not specify which model(s) to study.

A discussion further ensued about the collection of the solid waste generation tax and how City costs add onto the report and numbers that GBB put together.

Commissioner Overby stated there was no discussion or mention of drop off at Flynn Avenue in the material?

Director Spencer stated that we would have to purchase the Flynn Avenue site and right now we own 339 Pine Street and it is under city control.

Commissioner Overby asked if the Railyard Enterprise Project would have impacts on the Pine St drop off center.

Director Spencer discussed old Champlain Parkway alignment, but that the preferred alternative for the REP has not been developed. Actual impact is not yet fully understood.

Commissioner Bose stated he appreciates the detail that Commissioner Overby has with her questions but we have people from the public who would like to speak. Asks if we can move forward due to level of detail which is drowning out other kind of discussion.

Commissioner Archambeau seconded that.

Commissioner Overby stated she had a document from Gene Bergman in which she would like to read as he was unable to come to the meeting tonight. Public Information Manager Goulding stated that he received it as well and was posted on the website.

Mr. Goulding read Mr. Bergman’s comments.
Michael Casella of Casella Waste stated here will be an increase in taxes – less fee at drop off and there is an emissions standpoint study on a lot of the same roads. You have to consider capital cost, we are no testing electric vehicles in some of our areas.

Jason Stuffle stated the city should have the motivation to reduce waste stream and to have the city take over control. Volume is where private haulers make their money.

Commissioner Archambeau made a motion to accept staff’s recommendation.

Commissioner Barr seconded

Commissioner Overby stated she wanted to separate the motion and stated Item #3 should go first, conducting the survey of what public wants.

Commissioner Hogan asked if there was any other discussion. There is a motion to accept staff’s recommendations.

Archambeau – Yeah
Barr – Yeah
Bose – Yeah
O’Neill-Vivanco – Yeah
Overby – No
Hogan – Yeah

ITEM 7 – YOUTH ON BOARDS

Director Spencer stated we will discuss this at next month’s commission meeting, given the hour. Please read the memo that is in the packet for an explanation.

ITEM 8 – APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES 5-19-2021

Commissioner Overby submitted changes ahead of the meeting for consideration.

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

ITEM 9 - DIRECTOR’S REPORT

COVID 19 recovery and transition out of state of emergency is ongoing.
This is the last commissioner meeting for Commissioner Archambeau and Gillman. We want to thank them for their service, Commissioner Archambeau for 9 years of service and Commissioner Gillman for 6 years of service.

ITEM 10 - COMMISSIONER’S COMMUNICATIONS

Vice Chair O’Neill-Vivanco wanted to thank the Public Works staff for all the preparation on tonight’s topic as well as their attention to the details in the packet.

Commissioner Overby thanked Commissioner Archambeau for his time as a Commissioner.

Commissioner Barr would like to echo the thoughts of both Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco and Commissioner Overby.

Commissioner Hogan was asked by a resident about water ponding on Park Street where the street was just paved. He also asked about the Battery Street detour. Director Spencer stated that was a Parks project in which we are helping. They are working on getting a company to do the line striping. I will check into this and let you know the status.

Commissioner Archambeau thanked everyone for their kind words and expressed his gratitude for being on the Commission and helping the citizens of Burlington.

ITEM 11 – ADJOURNMENT 7 NEXT MEETING JULY 21, 2021

Commissioner Archambeau made a motion to adjourn
Commissioner Barr seconded
Unanimous approval
Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.