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

ITEM 1 – CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Hogan called meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

ITEM 2 – AGENDA

Commissioner Overby wanted to pull Item A off the consent agenda for discussion. Commissioner Barr makes a motion to accept agenda with A removed and added at Item 4.1
Commissioner Archambeau seconds
Unanimous approval

ITEM 3 – PUBLIC FORUM –

ITEM 4 – CONSENT AGENDA

B – ADA Space Removal – 124 North Union Street

Commissioner Barr made a motion to accept consent agenda
Commissioner Overby asked for an amendment to remove the Making Spaces Agenda Item
Commissioner Barr accepted this amendment
Commissioner Archambeau seconded
Unanimous approval

Item 4.1 – MAKING SPACES – GRAB AND GO SPACES

Commissioner Overby asked for clarity on this item as the memo refers to the Streets Seats program.

DPW Engineer Phillip Peterson confirmed that the memo asked for action on the Grab & Go pickup spaces and that no action was requested on the other “Making Spaces” programs. Director Spencer confirmed this and said that staff will come back for further authorization, when necessary.
Commissioner Barr made a motion to accept Item 4.1
Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco seconded
Unanimous approval

ITEM 5 – PARKING PROGRAM FOR RESTAURANT AND RETAIL WORKERS

Assistant Director Jeff Padgett made a motion to adopt, publish and notice the updates related to parking rates as described in Appendix C, Chapter 19 (b)(8) to include free parking for downtown restaurant/retail/service workers at the Lakeview/College street parking facility. AD Padgett stated that a goal of this policy change is to aid downtown businesses and workers, especially during this period of uncertainty.

Commissioner Overby expressed concerns that this free parking will encourage people to drive and that it is a subsidy for downtown businesses. She stated she supports the concept but thinks it needs work for two reasons: to provide incentives for not driving, and to acknowledge the value of the parking pass as a supplement to employee wages in an effort to help downtown businesses recruit employees.

Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco stated we do need a change in transportation mindset and we should encourage businesses to promote transportation options. This would include more car share pods & more bike parking in the garages.

Assistant Director Padgett stated that 2 to 3 more EV charging stations are going into the Lakeview Garage. We have additional money from DID for bike racks but it is hard to find a place to install bike racks. There are several initiatives going on to enhance transportation options.

Commissioner Barr stated there are many different opportunities and CATMA has a host of programs that they run. Bike share improvements are coming to Burlington and thinks this is one way to further enhance transportation choice.

AD Padgett stated that we have money for subsidizing bus passes but buses are free right now for everyone. We need to support downtown merchants as this change for free employee parking is a critical part of the removal of the free 2-hour parking in the Marketplace Garage.

Commissioner Archambeau asked how passes will be issued and for how long and when will they be valid.

AD Jeff Padgett stated there is no sense of percentages but 65 businesses in the downtown area value this and are looking for steady growth.

Commissioner Hogan asked if the permits were tied to individuals and license plate numbers and was informed that yes the permit is assigned to a person. There is a good
idea of how many will have to park. It is a month-to-month pass that is issued. There are changes coming as well as some challenges in the future.

AD Padgett confirmed that his approach was necessary to support businesses, workers and the economic recovery.

Director Spencer clarified that this is not about subsidizing businesses. We want to direct people to not park on the street and instead use the underutilized garage in the evening. This frees up parking for residents, shoppers and visitors on street. We are proposing to take a small slice of a very underutilized garage for parking for downtown workers.

Commissioner Barr made a motion to accept as presented.
Commissioner Archambeau seconded
Commissioner Overby stated she is not in support of this amendment for change.
Aye’s win 6 to1.

ITEM 6 – SLOPE STABILITY SITE ADJUSTMENTS

Associate Engineer Philip Peterson shared a Power point presentation. He advised that there are four slope inspections that occurred in 2019 and 2020. One was the Northshore Natural Area, which will need an inspection in five year, but we will monitor it. Manhattan Drive and Route 127 on the west side is stable but will be inspected every 3 years but will be monitored. Manhattan Drive at North Champlain Street urgent repair need but inspection good, will keep with other side of Route 127. Riverside Avenue has three segments and for some of them we need homeowner’s permission to go onto the land so we are more limited on what we can do on the private property.

Commissioner Archambeau asked if there was imminent danger for people’s safety and City Engineer Baldwin stated with the unknown conditions sandy soil easily erodes. If people stop putting material on the banks, it will be okay. River system at the bottom depends on how close the river gets. Commissioner Archambeau asked if there were contingencies in place if there was another super soaker rain and was advised that, we could not prepare for loss of land.

Commissioner Bose asked about historical floods and loss of landscape considered safe for slope, stabilization. Is there more willingness by business owners to talk? City Engineer Baldwin stated we don’t have authority to walk onto property and look without homeowner consent.
Associate Engineer Philip Peterson stated that Public Works or consultants are measuring data we can collect to get more buy in for inspections. Information is shared with other city departments. Stormwater has consultants vetting this for future projects. DPW Engineer Baldwin stated there is a development review process for a scale of what is going on. We need to invest in outfalls. DPW Engineer stated that homeowners have done some work and some are working with consultants to stabilize banks.

Sharon Bushor, 862-3604, called in during public comment and stated that Riverside Avenue stability of slope banks the side not abutting the river that is an old landfill and the stability of the area is in question. The whole area needs to be looked at, as it is a safety and liability issue. She expressed appreciation for staff’s work on this.

ITEM 7 – PASSENGER RAIL PROJECT AND LAVALLEY LANE

Director Spencer and City Engineer Baldwin offered an introduction and also shared that Senior Engineer Susan Molzon will be working on this project. There are many partners in this. We are moving the bike path from the east side of the railroad tracks to the west side from College Street to King Street; Lavalley Lane is going to be relocated. A transformer has been installed for shore power to trains. Additional work still needs to go out to bid. Contract 4 includes the relocation of Lavalley Lane.

Commissioner Barr stated great presentation and it is high time we have rail in Burlington.

Commissioner O’Neill Vivanco agreed that it is an aggressive time line, lots of obstacles to make the time line and do we have support through the city? CE Baldwin stated there was tremendous support in the city. Lavalley Lane needs to be moved first. Asked when we could expect at the Commission and Mr. Baldwin stated next month. Commissioner Overby asked about the water treatment plant and the large vehicle challenge of getting in and out and was informed that the consultant was asked to evaluate this.

Commissioner Hogan asked about the rail being in close proximity to the critical wastewater infrastructure. City Engineer Martin Lee stated it is not water treatment so from that perspective it’s less challenging and that the existing footprint should be able to accommodate these changes.

ITEM 8 – RAILYARD ENTERPROSE PROJECT

Senior Engineer Susan Molzon offered an intro and said that we are in the preliminary engineering stage after years of scoping studies. The Cooperative agreement financing details
include 80% federal, 10% state and 10% local. We will hire a consultant this summer and move forward with the three alternatives. This is a federal process with Federal Highway. Commissioner Gilman asked if there was a better way of connecting Battery Street and Pine Street.

Commissioner Overby stated she had contacted City Engineer Molzon earlier to clarify an items in the memo provided to Commissioners that stated the plan is to “reconsider all proposed alternatives.” The 2016 scoping study had recommended advancement of three alternatives, 1B, 2, and 5B. Molzon clarified that “all proposed alternatives” meant other alternatives besides 1B, 2 and 5B will be considered for the design of the Railyard Enterprise connection between Pine St. and Battery Street, see if we could go back and look at other options.

Johnathan Eddy from the Waterfront Diving Center telephoned in and stated he was concerned about losing parking and warehouse space stating this would be detrimental to his business. He stated the King Street revitalization program should come off King Street.

Jacob Albee is looking forward to seeing how it goes. The sidewalk on the east side of the street is more functional as the west side pedestrians are more often on this side of the street and walking between cars, which is dangerous.

Director Spencer stated that we are engaging the property owners in the process, but that there is no public right of way between Pine Street and Battery Street.

ITEM 9 - APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES

Commissioner Barr made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Archambeau seconded. Commissioner Overby stated that there were two sentences she wanted removed one on page 2 and the other on the last page. Commissioner Barr accepted the friendly amendment Commissioner Archambeau seconded Unanimous approval

ITEM 10 – DIRECTOR’S REPORT

See Director’s Report.

ITEM 11 – COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner O’Neill-Vivanco wanted to thank the Public Works staff for staying healthy all winter long.
Commissioner Overby heard concern expressed by a City Councilor that there was no longer an appeals process for permitting and inspections and asked for clarity. Assistant Director Baldwin stated that nothing has likely changed and appeals should still be coming before this commission.

Commissioner Archambeau is on the permit reform committee and had not seen or heard of any changes.

Commissioner Hogan referenced emails that may have appeared to come from him and offered a general warning about suspicious emails.

ITEM 12 – ADJOURNMENT & NEXT MEETING APRIL 21, 2021

Commissioner Archambeau made a motion to adjourn
Commissioner Barr seconded
Unanimous approval

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.