

Burlington Planning Commission

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Joint Planning Commission and City Council Form-Based Code Committee

REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, February 19, 2015 - 5:30 P.M.

Contois Auditorium, City Hall, 149 Church Street

Meeting Notes

I. Agenda

II. Overview of tonight's meeting

III. Public Forum – (15 min)

Mayor Weinberger – He is excited with the committee's work and that we are at this point in the work. Went to Mayor's innovation Project last summer and heard other mayors' talk about FBC and the impact it had on their community. FBC is a tool that can be used for many goals – preservation, infill development, transformative redevelopment (Chapel Hill). We should use FBC to make feasible what we talked about in planBTV Downtown-Waterfront. We can encourage infill of surface parking lots and help the process be more predictable for developers and neighbors. The hope is also to have higher quality building design and FBC can help us legislate better design. It would be a mistake going any further to include the enterprise zone in the code, let's wait for planBTV South End to happen there before talking about the planning process. There has been a debate on height limits, talking about a number of stories versus a total of feet of height. This isn't an effort to detract from the character and scale of the development. The April 1st deadline is set in the council resolution and the committee should give an update to Council at that time but take the time to get this right.

M. Standley – Lives in Ward 3 in ONE and studio in South End. Been very involved with planBTV South End – last week workshops. Urges staff to keep up the work and continue to do more outreach. Disseminate the information gathered during the workshops last week. We should vet the data a bit more before coming back with a draft plan.

A. Simon – He is encouraged to hear the Mayor to take more time to review the code. April 1st deadline was arbitrary a bit. What is the thought on extending the process?

IV. Downtown Form-Based Code Review

D. White – RDS studio tested two sites in FD6.

J. Fielding – Presented the designs for both sites. 86 Main Street & 75 South Winooski.

A. Montroll – Was the setback of the upper stories required?

J. Fielding – No, but she wanted to show how she could make a base that is shorter with taller height in the back.

E. Lee – Would be interesting to see how the skyline of Burlington could be changed with this.

A. Montroll - What is the height of this building?

J. Fielding - 138 feet.

J. Shannon – What wouldn't be allowed to happen under current zoning?

D. White – Building height would not be allowed.

J. Fielding – The existing code also doesn't make you do certain thing like the shopfront.

J. Shannon – What is the bump out in the upper floors about?

J. Fielding – Just wanted to show possible articulation of the façade of the building. The glazing requirements were the most restrictive in the code that forces her to do certain things. It would be great to have the arcade not be required to go all the way along the façade.

J. Shannon – Very interesting and helpful to hear and see those examples.

E. Morrow – Presented his work on the Rite Aid site. One scheme that pushed out the code and the other that did want he wanted.

A. Montroll – Did the setback meet the requirements of the code?

J. Shannon – You just designed the building you wanted?

E. Morrow – Correct. This is 75 feet tall building on the lowest model.

E. Morrow – Patagonia store site. What if they wanted to get net zero, and lose much less energy. What if they wanted to use translucent glazing? There is already more than 80% glazing on the façade. Measure building height from a point 14 feet high and then give developers a certain amount of height above that.

D. White – Did you calculate the amount of glazing between 3 and 10 feet?

E. Montroll – It is probably all within the 10 foot height limit.

J. Shannon – The item that is jumping out is the inclusion of the enterprise zone. Think we should remove FD5-AI from the code.

D. White – Passed around the proposed map to eliminate the FD5-AI and takes the enterprise district out of the proposed FBC.

On a motion by J. Shannon, seconded by C. Mason, the committee unanimously moved to change the regulating plan to remove FD5-AI as well as Smalley Park as a Civic Space.

A. Montroll – Makes sense to take out for now and discuss after the South End process is over.

J. Shannon – She is not comfortable with the form-districts from area to area. Fitting in almost means something different block to block. The worst thing from any zoning process is to figure out what the unintended consequences are. Doesn't see how we can have the districts where they are.

A. Montroll – We should always go back to the map and make sure that everything makes sense. Still would be helpful to get through the different districts.

M. Tracy – Thinking of the waterfront now and the PIAP process we just went through for this. Feels a little bit premature with so much in flux on the waterfront and not understanding what that will affect. When starting to touch on the waterfront, this is the other area that people might react negatively. People look at planBTV as the panacea, looking at it for more of a broad document.

J. Shannon – planBTV was adopted in MDP and that is city policy. During the re-write, we did the zoning before the planning and planBTV is the vision on which the zoning should be based on.

A. Montroll – planBTV is the planning document and can be interpreted differently. We do need to keep going back to it and not do something that is inconsistent with it.

E. Lee – Of an example of other mandate from planBTV – discusses green space and ecological needs but yet the green space is not allowed to be located in front of buildings. In planBTV there is a map of lots that are underdeveloped as possible major sites to be developed and redeveloped. Those sites are the main sites where change might be happening.

D. White – Showed map that shows the relationship between FDs and current zoning districts. Most FDs are following the existing zoning districts pretty closely. The current zoning districts were delineated during the

zoning re-write and very closely linked to what is on the ground today. What is most important is the scale that is allowed in each district, not so much where the lines are drawn.

J. Shannon – Numbering issue - can we change the convention of the numbering to make it follow the districts? Can we add the map of underutilized sites to the website?

A. Montroll – Can we keep a list of motions and requests that are being made during the meetings.

J. Shannon – Perhaps we could lay out a more realistic timeline for the process to continue and present to the City Council.

A. Montroll – At least we need to report to the Council. Go to second meeting in April to have a schedule ready. He will sit down with staff to figure this out.

A. Montroll – For him building height jumped out and setbacks seem too restrictive.

E. Lee – Yes, the height is an issue that many reacted to.

D. White – If you want to have an absolute number, then that is a fundamental change that should apply everywhere for each district.

J. Shannon – We should stick with the base height limits that are included in the code. Taller buildings should have that extra public review if they want to go taller.

E. Lee – I don't hear people say that a building is too tall in term of height in feet but rather in terms of stories. Minimum height floor to floor on the first story.

A. Montroll – He is leery of doing both absolute height and number of stories – we should do one or the other, not both.

D. White – Depends on the uses in the buildings and floor to floor ratios will change.

J. Shannon – We should regulate the ultimate height. Most of the city is on a hill, so define the point on the hill where we measure from.

V. **Public Forum** – (15 min)

D. Gayer – Jodie example would be reviewed by DRB, not staff.

D. White - No, her project would be within the requirements of the code and reviewed by staff.

C. Simpson – A good start is looking at what works and Church Street is a great example. Work from your assets.

H. Roen - Having FD5-PT on the waterfront. 100% lot coverage allowed there and that should look at that carefully.

M. Standley – She is thrilled that the enterprise zone was removed. Moving forward, she is concerned that the draft FBC got this far with that in it. Surprised that the resolution passed unanimously without the Council seeing and approving this draft.

D. White – The resolution was about the intent of the FBC and the creation of this committee.

B. McGrath – What is the difference between the current code and the FBC?

A. Montroll – Staff will explain that to him separately.

E. Morrow – Sites west of the train tracks on the waterfront need further review. Would like to see an alternate of traditional planning & zoning developed as well. Public review is good to have. Some cities have a city architect on staff and that could help the discussion. DAB and DRB should meet more regularly.

D. Gayer – Comparison of the existing zoning with the FBC on the website.

VI. **Adjourn**