



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE
c/o Community & Economic Development Office
City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401
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Councilor Brian Pine, Chair, Ward 3
Councilor Karen Paul, Ward 6
Councilor Ali Dieng, Ward 7

Committee Members: Chair Brian Pine (BP), Councilor Karen Paul (KP), Councilor Ali Dieng (AD)

In attendance: Ian Jakus, Joe Speidel, Bill Ward, Gillian Nanton, Caryn Long, Sandy Wynn, Carol Livingston, Rebecca Thompson, Mary Danko, Councilor Sharon Bushor

Thursday, June 6th, 2019
5:30 – 7:00 PM
City Hall – Conference Room 12

Draft Minutes

1. Review Agenda (5 minutes)

BP commenced meeting at 5:30

KP made a motion to change order of the meeting - motion to switch the #4 agenda item 'The Neighborhood Project' and the #3 agenda item the 'Update on the Early Learning Initiative'

BP seconded the change in the agenda.

2. Public Forum (10 minutes)

BP notes that there will be further opportunity to speak during the agenda items.

3. The Neighborhood Project - Discussion of report recommendations (45 min)
Gillian Nanton, CEDO

BP asks Gillian Nanton, Assistant Director, CEDO to work through the recommendations and lay out the scope of work.

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contact Gillian Nanton at Gnanton@burlingtonvt.gov

GN explains the task assigned by City Council on April 29 was to prioritize recommendations and report back to council end of July.

There was agreement in prioritizing the recommendations relating to quality of life enhancements.

BP asked for an update on current efforts by Code Enforcement and UVM.

Bill Ward, Director, Code Enforcement said working with Gail Champnois at the UVM Community Coalition for move out day this year was a big success, four dumpsters. One of Code Enforcements greatest successes is identifying the ongoing problem properties for strategic approach. Often times nuisance complaints do not result in tickets so this requires sharing of police data on nuisance complaints and early intervention.

KP stated that she will personally call landlords if there are issues, this happens less frequently now.

Joe Speidel, UVM, said the University is starting an online education for renters that will be mandatory, including fair warning for any renter that they would sign off on and then that will serve as warning for future action.

Bill Ward said there are some landlords that are repeat offenders, in cases where the tenants have substandard living conditions. The new report card instituted by inspections – the problem properties/units have to be re inspected more frequently. There are issues that go beyond safety like 'four unrelated' ordinance, and non-sanitary trash which is currently a \$100 fine. He suggested increasing the fine for non-sanitary trash to \$500 would be helpful. Many landlords will contest the tickets, but many will just pay, but if a property owner appeals then it goes to a jury trial.

Councilor Sharon Bushor stated that on East Ave, there was illegal dumping. She said that spring cleanout has negative consequences, because the students who live in many areas think they can leave everything out on the tree belt and they don't get picked up everywhere. Dealing with trash left illegally how do we deal with that?

Bill Ward responded that the flyer for move out day does say that you cannot leave things on the greenbelt. Not doing spring move out would make it a lot worse.

AD asked if the good landlords get rewarded.

Bill Ward responded that Code Enforcement leaves the good landlords alone, with a longer time for re inspection, which is what they want.

Joe Speidel said that there are other ways to work with landlords. Treating rentals like businesses. Joe said he is willing to do some research on this.

The CDNR Committee members agreed that UVM should pursue this research about how to really approach landlords as a business. UVM determined that they cannot recommend specific landlords.

Caryn Long asked Joe to look into how to enforce the 'four unrelated' ordinance.

Joe Speidel responded that from what he has heard other communities are doing the same things, and have the same challenges.

Bill Ward said that Code Enforcement has 9 'four unrelated' cases this year. If someone is willing to lie, it is hard because they get 48 hours notice before an inspection. This year the City has received \$22,000 from the penalties for violation fees.

Carol Livingston said she heard this issue about the cost on campus housing.

Joe Speidel said that UVM is currently doing a housing study. The reasons for living off campus have not been financial in the past. He said comparing off campus and on campus housing costs is difficult because many additional services are included for on campus housing.

KP asked to go through the other recommendations in the other 2 categories, or come up with a response to some of the steps.

Gillian Nanton explained there are potential issues where demographic changes are leading to single family homes being converted to rentals. Building more student housing did come out of this as the number one recommendation, secondly creating a property acquisition fund.

Carol Livingston asked if there was any regulation to impede that conversion from happening?

BP said we have long looked at this, and there is really no way to stop that from happening. You can't stop someone from selling to an investor.

Caryn Long said there are people who would like to buy but are being outbid.

Sandy Wynn said there was a house on Loomis that was in terrible shape that was converted back into a single family home but this is rare.

Caryn Long said we should set up a fund to provide assistance with those conversions.

Ann said the solution is for UVM to build more housing, either on campus or off campus.

Karen Paul said that UVM will be getting their housing study completed and will be having more conversations with leadership there. Students want to live off campus for independence and privacy. It is up to UVM to build housing that will satisfy these requirements. If landlords can no longer sell by the bed they will either sell, or improve their property. As a first step UVM needs to explore the Trinity Campus.

Sandy Wynn said that UVM needs to lift their status as a dry campus because that has driven students off campus. There used to be a strong differential between homestead tax rates versus investment property, but that benefit for homestead has been largely reduced. Local lenders have programs to renovate properties, we don't need to recreate the wheel, so be cautious about this. Burlington needs to reassess properties because they are severely under appraised.

KP said when the balance has tipped toward absentee landlords in neighborhoods it is really unfortunate, but we should prioritize the ones where balance between single family and multi-family can be maintained. There are cases when sellers will prioritize sales to non-investors, but it takes a community effort. KP suggested that in regards to Trinity Campus housing, it would be meaningful if it could happen, although it would be great if it could accommodate more students.

Sandy Wynn said that Real Estate agents are really driving this issue when they push for a fast sale and a commission.

AD said there should be a cap for UVM to target a certain percentage rate of on-campus housing.

BP stated that there are already agreements with UVM that regularly renegotiated to this end.

4. Update on Early Learning Initiative (20 min) Rebecca Reese, CEDO; Brian Lowe, Chief Innovation Officer

Rebecca Reese presented on the 2019 capacity grants (attached) and the First Step Scholarship.

Discussion of handout explaining the Early Literacy Outreach Program (attached).

Mary Danko said that the library could provide home daycares with a once a week literacy program. The providers like it because it gives them respite and provides interaction for the kids.

BP asked how many kids they are reaching.

Rebecca Thompson responded she personally is reaching about 50 with the additional volunteers roughly 100.

Mary Danko said that they would like to create a limited service position for which they have most of the funding, but need additional to fill the gap.

Brian Lowe said it is a great investment to leverage connection with the library.

BP asked how many kids are in home childcare.

Rebecca Thompson responded that most home providers are not registered but that there are 17-19 providers that are registered but not high quality.

Brian Lowe explained that with some funding from ELI Capacity Grants this program could help bridge the gap to these home providers that they are not currently reaching.

AD suggested offering the program outside of home daycare providers to events.

BP referred to the Old North End Enterprise Strategy that created a network of home daycare providers but that it was not maintained.

AD made a motion to support the 2019 Capacity Grant recommendations including the addition of funding for the Early Literacy Outreach Program. The motion was seconded by BP, unanimous approval.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15