



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT

**CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE**

c/o Community & Economic Development Office

Councilor Selene Colburn, Chair, East District

Councilor Tom Ayres, Ward 7

Councilor Adam Roof, Ward 8

Meeting Minutes 7/14/2015

The meeting began at 6:06 p.m. and was called to order by Councilor/Chair Selene Colburn. Councilors Ayres and Roof were present. Staff present included Peter Owens, CEDO Director, Marcy Esbjerg, CEDO Assistant Director and Brian Lowe, Mayor's Office Chief of Staff. Other Councilors present included Sara Giannoni and Sharon Bushor.

Review Agenda:

Chair Colburn explained the revised agenda which included revised process tonight. We will be hearing a verbal update of the Housing Action Plan regarding the timing, process and to continue to include a strong public process.

A motion was made by Councilor Tom Ayres and seconded by Adam Roof to approve the agenda. Motion passed.

Public Forum:

Caryn Long commented on very bad Henry Street noise complaint from last weekend. She expressed concern about the 4 unrelated ordinance not being enforced. The example used was Weston Street where reportedly 21 people live in 3 houses.

Charles Simpson – He referred to the report from Housing Summit about the Housing Action Plan. HAP Topic #1 – Neighborhood Parking. This should be brought together with Downtown Parking analysis and not looked at separately. Form Based Code – eliminates zero energy building in Burlington; so the City might want to hire a City architect to look at those changes. HAP Topic #11 –The City should consider cooperative student housing for the 1500 student housing units. He also noted that there should be greater discussion on the Burlington College land, market rate housing and parking.

Councilor Bushor commented on the Housing Action Plan that appeared to her as a laundry list of ideas. She suggested that the Council should make the Housing Trust Fund full penny as a permanent charter change. She also expressed concern regarding the affordability piece for student housing. Sharon commented that there are

many times where housing and parking intercept. She did think the original HAP draft very thoughtful. There was very good feedback and input. She suggested the public see what ideas were/were not accepted in the Plan.

Ibnar Abilik commented on the HAP #6 and concern about South End Plan BTV. He questioned if housing in the South End might drive out artists. Ibnar thought it was important to consider what the public says. He expressed concern about CEDO involved at the 11th hour – when, how, who is involved with the Plan, who does the approval? He suggested to study the future needs of industry, waste water and infrastructure in the South End. He also commented that HAP topics #10 and 17 go together.

Erhard Mahnke presented a chart for affordable housing , Inclusionary Zoning rents and incomes. He applauded the fact that for FY 16, the Housing Trust Fund was fully funded! He wanted to ensure that the HTF remains focused primarily on low/mod. Erhard also reminded us that the prime provider of the Housing First model in VT is Pathways and they should be mentioned in the HAP.

Sandy Wynn: She inquired as to why the 4 unrelated ordinance is not enforced, and also wondered why it was not mentioned in the HAP.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Councilor Ayers to pass the minutes from both the 3/24 and 5/12 meetings. Seconded by Councilor Roof. The motion passed.

Housing Action Plan – Brian Lowe, presenter:

In his verbal report, Brian stressed the reasons why this administration seeks to develop this Housing Action Plan. He cited the high 44% cost burden of citizens , the low vacancy rate(less than 2%), and the goal to increase housing stock in downtown, since Burlington lags far behind other cities of comparable size.

Brian recounted the number of public meetings on the HAP in addition to the City Council meeting on April 15. He stressed the very robust public process.

Brian summarized the four areas of change in the Plan with a draft coming later this month:

- Expansion of the preservation of affordable housing section

- Addition of a Sustainability/energy efficiency section

- Regionalization/include Chittenden County in housing discussions – not limited to Burlington city limits

- Clarify goals, timeline and who's responsible!

Public Comment

A citizen said it is critical that the HTF administration follows the ordinance and serve residents at 80% or less of the median income.

Caryn Long also asked if the vacancy rate was accurate and if there was a population decrease.

Erhard Mahnke said a greater emphasis on preservation of affordable housing was welcome. He thought it was important to incorporate John Davis' comments and look at demographics on cost burdened – 30, 50, 80% of median income. The report used the figure of 44% of 80% of the AMI were cost-burdened.

Brenda Torpy applauded the public process and said it was a good thing. But she also said we have to stop talking and start doing, because Burlington is being affected by market impacts.

Councilor Bushor asked a number of questions. What do you mean about preservation of affordability? What do you mean about regionalization? It is true that housing issues can have impacts from other communities. We can have statewide goals for housing but we can only control our City.

Charles Simpson mentioned other towns in Chittenden that have huge shopping malls with 1000 paying jobs and they should build affordable housing near those retail centers.

Councilor Giannoni talked about the vacancy rate tied to income or cost of housing; it is not the same across the market. She suggested that parking minimums/policy need to be solved. She brought up issues surrounding Form Based Code – i.e., increased heights - how it impacts infrastructure, how it works in other places are similar to BTM. She is concerned at eliminating the review piece.

Councilor Feedback on Verbal Report

Councilor Colburn reminded the audience that there are other processes on parking and Form Based Code and we should be careful not to confuse the roles of this committee with other groups.

Councilor Ayres wondered what is the purview of the Housing Action Plan is?

Both Brian Lowe and Peter Owens said that the HAP is a strategic document that will focus on housing. It will serve as a framework but not as a regulatory document. The HAP will point to areas the City needs to work on.

Councilor Roof said he likes the proposed changes like preservation and sustainability.

There was a discussion regarding Form Based Code. Councilor Ayers shared that intellectually FBC makes sense but in his analysis it was black and white with no grey. He also is concerned that there seems to be a lack of community feedback/input and suggests more of a hybrid approach. Peter Owens referenced learning about the community of Somerville and their use of FBC but as an iteration of their building code or more of a hybrid that worked for their community. Councilor Roof noted that the FBC proposal is for a pilot area, downtown.

Councilor Colburn offered the following comments on the verbal update for the HAP. She liked the expansion of the preservation of affordable housing. She noted that the public comments brought up preservation of open space and suggested that should be added. Councilor Colburn asked if the order within the plan reflected the administration's priorities as in the deregulation coming at the front of the plan. She wanted to ensure the Plan reflects a deep sense of urgency and the commitment to grow student housing and provide targets of the number of units. Finally, she reflected on a comment made by Kirby Dunn in previous comment periods that not everyone who is eligible to receive subsidy will ever get those subsidies in Burlington.

Councilor Ayers expressed an interest in allowing more accessory dwelling units in several areas of the City including the idea of tiny houses.

Caryn Long: Where is our information on people and wages? Caryn wondered how student information impacts our data.

Focus/work of CDNR moving forward:

Councilor Colburn opened the last item on the agenda by providing a list of issues considered by the committee in past years. She noted that she would like to warn meeting 2 weeks in advance. After discussion, it was suggested the next meeting would be at the end of August or early fall. Brian Lowe believes that the next version of the Housing Action Plan would come out at the end of July. Councilors are to bring written comments to the next meeting on the Housing Action Plan.

For the focus and work of the CDNR Committee, Chair Colburn is going to check with Council President Knodell in the changed role of the HR/Institution Committee and what matters will now fall to the CDNR Committee. In addition, the role of NPA's/staffing/support/public process would be examined, as well as updates on the City's homeless policies. CDNR wants to continue on quality of life issues such as 4 unrelated and housing and economic development. Someone asked if the Committee should consider Community Policing and it was noted that the Public Safety Committee considers that topic. Finally, Councilor Colburn mentioned learning about other civic engagement models from Kesha Ram if relevant.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8 PM by Councilor Ayers and seconded by Councilor Roof. Motion approved and meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcy Esbjerg, Assistant Director

CEDO

