



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

Attending: Chair Brian Pine (BP), Councilor Karen Paul (KP), Councilor Ali Dieng (AD), Councilor Sharon Bushor, Ian Jakus (CEDO), Gillian Nanton (CEDO) (GN), Joe Speidel (UVM), Bill Ward, Director Code Enforcement (BW), Sandy Wynne, Jonathan Chapple-Sokol, Linda Rizvi, Caryn Long, Gabrielle Sealy, JF Carter Neubieser, Dave Hartnett

Monday, July 22nd, 2019

5:30 - 7:00 PM

City Hall – Conference Room 12

Draft Minutes

Meeting convened: 5:36PM

1. Review Agenda (5 minutes)

Approved unanimous.

2. Approve Minutes (5 minutes) 6/6/19, 4/22/19, 7/1/19

Hold off on action on the minutes until all Committee members are present.

2. Public Forum (10 minutes)

Linda Rizvi said there is a recommendation to exclude certain neighborhoods that would not be eligible for some of the policies and recommendations of the neighborhood project. She feels that if the committee should not recommend that some policies target certain areas and would accelerate these issues in other areas.

Caryn Long said that the noise ordinance is not being enforced. She suggested hiring more enforcement officers to support the laws that we have on the books. Said that initially 'four unrelated' was enforced and it worked.

Sandy Wynne said that I have a question about a property where cars are parking on the grass. I see the parking enforcement officers walk by, but can they do anything about this? Why aren't

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there other people reporting these issues. How can we encourage all departments to work together to report these issues.

Councilor Bushor asked if despite the delineation of authority in enforcement of traffic and parking and enforcement of zoning could they be authorized to enforce both of these issues? Could we give them the authority to do that?

4. The Neighborhood Project - Continued discussion of report recommendations, priority setting and establish action items (1 hr)

BP said that at the last CDNR meeting we had many questions about code enforcement, so we do want to revisit those.

BW responded to Sharon Bushor's question said that before he came on board here, there were areas that were gravel that have since become overgrown by grass, and may appear to be grass, and the police department cannot know that information, so they stopped enforcing yard parking tickets. They have always had the authority to enforce yard parking tickets. Recently they issued 40 lawn parking tickets in the last quarter. Code enforcement and BPD share that role.

BW said that See Click Fix is the best way to report because the police department can take those issues on. They get all the on-street parking issues and code enforcement cannot do on-street parking but can do yard parking. See Click Fix shows when we're doing a good job and when we're doing a bad job.

BP said the other issue that came up was the enforcement of the 'Four Unrelated' ordinance.

BW said there have been half a dozen this year, we send a warning letter to the property owner, and if it's a glaring violation then we can jump right on it. We like to give people the benefit of the doubt so we do send them the warning letter and we want to avoid misunderstandings. This often happens early on in the year, before the dorms open up, sometimes people are temporarily staying in the apartment, and we investigate and follow up.

Caryn Long said that when the city provides warning it allows the extra people to vacate the home. She said some homeowner call landlords directly.

BP asked if this is state law to provide a warning.

BW said the 48 hour warning for an inspection is required. If you were being dishonest you could have the tenants vacate, but that should be a major inconvenience for the tenants and be a red flag for them. We have waited for the first week of school to pass, and then done inspections when it is a big inconvenience for the tenants. When a tenant gets fed up with the situation they have reported their landlords. But this is a rare circumstance. There are a few problem landlords that are no longer in Burlington since from when I started so enforcement has worked.

AD asked about the issue of yard parking generally and the issue of stormwater runoff.

BW responded that routine parking on grass cause the areas to become compacted and it cannot absorb the water and it creates additional runoff with additional dirt and debris. In Wards 4 and 7 the city can write tickets for lawn parking. But in some wards, it is a straight zoning violation. There is an exception for certain areas, where a ticket can be issued.

BP is this an ordinance?

SB said when this issue came up it wouldn't have passed, so they focused on the center city.

BP asked BW to take a look at the report and identify short and long term issues that we can take on.

AD said that in the last meeting there was an issue of staff capacity.

BW said some of the best discussions have come through DPW, and the new permitting and zoning merger is helping with these issues including parking enforcement. With the new staffing situation we are going to have additional capacity. The data that we gathered from the ratings system, and it takes some time to get to it. BW said that citizens can look up the ratings.

GN said that one of the principal recommendations is to streamline the quality of life ordinances and recommended the establishment of a team to examine this more comprehensively.

BW said that one of the challenges is that the landlord group has to be on board if it's a simple change. We have a large group of landlords that have scored at a 4 or 5 level, and they might support the changes because it wouldn't affect them.

Dave Hartnett said that particularly in ward 1 we also have businesses that are not following quality of life ordinances. We need to look at the whole picture.

BP said that trash haulers cannot be operating at 6 AM. Who handles this?

BW said that this is a real issue that should be reported, and they should call the police on them right there at that moment so they can be ticketed. DPW handles it on haulers downtown that have an exception.

SB said that the City Council would benefit to having a cheat sheet for some of these laws that we just don't know, and who's responsible for enforcing it.

GN reviewed the Employer Assisted Housing materials (attached).

BP asked about the employer assisted housing program in Bennington at the Southern Vermont Hospital, and could reach out to the hospital and follow up with them.

SB asked about administering the program, would it be CEDO or CHT?

Gabrielle Sealy said that I live in Ward 8 and there are four properties that are for sale that would be huge if they converted from rental to single family homes, as they were originally. I don't want all owner occupied but just want balance.

SB asked if the City could be considered an employer.

BP said that previously when they tried to get this going, the City was included. He said that the Chamber often raises the issue of housing affordability and an employer assisted housing program would help to address that.

Joe Speidel said that it would send a good message if the City was involved in this, as well as other large businesses who often raised this issue.

Jonathan Chappel Sokol said that in terms of the City being an employer and the city requiring department heads to live in the City could we provide assistance.

BP said that this is part of the City charter. Typically these types of programs are not aimed at executive level employees. Rarely are waivers requested due to cost.

BP is there any way to notify prospective buyers about the 'four unrelated' ordinance?

BW said that after 2012 you could not have more than four unrelated in the high density zoning districts. If the landlords can document that they were operating before 2012 then they are grandfathered as an exception unless they stop renting for 12 months, and the grandfathered status gets passed on to different property owners.

GN said that one item that the City team could take on immediately is reviewing the quality of life issues, but the legal team currently has limited capacity. To continue work on the fund to purchase single family homes would require roughly \$15,000 to start off, but pointed out that the funding for the project was previously shared between the City, UVM and Champlain College.

BP said that we should consider how much CEDO can actually do and deliver. It would be helpful to get a response from CEDO regarding capacity and what can be expected.

JF Carter Neubier asked about how we can ensure that UVM isn't raising housing costs for students on campus, if that is considered here.

Joe Speidel said that the housing study currently underway will examine the decision to move off campus but in the past cost has not been a significant factor. Councilor Hanson also asked to examine costs of on campus housing that we will pull together.

Caryn Long said that the dry campus issue that drives upper classmen off campus. Cost is definitely a factor.

GN said that we did hear from students that cost of housing was a factor in deciding to move off campus.

Caryn Long raised the issue of enforcement, and that we need to follow up on it. Homeowners are afraid to report these issues of nuisance due to retaliation.

AD said those families should come here to speak to CDNR.

BP said that we should meet with Bill Ward to have this conversation, and maybe we should also meet with the Chief of Police.

5. Next Steps (5 min)

BP said that the CDNR Committee would request an extension to report back to no later than the last City Council meeting in August. Next steps would include: Bill Ward to prioritize the quality of life issues. CEDO to report back on capacity to take these efforts on. Convening a City team to focus on minimum housing standards. Explore additional funding for the acquisition fund research.

AD asked if we could add timelines to the action items / priorities for at least the high priorities (12 months) medium 12 -16 months for example.

Followup with Councilor Paul to schedule the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:18