Burlington Conservation Board
149 Church Street
Burlington, VT 05401
http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/planning/
Telephone: (802) 865-7189
(802) 865-7195 (FAX)

Matt Moore, Chair
Will Flender, Vice Chair
Scott Mapes
Don Meals
Jeff Severson
Miles Waite
Damon Lane
Zoe Richards
Stephanie Young

Conservation Board Meeting Minutes - Draft

Monday, July 6, 2015 – 5:30 pm
Department of Public Works – Main meeting room
645 Pine Street

Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Jeff Severson (JS), Matt Moore (MM), Stephanie Young (SY), Damon Lane (DL), Don Meals (DM), Will Flender (WF), Scott Mapes (SM)
- **Absent:** Miles Waite (MW)
- **Public:** Eric Farrell, Michael Buscher, Peter Smair, Owiso Makuku (Burlington College Major Impact Development Review)
- **Staff:** Jay Appleton (Planning & Zoning), Jesse Bridges (Parks & Recreation)

MM, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Annual Organizational Meeting

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by ZR:

Reelect the existing Chair and Vice Chair.

MM and WF were reelected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively 8-0.

Minutes of June 1, 2015

A MOTION was made by DM and SECONDED by JS:

Approve as written.

Vote: 6-0-2 in favor (SM and WF abstaining)

Board Comment

Following up on the June 1 discussion concerning implementation of Vermont Residential and Commercial Building Energy Standards, DL summarized the status of the “stretch code” energy standards. He noted that the State is in the process of updating its energy plan. The State has information regarding Residential Building Energy Standards (RBES) at http://publicservice.vermont.gov/topics/energy_efficiency/rbes, but there is little available on its Commercial (CBES) counterpart. DL added that Vermont is among the first states to implement commercial building energy standards.

Regarding two new University of Vermont (UVM) student dormitories which received zoning approval on June 8 (ZP# 15-1000CA), ZR was disappointed that a proposed green roof was eliminated. She felt that applicants need to be held accountable for doing what they represent in front of the Conservation Board.

DM reported that national legislation was recently adopted in France that requires that new buildings in commercial zones must have either plants (green roofs) or solar panels covering at least part of their roofs.

Public Comment

Regarding green roofs, Michael Buscher commented that green roofs are very expensive to build, and one can get more environmental benefit for the cost with other measures. Peter Smair agreed. (Both are consultants who were in attendance for the Burlington College item.)

Open Space Subcommittee

Jesse Bridges, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation, was in attendance to update the Board on public outreach efforts regarding open space preservation on the Saint Joseph's Orphanage/Burlington College property at 351 North Avenue. WF stated that the committee had not met since the Board June 1 meeting.

Mr. Bridges reported that public meetings were held to garner public comment on open space preservation the property, and what shape that may take. Additionally, focus groups met to do the same. Public comment will be summarized on the Parks and Recreation web site, along with a public comment tool. A public meeting will be held on July 15 at the Saint Joseph's School to summarize the comment/ideas the Department has gathered so far, and to present some of the realities surrounding the project.

Mr. Bridges then turned to discussion of Conservation Legacy Fund (CLF) use policy options with regard to purchasing part of the Burlington College property. He noted that the capacity of a fund raising drive to raise monies is limited because there are so many drives underway currently.

Use of the CLF to purchase part of the Burlington College property presents two policy options, Mr. Bridges said. The Board could either move to amend the CLF structure to allow expenditures of more than 40% of the fund, or it could encumber future CLF monies for acquisition.

ZR observed that the financial history of the property is very complicated, and there could be unforeseen impacts if the decision was made to encumber future CLF dollars.

WF felt that the property is worth spending a significant amount of CLF funds for, and he was in favor of going above the 40% limit.

DM suggested that acquisition of the property and consideration of going beyond the 40% limit should be two separate conversations. He stated he was against encumbering future CLF funds because one does not know what the future will bring.

JS said if the project cannot meet the leveraging ratio, then he is open to exceeding the 40% limit. He also was against encumbering future CLF dollars unless it could be done in the context of future conservation needs.

WF suggested that the Conservation Board and Parks and Recreation Commission hold a joint meeting to discuss CLF policy options.

Project Review

16-0007CA/MA: 351 North Avenue (WRM, Ward 4N) Burlington College/Eric Farrell
Change of use from existing orphanage to 63 residential units. Establish common spaces, assembly spaces, hardscape and landscape improvements, parking, etc.

Eric Farrell, Michael Buscher, Peter Smair, and Owiso Makuku were in attendance on behalf of the item. DM left the meeting at the beginning of the item at 6:19 pm.

Mr. Farrell presented his application to convert the existing orphanage building to residential use. Since the June Board meeting, Mr. Farrell purchased 27 acres of the existing 33.65 acre property owned by Burlington College. His zoning permit application proposes construction of 63 studio and one-bedroom residential apartments within the building, create assembly space in the chapel wing, and associated external site improvements to support the project.

Mr. Farrell reviewed the site plan focusing on parking and stormwater management. A paved access road to an existing paved parking lot west and downhill from the building would be constructed, and the lot itself resurfaced. A new gravel parking lot would be constructed adjacent to the north end of the building. Mr. Farrell explained that the gravel lot should be construed as temporary because there are future decisions regarding future use of the property that could drive parking requirements. Thus he wants to provide minimum parking until those decisions have been made. He plans to ask the Development Review Board for a waiver. If he is required to provide more parking than proposed, he would expand the proposed gravel lot. The existing paved lot would be retained as parking.

Mr. Smair reviewed proposed stormwater management infrastructure. Runoff from the front of the property will be redirected into existing City storm drains. An infiltration basin north of the existing paved parking lot in back would be constructed, fed by a grass swale. A rain garden would be constructed to the south of the existing paved parking lot. He stated that the existing sandy soils on the property downhill are doing a good job managing stormwater runoff, so there is no need for anything else. Like with parking, Mr. Smair said it does not make sense to invest of hard structures until the final site plan is known.

Mr. Farrell concluded by saying he needs a comprehensive plan for the site before building much infrastructure. “I don’t want to build stuff we’ll have to take out later.”

SM observed that the volume of runoff going to North Avenue storm drains will be decreased by the proposal. Mr. Smair agreed.

MM asked if use of permeable pavers would be installed. Mr. Farrell replied in the negative.

DM asked what energy efficiency were planned for the building. Mr. Farrell answered that the entire building will be re-insulated.

A MOTION was made by WF and SECONDED by DL:

The Conservation Board supports the project as proposed, endorses granting a parking waiver, and commends the applicant for the proposed bicycle support measures.

Vote: 7-0-1 in favor (JS abstaining)

Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 6:47 PM