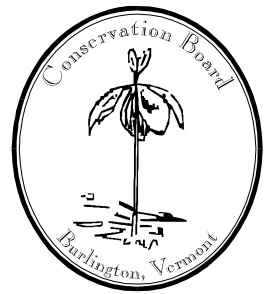


## Burlington Conservation Board

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Zoe Richards, Chair  
Rebecca Roman  
Don Meals  
Ryan Crehan  
Hannah Brislin  
Miles Waite  
Caryn Connolly  
Kyle Tansley  
Elizabeth Cunningham, Student



## Conservation Board Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 7, 2022 – 5:30 pm  
Remote Meeting

### Attendance

- **Board Members:** Zoe Richards (ZR), Ryan Crehan (RC), Miles Waite (MW), Hannah Brislin (HB), Caryn Connolly (CC), Don Meals (DM), Elizabeth Cunningham (EC), Rebecca Roman (RR), Kyle Tansley (KT)
- **Absent:**
- **Public:** Sharon Bushor, Kate Kruesi
- **Staff:** Scott Gustin (Permitting & Inspections), Jennifer Green (BED), Jenna Olson, Megan Moir (DPW Water Resources)

ZR, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

### Minutes

A MOTION was made by MW and SECONDED by DM:

Adopt the minutes of February 7 as written.

Vote: 6-0-1, motion carried.

### Board Comment

Board members introduced themselves to new member Kyle Tansley and vice versa.

SG asked the BCB if they would like to go in-person or hybrid in the coming months. Board members opted for hybrid meetings starting in April.

SG mentioned the Open Space Addendum was unanimously approved by City Council on February 22. He also noted the steep slopes amendment has gone through 1<sup>st</sup> read with the Planning Commission and is coming up for a public hearing. Following that, it will move to the City Council. He also mentioned that he recently followed up with VT DEM as to the Riverside Slope Study and FEMA's hazard mitigation grant program.

MW noted Front Porch Forum chatter about Councilor Magee's proposal to allow camping in city parks. It is being presented to the Parks Commission this week. It would allow camping for up to 30 days within any city park. ZR asked if this should be a discussion topic. SG will reach out to Cindi Wight to note the Conservation Board's interest in this matter and ask about next steps following the Parks' Commission consideration this week. HB asked to see the proposed ordinance language.

ZR said there's interest and excitement among city councilors recognizing that there's a symbiosis between climate and conservation work.

The programs and services of the Dept. of Permitting & Inspections are accessible to people with disabilities. For accessibility information call 865-7188.

## Public Comment

None.

## Update & Discussion

### 1. Water Resources: Integrated Water Quality Plan

Discussion with Water Resources Staff

Jenna Olson and Megan Moir appeared on behalf of this item.

Jenna Olson and Megan Moir presented the city's Integrated Water Quality Plan.

Ms. Moir overviewed the city's approach on how to deal with various water quality obligations. She noted the 2016 Lake Champlain phosphorous TMDL. This is about reducing phosphorous and cyanobacteria blooms. There are also flow restoration TMDL's related to erosion and aquatic life. Combined sewer overflows (CSO's) continue to occur despite progress that has been made. The city has extensive water & wastewater infrastructure. We need to account for repair, maintenance, and improvements. Ms. Moir noted several improvements scheduled for the upcoming construction season. We need to consider needs for modernization of our wastewater treatment plants.

Jenna Olson started by noting the cyanobacteria conditions in Lake Champlain. The EPA conceived of integrated planning efforts around 2010. As regulatory requirements add up, they can become increasingly burdensome. Burlington started its integrated planning effort in 2014 with the formal process beginning in 2017. Currently, final edits are underway. An integrated permit issued through the state is anticipated following completion of the plan.

Vermont contributes 69% of the phosphorous load to the lake. The largest single source is agriculture; however, urbanized lands are significant contributors. Burlington is responsible for 1.6% of the VT phosphorous load into the lake. Burlington has made very substantial progress towards meeting its phosphorous target.

Various strategies and combinations thereof have been considered in reaching the city's goals. There are three primary "boxes:" Dry weather tertiary treatment, dual-use wet weather treatment, optimization only. Preferred portfolio is a combination of measures.

Ms. Moir noted that the targeted reduction is based on a 2017-2019 study period. She noted that the flows to the Main WW Treatment Plant fluctuate due to stormwater flows into the system. Reduction in phosphorous needs to be accounted for in dry and wet weather scenarios. CSO reduction strategies are part of any scenario.

Next steps include engineering and design (2022-2023), DEC permit approval, and construction (into 2023-2024).

MW asked where the large storage tank along Pine Street would go. Ms. Olson replied, under Calahan Park. MW said it's a wet area.

(DM left at 6:30 PM).

ZR asked how we can work collaboratively on shared goals. Is there measurement of any other things like surface water buffer? Like along the Winooski River. Ms. Olson replied that new development projects affecting surface waters are reviewed by her office in partnership with DPI. Burlington focuses on runoff and WWTF's because that's what our permits cover. Ms. Moir said that some \$12M will be spent at the WWTF's could also generate more than \$1M for offsite green water quality work. Ms. Olson noted that her office worked with Dan Cahill on the newly adopted Open Space Addendum. i.e. Changing

practice to make rain gardens serve also as pollinator habitat. Integration of invasive species management in green infrastructure as well. She noted the collaborative work with DPI and BPRW.

RR pointed out that agriculture tends to be villainized in discussions about water pollution. Ms. Moir understands and said acre per acre, urban runoff is worse.

HB suggested that misconceptions about agriculture and the WWTF's be addressed through education. Ms. Olson said she's starting a "water words that work" webinar tomorrow. There are public education resources that her office can tap into. HB suggested checking in with advocacy organizations as part of the education and outreach effort. Ms. Moir noted the Lake Champlain Committee as an organization her office will collaborate with.

EC suggested sticking to a few main points for the main message while keeping the door open for a deeper dive for those who are interested.

## **2. BED Discussion in regards to the Open Space Addendum**

Discussion with BED staff as to climate strategies

Jennifer Green appeared on behalf of this item.

Jen Green overviewed net zero energy and Burlington's "2030 District." Burlington achieved getting all of its energy from renewable energy resources in 2013. Most of Burlington's thermal load comes from natural gas. The city is moving away from fossil fuels and pursuing electrification instead. Ms. Green showed a "business as usual" vs. Net Zero Energy 2030 slide followed by a Net Zero Energy slide. Net Zero Energy is based on 60% energy efficient buildings, 20% electric vehicles, 15% district energy, 5% alternative transport. Ms. Green noted the district heat idea to capture steam heat from McNeil for use at the hospital.

The theme is to electrify everything. As we make our energy sources cleaner, we make our grid cleaner.

ZR said she'd be interested in hearing more about the 2030 District at a future meeting. MW asked about the 2030 District. Ms. Green said there are about 20 districts in the US. Within that district, members commit to making reductions. Burlington has made the whole city part of the district. We get a property energy engineer to look at past energy consumption and draft a plan to follow to meet the 2030 goals.

(HB left at 7:06 PM.)

MW noted the lack of geothermal use in Burlington. There are a few installations, but no neighborhood installations. Ms. Green noted the new weatherization standards for rentals. 60% of Burlington residences are rentals. The city is seeing a huge rise in heat pump installations.

ZR said that, as the city heats up over time, we need to make sure our strategies are equitable. What can trees do for us in terms of cooling and avoided energy use? Ms. Green noted the heat island effect is obvious. Leaving a paved area and moving into a green area is a very notable difference.

## **Adjournment**

7:12 PM.