

## Community Development and Neighborhood Revitalization Committee Annual Report (March 2014)

Prepared by Councilor Kevin Worden on behalf of the Neighborhood Revitalization and Community Development Committee (Councilors Worden, Knodell, Aubin). The Committee much appreciates the staff support from Brian Pine, CEDO Assistant Director for Housing.

The Committee met on January 28, 2013, February 25, 2013, March 25, 2013, June 24, 2013, July 16, 2013, August 21, 2013, October 1, 2013, November 13, 2013, and January 30, 2014.

The Committee meetings were well attended by interested residents, representatives from the major city institutions (FAHC, UVM, CC), developers (CHT, Redstone, McGowan) and staff from several City Departments (CEDO, Planning and Zoning, Code Enforcement, Police Department, etc.).

Throughout the year, several city initiatives and updates were presented by representatives from various City Departments with discussion and comments from those in attendance. The following is a sample of initiatives and updates that were discussed: Consolidated Plan for Housing & Community Development, Community Development Block Grant, US Ignite, Resident Only Parking, Parking Related Zoning Changes, "Clean Hands" zoning and code policy, and the Farrington Mobil Home Park.

### Neighborhood Development Area (NDA)

John Adams, Planning Coordinator with the VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development, attended two meetings and explained the Vermont Downtown Program overall and the NDA program. NDA designation is intended to encourage municipalities and developers to plan for new and infill housing in the area within walking distance of its designated downtown. NDAs do not change the local zoning standards or the development review process. The Committee sponsored a Resolution to the full City Council to authorize the City to complete an NDA application to the State.

### Center City revitalization

A significant amount of time at each meeting was devoted to discussing the issues of housing in the Center City area (between Maple and North Streets from the Institutions to Battery Street). The following goals, initiatives and stakeholders were identified by the Committee and meeting participants.

#### **Goals:**

- Better balanced neighborhoods – resident types, housing types, demographics, affordability – increase the choices
- Increased home ownership – less turnover
- Reinvestment in existing housing stock
- Safe and quality housing/ Elimination or reform of problem landlords
- Connecting residents to work – creating walkable neighborhoods, and workforce housing
- More downtown housing
- Better stormwater management and green belt
- Safe walks
- Noise reduction and quality of life improvements

**Initiatives:**

- Enforcement of 4 unrelated ordinance/transparency and clarity on allowed uses
- Condo conversion rules need to favor conversion to owner-occupancy
- Cohesive and connected parking plan for downtown and residential areas
- Seed capital – acquisition dollars for problem properties
- Taxation policy for rental units – creating a better balance between value, cash flow, and value of the asset
- Identify sites, funding sources, and great management firms to build university affiliated housing downtown, and create compelling advocacy plan/messaging campaign for why that's a part of the solution for neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood Improvement District/TIF to provide seed capital or other capital
- Mapping problem properties using BPD calls, municipal violations, etc. Data to drive strategies – use data for acquisition strategy, prioritization, safety, etc.
- Connection between code, BPD, and P&Z.
- Patrols the next day to follow up with violators – all on the lease to follow up
- Develop strategies to build comprehensive capacity to do scattered site redevelopment and acquisition – once we have \$, we have to have people to creatively deploy it on a building by building basis

**Stakeholders:**

- Landlords/rental property owners
- Institutions
- Current residents – NPA's
- Students
- Financial institutions
- Low-income advocates
- Refugee resettlement programs
- All City departments
- Downtown advocacy groups