

The Coalition for a Livable City would like to thank all the many people who have worked with us over the last 6 months in our attempt to bring due diligence and democratic process to fundamental zoning changes. We do not believe that major zoning changes should ever be made on a tight schedule or in direct service of a specific development proposal.

We are disappointed in the final tally on Questions 3 & 4, but proud of the work so many have done for Burlington.

Not only were we outspent 3 or 4 to 1, but the city fast tracked the zoning changes and put out so much misinformation, while insistently accusing us of the same, that a clear understanding of their machinations didn't reach as many voters as it might have, given more time.

The city's aggressive and high speed strategy worked for them, but our major objection - changing the zoning to please the developer - remains glaring and unabated. The Planning Commission and the City Council rushed pre-determined zoning changes through because the developer required them. These changes would have quietly become the law except that some people were paying close attention and knew it wasn't right.

When the City realized that a petition drive would inevitably put ZA16-14 on the ballot in March or sometime later, they squeezed it onto the crowded November 8 ballot. This was preemptive. It deprived us of the opportunity to reach more people through the petition drive and it afforded them the advantage of higher turnout at the polls with many voters less focused on Burlington issues than they would be in March or in a special election. Question 3 in particular, was worded so as to provide no information whatsoever about the substance of a highly substantive zoning change. And it was marketed as nothing more than a "zoning update." Question 4, on TIF financing, was also effectively sold - the city presented it as 22 million for Burlington with no tax increase. We tried to correct this misrepresentation, but succeeded only in part.

Despite the aggressive campaign of proponents for ballot items 3 and 4, only slightly more than half the voters approved Question 3. Question 4 the free money new streets question fared a little better, but still in the 50% range. A majority of voters in Wards 2 & 3 voted No on Question 3. Citywide, 46% voted No on 3. Question 3 did "pass," but there is not the consensus our community needs.

We will continue to strive for redevelopment that serves Burlington well and that respects PlanBTV without distorting it. The Sinex project – which was not on the ballot – would be a disservice to Burlington and to the integrity of the zoning laws meant to shape and guide appropriate, not disproportionate development.

The March elections for city offices will be a chance for voters to say “yes” to development that serves the community and “no” to development that serves developers and other interests first.

CLC still has many serious concerns about the process of the zoning change, the ballot questions, and the ad campaign promoting yes votes. Tuesday’s results may prove to be less a victory for proponents than a half time score. The city has an obligation to follow the law when it places items on the ballot. The CLC will be weighing the options. We urge the citizens of Burlington to heed the advice of a Sioux chief on facing adversity: “Be patient, have courage and watch for signs.”