

From: Sharon Bushor <sfbushor@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 23, 2022 11:10 PM
To: Meagan Tuttle <mtuttle@burlingtonvt.gov>
Subject: Rezoning Trinity Campus

[WARNING]: This email was sent from someone outside of the City of Burlington.

To the Planning Department and Planning Commission

Good evening,

Since this proposal was expedited as part of the Mayor's Housing Agenda, I have spent time on my own and then in the company of neighbors and City Councilor Gene Bergman looking at the existing campus and then going down South Prospect Street looking at Redstone Campus and the addition of the Lofts by Redstone Development to that location.

In this communication, I plan to cover the Rezoning request. In addition, I plan to touch on the dilemma of creating housing versus creating affordable housing and how this proposal is not actually addressing or significantly helping to solve the problem of the availability and cost of off campus housing.

Let me begin with this Trinity Campus affords the University of Vermont a unique opportunity to expand that campus with the addition of housing and perhaps a discipline focused experience with classrooms and research/ technical support. I hope the University will spend time creating a vibrant Master Plan for this site. I am concerned that this zoning request has only considered obvious spaces where a large structure can easily be erected without a Master Plan that may yield a more cohesive design.

When UVM came before you with their proposal for housing, they initially asked for a 15 foot setback to mirror the setback of the small single family homes that populate both sides of the street. I will note on the opposite side there is one larger structure (not over 35 feet) that resembles a triplex and has a dentist office in it. Another building similar in size has 6 small apartments. This is a perfect working class neighborhood; apartments, single family homes sprinkled with size appropriate local businesses (Kampus Kitchen, flower shop, dentist, Indian restaurant). Across the street was a small college that reached out to their neighbors informing them and including them in proposed changes. Trinity College even shared their space for NPA meetings. Our neighborhood has always seen the value in higher education. Neighbors are diverse in age, occupation (some in the workforce, some in school, some doing both, some retired), socioeconomic status, nationality and race. We all understand the crisis we face in housing and support creating more.

When you look at the height and massing of the proposed structure with a now 25 foot setback, visually it is clearly out of scale with the surrounding structures and creates a high wall blocking any sight of trees and green space within the campus.

In comparison, now travel down South Prospect Street and view the Lofts. They are setback at least 45 feet from the sidewalk and are about 35 feet tall and separated to resemble individual houses from the street. Their orientation, size, color (dark brown), are an attempt to replicate the smaller single family homes on that side of the street. I will also call to your attention, dorms of

greater height and massing are set WAY back from the residential homes and not along the streetscape. I believe Ward 1 is deserving of this same consideration.

NOTE: Most neighbors do not have concerns about structures built behind Mercy Hall and agree height and massing can occur there and in other internal locations.

REQUEST: PLEASE CONSIDER A SETBACK OF 45 FEET AND A HEIGHT LIMIT AT THIS SETBACK OF 35 FEET. I ALSO REQUEST A REQUIREMENT FOR A DESIGN ELEMENT THAT BREAKS UP OR SOFTENS THE MAGNITUDE OF LARGE STRUCTURES THAT FRONT THE STREETScape. ONE LIKE THE DESIGN ELEMENT USED BY THE LOFTS AS EXPLAINED ABOVE.

NOTE: If urgency is driving this zoning request, why not build on one of the sites that already can accommodate housing.

A Planning Commissioner suggested one such location on South William's currently used as a parking lot. In 2019, UVM referenced a process they were undertaking to identify on campus locations that could accommodate housing. Other sites may be known to them.

Why am I suggesting this? To allow time for a Master Plan to be fully vetted.

I am aware that the Planning Commission has no control over the price UVM charges for housing. Students will tell you one motivation to move off campus is the cost of on campus housing. I, like you, am also aware that increased freedom ranks right up there. Therefore if undergraduate housing is created, no one can guarantee more students will choose to remain on campus. Unless the affordability of UVM housing is discussed in earnest, this most likely will not yield the desired outcome of retaining students or bringing them back to on campus housing. Housing for graduate students may have a very different outcome and may help to either allow them to REMAIN ON CAMPUS OR RETURN TO CAMPUS. Often these students have access to grants or work study that offer monies for housing. Trinity may also be a great location to house Medical Students.

REQUEST: PLEASE ASK THE QUESTION ABOUT GUARANTEEING OCCUPANCY AND IF APPROPRIATE GENERATE A LETTER TO THE ADMINISTRATION TO DISCUSS WITH UVM AFFORDABILITY OPTIONS FOR THE HOUSING BEING CREATED.

The last item I want to mention is one that the Ward 1/8 NPA also struggled with.

UVM'S enrollment has grown significantly over the past few years. The City has an agreement that for every student over the agreed upon % housed, UVM must create a bed. Annually, UVM comes before the Council with their report and show they have complied. The problem for the City is if enrollment continues to grow, the number of students moving off campus at the end of their sophomore year increases. As enrollment grows, our housing crisis grows.

I bring this to your attention because some in attendance at the NPA meeting wanted this zoning amendment denied until enrollment was capped and additional students be required to live on campus.

I am aware the only topic under your direct purview is the zoning amendment. To not further explain the relevance of affordability and increased enrollment as factors that create a

neverending increase in the number of students moving off campus each year would ignore the interrelated complexity of this housing issue. An issue that needs more than a zoning amendment to solve.

Thank you for your time.

Sharon Bushor

Ward 1 Resident

Please note that this communication and any response to it will be maintained as a public record and may be subject to disclosure under the Vermont Public Records Act.