

Ward 6 Neighborhood Planning Assembly
April 7, 2016
Aiken Hall, Morgan Room, Champlain College

Minutes:

Present: Approximately 18 people present; Start time 7:03 pm.

1. Peter Keating welcomed participants and moderated. Minutes from March 2016 were approved.
2. Karen Freudenberger discussed the 2016 Community Development Block Grant process. Burlington is an entitlement community receiving CDBG funds to alleviate poverty. Funds derive from HUD and have to be spent in the city. There are two categories: Public Service grants of \$108,732 were recommended by the committee in response to \$349,796 requested. Development grants totaled \$525,766 based on requests of \$579,905. Our policy is to fund fewer agencies than in the past with larger awards including for multi-year. We have a theme for the Social Service portion. This year it was housing. Recipients in that category included agencies promoting "housing first", aid for battered women, food service preparation training, and Homeshare, Vermont. In the Development category, the largest grant went to the Champlain Housing Trust. Other recipients included the Howard Center and the Food Shelf. Unspent funds are carried over to next year. The committee recommendations go to the City Council and the Mayor for final decision. Question (Neil Groberg): Which groups were denied? Answer: groups that submitted large requests we couldn't substantially fund. Q. (Ibnar Avilix) The unspent funds will be rolled over? A. Yes. Q (Peter Keating) is the amount granted by HUD decreasing? A. Yes. Q. What is the theme for the Development portion next year? A. That portion doesn't have a theme.
3. Gail Shamnois gave an update on UVM campus developments. UVM has a neighborhood development program which has led to a substantial decline in noise and vandalism complaints on targeted streets. On April 17 there will be a neighborhood clean-up. The university is working with code enforcement and the police to solve problems generating excessive calls for services and violations are down. We carry out conflict resolution with neighbors of college students which result in agreement addressing quality of life issues. Target streets are Buell and Loomis for our annual recycling efforts for student furniture.
4. Lauren Pyatt of CEDO discussed the city's lead abatement program. The lead issue here is paint in buildings constructed prior to 1978. 70% of the structures in the city predate this. We have a HUD grant of \$3.4 million for the program. Landlords and tenants can enroll for free and we provide repainting and other services including window replacement. Since 2003, we have treated 250 structures. Criteria include construction prior to 1978 and income limits for tenant-occupied units. The program doesn't cover efficiency apartments. We lend HEPA vacuum cleaners and can test the blood of children under 7 years old. Details at burlingtonleadprogram.com. Q. (Carolyn Bates) Source of funds? A. HUD. Q. (Groberg) Is the city water system tested for lead? A. There are no known issues with this but you need to ask DPW. Miriam Stoll added that the schools test their water and no problems have been found.
5. Miriam Stoll gave an update from the School Commission. While the budget passed, the challenge is implementation. Specifics will be presented April 12 at Contois by the Superintendent. He has started a multi-year strategic planning process with a 3-5 year scope. It will involve community input. The first presentation of this will be April 28 at a place to be announced. Mediation between the board and the teachers' union wasn't successful so the negotiations have moved to fact-finding. There is a page on the schools'

website that addressed these negotiations. One issue the schools are addressing is the achievement gaps based on different variables. Discipline that takes a student out of the classroom adversely affects educational performance so we are moving toward other forms of response to behavior problems. Q (Freudenberger) We hear a rumor that the leadership staff at various schools may be shifted from their present locations. If so, why and what is the role of the Board? A. The Board has no role in this. We set the total budget, hire the superintendent, set the goals, but we don't determine specifics. Is there a "principal swap"? No. There may be some reallocation as positions open up. Q. (Groberg) Will the superintendent check with parents? A. Consultation with parents started before any search process and there will be no presentation of final candidates to parents at the end.

6. Eric Morrow, architect, discussed the basis for informed deliberation about the Town Center Mall with comments added by Megan Tuttle of Planning & Zoning (P&Z). Morrow said the right tools were needed and that a physical model was indispensable. It could take a week to build and cost \$3,000 to \$5,000. It is needed to show relative scale and shadows. It typically is of one color and shows no facade detail. Where a sharp change in zoning is involved, it lets you evaluate that. In this case the current height allowed is 105 ft. and what's asked for is 165 feet, a 150% change in building height. The model should extend a block and a half on all sides of the project and in this case all the way to the water on the west side. Morrow has a petition urging the city to require such a model, emorrow2030@gmail.com. Q. How tall would the buildings be? A. from Megan Tuttle of P&Z, 13 to 14 stories and 165 ft. max., a 55ft. increase over present zoning. Q. (Groberg) So there is no model now? A. (Morrow) There are sketches but no model. A 3ft by 5ft model would be suitable. Groberg to Tuttle: Are there shadow studies? A. Yes, done on the previous design last year. New results will be presented to the City Council 4/11. Mass and height are important but physical models can be expensive. We have a digital map of the entire downtown that was used for the current images. It is a resource. A. from Morrow. Two dimensional images can distort a landscape making distant features appear smaller or larger than life-size. Q. (Mary Twitchell) I recall that there was a physical model for the original mall that was very helpful. Q. (Avilix) Doesn't a 3-D model generator exist that could be tied to the digital data? A. (Morrow) Yes, but that's up to the design team. (Tuttle) Yes. Q. (Groberg) Will the location of UVM Medical Center personnel in the mall cause parking problems? A. (Tuttle) We are looking at shared parking to meet demands. Q. (Charles Simpson) What will the TIF funds go for? A. (Tuttle) Public infrastructure around the project, such as streets. (Simpson) Will the city have to purchase the roadbed to reopen St. Paul Street? A. Yes. Joan Shannon responded: This is an item being negotiated. (Tuttle) It will be in the pre-development agreement presented Monday to the City Council. On Tuesday David White of Planning & Zoning will discuss related zoning changes. Q (Keating) Has Morrow asked P&Z to request a model of the developer? A. (Morrow) Yes. (Tuttle) the City has asked the developer for this. It is up to the designers. (Groberg) In view of benefits from the city to the project developers, why should we have to purchase the right-of-way? It should be given as an act of goodwill. A. (Shannon) It is in the total package. We want the best deal for citizens and reach the city's goals for the area. A. (Tuttle) TIF money will go to it (the purchase of St. Paul St.). (Shannon) This project will add to the tax base very significantly and will add connectivity. It is an important city goal.
7. Council Member Joan Shannon discussed council activity. There is information on the Town Center on the City website. I just returned from a fact-finding trip to Ithaca, N.Y., partly in response to questions from a Ward 6 resident. We looked at parking. Residents there pay \$45 a year for street parking permits No street is entirely resident only parking

and on such streets the limitations are from 9-5. Only 300 permits have been issued for 25 to 30 blocks of such streets. If you don't use your permit it is revoked. Commuters can park for 4 hours at a time on a one side of the street so this discourages commuter parking. Landlords are paving their yards and selling parking spaces to the general public, causing tenants to have insufficient parking. Colleges provide student parking for \$800 a year. Freshmen at Cornell get free bus passes, as all UVM all students currently do. There are no minimum requirements for parking in new buildings. We do, and also have parking maximums. Employers want access to parking before they are willing to invest. 68% of Ithaca is off the tax rolls. We have 40%. Their taxes are higher: a \$300,000 house is taxed \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year and there's no income sensitivity. There are three large parking structures downtown with 1500 spaces. Where they have purpose-built student housing without parking, that hasn't been a problem. On other matters, our smoking ban in parks didn't pass last year after an 8 year effort. Can you give me feedback? Q. (?) Do other cities ban such smoking? a. Yes, including Rutland. In our proposal, smoking would be permitted in adjacent parking lots. Q. (Keating) the spill-over effect? A. Yes, that's why we said parking lots. Q. (Keating) The status of New Moran? A. They have a development partner, the project has been reduced, and council is monitoring the progress. Q. (Avilix) If New Moran is scaled down, will that affect the TIF agreement? Will there have to be another public review? A. It could be reconsidered. Q. (Bates) What do you know of the Redstone building proposed for Pine Street? I'm told they were or did go to Ward 5 but may have pulled the project back. A. This was a site once proposed for a Shaw's supermarket. With the cost of building in a polluted area, they (Redstone?) faced more costs and so wanted a larger building. The cost of land is higher in Ithaca but they face similar issues with urban soils. Q. (?) What's the height in Ithaca? A. 6-8 stories, higher in some campus buildings. (Tuttle) Twelve stories are permitted. (Avilix) Brownfield problems there? A. No. just urban soils.

8. Members Items. Keating indicated that the Steering Committee will soon need at least one new member. Consider volunteering. (Avilix) The Pine Street Coalition; Let's Do it Right feels we still have a chance to affect the current design of the Champlain Parkway. We have a map and specific design comments and recommendations. Our web site is www.SafeStreetsBurlington.com and <https://www.dacebook.com/SSBPineStreetNow/>.

Motion to adjourn moved and passed at 8:50 pm. Respectfully submitted. C. Simpson