

Office of  
the Mayor  
Burlington,  
Vermont



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Mayor  
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#### MEMORANDUM

**To:** City Council

**From:** Miro Weinberger  
Mayor 

**Date:** June 13, 2012

**Re:** Appointment of CEDO Director

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I respectfully submit for your consideration and approval Peter Owens as the next Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) Director for the City of Burlington. I am requesting City Council approval of this appointment at your June 25, 2012 meeting.

Peter began his professional career here in Burlington working on urban design projects in the City from 1984-1990. Since then he has had a dynamic, varied career that has involved innovative work in California and the Upper Connecticut River Valley. If approved, Peter intends to return to Burlington and start work on or about July 9.

CEDO has a proud history. The agency has been at the center of much of the waterfront and downtown development successes of the past 30 years and will be central to the community, economic development, housing and anti-poverty efforts I intend to pursue in the years ahead. Since being elected I have been focused on finding a leader for CEDO who has the vision, creativity, energy and persistence necessary to succeed on these numerous, critical fronts.

I am confident that Peter is that leader for the following reasons:

- **Peter is an experienced urban designer who has worked on inspiring projects in large cities and rural New England.** Peter worked for three years as a Senior Planner for the Presidio Trust – a groundbreaking federal agency charged with preserving the natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources of the historic San Francisco Presidio. There he was a leader in a joint planning and real estate office that worked to create new parkland and convert 700 historic former military buildings into civilian use. In recent years Peter has worked on three of the most innovative and exciting development projects in the Upper Valley as a principal and director of urban design at ORW, a White River Junction landscape architecture and planning firm.

*This deep experience conceiving and implementing high-quality urban design projects will be enormously valuable as Peter works to complete the unfinished job of reclaiming the waterfront from its industrial past, making Burlington more affordable by encouraging the creation of more downtown housing, and planning the future of the Urban Reserve.*

- **Peter is a collaborator and listener and committed to building community.** Colleagues of mine who have worked closely with Peter describe him consistently as someone who can bring people together to move diverse communities forward and get things done. During his time in Burlington during the 1980s, Peter served as an early board member of the pioneering Burlington Community Land Trust – an organization that has created affordable homeownership opportunities for hundreds of low and moderate-income Vermonters.

*These character traits will help this Administration overcome some of the debates about growth and change that have divided the City in the past.*

- **Peter will bring the perspective and prudence of an entrepreneur to the office.** For the past 15 years Peter has been actively involved in real estate and business development as both a principal and investor. Those activities have ranged from buying and restoring historic properties in Lebanon, NH to raising \$2.5 million of equity and investing in a \$50 million historic hotel project in Boston to planning and helping to create a new catering/special events company.

*This background will serve the City well as Peter leads efforts to create jobs and craft the public-private partnerships necessary to move the city forward.*

- **Peter is a man of ideas and student of cities.** Peter earned a Ph.D. in Environmental Planning/Urban Design from the University of California, Berkeley while studying neighborhood form in twelve Upper Valley neighborhoods. Later he served as a member of a Dartmouth Medical School research team doing important research on the relationship between the built environment and obesity.

*Peter's study and understanding of the built environment and cities will be of great value in shaping ideas and policy regarding Burlington's future.*

Peter's resume is attached.

Peter, who currently resides in Hanover, will establish residency in Burlington. We will be contacting you in the next couple days to invite you to meet Peter and discuss the future of CEDO in advance of the June 25 meeting.

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