



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT  
CITY COUNCIL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &  
NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE  
c/o Community & Economic Development Office  
City Hall, Room 32 • 149 Church Street • Burlington, VT 05401  
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**Councilor Selene Colburn, Chair**, East District  
**Councilor Tom Ayres**, Ward 7  
**Councilor Adam Roof**, Ward 8

Tuesday, July 26, 2016  
6:00 – 7:45 PM  
Fletcher Free Library  
Community Room

### **Draft Minutes**

In addition to the Councilors noted above, the following people were in attendance – Jesse Bridges, Director (Parks, Recreation and Waterfront, Councilor Sara Giannoni, Lacey Smith (Burlington Police Department), Ibnar Avilex, Dylan, Marcy Esbjerg (CEDO), Rachel Smith, Chris Brzovic (Burlington Housing Authority), Rita Markley(COTS)

1. **Review Agenda** – Chair Colburn started the meeting and began with a review of the agenda. A proposed change to the agenda included the review of the Public Lands Inventory at the beginning of the meeting. Councilor Ayers made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Councilor Colburn. Motion approved.
2. **Review of Public Lands Inventory**, J. Bridges (Parks, Recreation & Waterfront)– Director Bridges reviewed the list and said that the list was being updated as it didn't include cemeteries and newer community gardens. The list shows which department is in charge of the area, GIS – property address, footage and comments. In looking at what public lands are available, Bridges noted that the space available is still subject to permitting and zoning based on what are the plans for the land. Examples he shared were setbacks based on lot line (right of way);lot coverage and impervious surface just to name a few. He noted that all park land goes through the regular process of the Development Review Board, etc., like the other developments.

During the discussion someone asked about Mackenzie Park – and it was mentioned there is a lot of wildlife and great cross country skiing there.

Another question was asked about a tiny home on wheels as a temporary structure. It was noted that temporary structures have a limited location time within the City's ordinances.

The programs and services of the City of Burlington are accessible to people with disabilities.

For accessibility information, call 865-7144. For questions about the meeting, contact Marcy Esbjerg at [mesbjerg@burlingtonvt.gov](mailto:mesbjerg@burlingtonvt.gov)

Also noted that the grass gets compacted like in City Hall Park and that becomes bad for stormwater runoff.

Where might there be opportunities for tiny homes? Jesse explained that part of the Urban Reserve has been reclaimed for land. Manahattan Drive was one of the biggest encampment which changed when work was being done there. The question of North Beach was explored but Jesse noted it is not built for winter use; they start operations there April for opening on May 1. AS a whole, the department does look to more permissive policies that may have limited impact; ie – dogs at beach during off hours. There was some interest in a vacant lot on Riverside and noted lots of room at MacNeil – lots of room. It was mentioned again that the 'old' City Ordinance only allows camping at North Beach in the City. Jesse offered to return for further discussion.

3. **Public Forum** – there were no comments.

4. **Approval of Minutes** – Chair Colburn looked for a motion to approve the minutes for the June 2016. Councilor Roof made the motion and Chair Colburn seconded the motion. Councilor Ayres abstained as he was not in attendance. The motion was approved.

#### **5. Discussion on Homeless Encampments**

Lacey Smith from the Burlington Police Department talked about how the City of Burlington responds to encampments. She said they only go out to encampments as a response to a citizen complaint or concern. Lacey goes with a member from the street outreach team to the location, identify individuals and post a notice there is no camping allowed and they list all the resources available. She noted that it can be weeks or months before an encampment is removed; they do make a concerted effort to identify folks and have conversations, explain why they have to move. Most of the campers are already connected to a service provider and not unknown. She explained where there are larger encampments of more than one tent – waterfront, Blodgett, Urban Reserve; former Burlington College land. Removing encampments isn't a great solution because we are just shuffling people around; there is no housing or shelter to offer them. There is zero timeline involved except in case of construction and then we have to ensure safety. ; Sometimes when we go out to sites frequently, we become a nuisance and they might just leave. If a site is being cleaned up, Lacey and Casey stay to ensure that no possessions are lost.

During the discussion about encampments a few questions were raised.

Rita Markley asked about Centennial Woods and So. Burlington because she heard anecdotally people are moving out and going there and that includes families. Lacey hasn't gone to either place.

Chris Brzovic asked Lacey how many families has she worked with and she replied she hasn't seen one family.

Councilors asked if Lacey could explain more about the complaints – is it behavior or presence. Lacey explained that it could be either/or dependent on the complaint.

Sometimes people are biking and they see a tent or tents and know it is illegal to camp. Other times it might be noise or a problem.

#### **More on encampments**

Marcy Esbjerg from CEDO talked about encampment practices from around the county. She

mentioned some communities in MA which just bulldoze encampments to Seattle WA that has sanctioned encampments.

Some best practices around the country include services or service providers connected to encampments or provide portable toilets, showers, lockers to store stuff during the day or after encampment is moved. Marcy also explained that some communities like Miami Beach will not move an encampment unless they have a bed to offer the folks at a low barrier shelter.

The City does have a draft policy on how we respond to encampments and it is a working draft and a policy we have worked on within the past year or so.

Chair Colburn asked about encampment securing and if that has changed since the most recent death in a camp. Lacey explained that officers on foot might walk through 2 x a day and such at a place like Pine Street but may never see anyone.

Chair Colburn was concerned that there might be a push to break up encampments and both Marcy and Lacey said they were not aware of any such move. The question was also asked about private land. The City of Burlington doesn't do anything on private land unless the owner asks us to do something.

Chair Colburn mentioned an idea that came from the last meeting about a community policing model and how that might apply to encampments. Marcy Esbjerg mentioned a model in Sonoma County CA where they have an encampment that is self-governed. Councilor Ayres explained that CA has experienced generations of encampments ranging from immigrants and refugees, agriculture works and migrant camps as well as those experiencing homelessness.

Rita Markley gave an update on the warming shelter. The lead agency will be Community Health Centers of Burlington and they are looking at some of the properties owned by the Diocese.

In general, Chair Colburn asked what the role should be of this committee regarding all the information we have amassed on homelessness and tiny homes. She suggested a communication to City Council. She also wondered if we should marshal our resources to do a summit on Micro Housing. Chair Colburn will produce a working paper on the issues and committed to work on it after August 9<sup>th</sup>. Councilor Ayers offered to begin working on a possible Micro Housing Forum with potential speakers and issues to discuss.

Other comments from the public included:

Councilor Ayres would like more exploration of North Beach off season for the homeless noting that a service component must be included.

Lacey Smith commented that we should move away from a seasonal approach; we know of plenty of folks that might go to a low barrier shelter all year.

Chris Brzovic stated that shelter is not a destination but a place to connect them to housing and services.

Councilor Giannoni asked if the Committee has gone to the Daystation and Wellness Co-op to get feedback. Chair Colburn responded that we had planned to connect with the Chittenden Homeless Alliance to communicate with those who experience homelessness.

Ibnar Avilex asked if there a link to the properties on the inventory list and it was suggested that he use Google Maps and the City of Burlington's Assessor's site.

**6. August meeting to reschedule due to holiday**

The Committee decided to cancel the August meeting and agreed to meet on Sept 6 – location to be determined. AT that meeting, the Committee will schedule the final 3 months of the year. Suggested topics included an update on the Inclusionary Zoning Report in September and finalizing plans for a MicroHousing Discussion. In October, the topic of 4 unrelated with Bill Ward will be planned.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilor Ayres and seconded by Councilor Roof. The motion was approved and the meeting adjourned at 7:47 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marcy Esbjerg  
Acting Director  
CEDO