



CITY OF BURLINGTON, VERMONT
**CITY COUNCIL TRANSPORTATION, ENERGY &
UTILITIES COMMITTEE**

c/o Department of Public Works
645 Pine Street, Suite A
Post Office Box 849
Burlington, VT 05402-0849

802.863.9094 VOX
802.863.0466 FAX
802.863.0450 TTY
www.burlingtonvt.gov

Councilor Maxwell Tracy, Chair, WARD 2
Councilor, Tom Ayres, WARD 7
Councilor William “Chip” Mason, WARD 5

Inquiries:
Guillermo Gomez
802.540.0557 DIRECT
ggomez@burlingtonvt.gov

Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES:

Wednesday, May 28th - 2014 at 4:45 PM

**DPW – Front Conference Room
645 Pine Street – Burlington, VT**

Members present: Chair, Maxwell Tracy (TEUC)
Chip Mason (TEUC)

Others present: Eleni Churchill, CCRPC
Guillermo Gomez, DPW
Barbara Grimes, BED
Munir Kast, BED
Nicole Losch, DPW
Kirsten Merriman-Shapiro, CEDO
Nathan Wildfire, CEDO
Charlie Willette, BED

Chair Tracy called the meeting to order at 4:47 pm.

1. Agenda

Chair Tracy moved to approve the agenda. All in favor.

2. Public Forum

3. Minutes of 3/6/14

Councilor Mason moved to approve minutes from 4/30/14. All in favor.

4. Newly Adopted Lighting Policy – Jean O’Sullivan - BED

O’Sullivan: At BED we have been operating under a set of procedures. This effort is to put all of these procedures and policies in writing. The purpose of this is also to deal with the issue of

decorative lighting and banners on BED poles. Additionally, the Dark Skies Initiative is something that we also have included in the policies. This effort was done through the Lighting Committee. This committee consists of two BED Commissioners and two members of the public.

Charlie Willette and Munir Kasti are here to talk about the current procedures and then I will go over the policy.

Grimes: They will both explain how current practice at BED. This effort started years ago after an unfortunate incident that happened near Red Rocks, where a woman was seriously injured. BED ended up having to pay \$6.5 Million because the City's Policy had lapsed. Mayor Kiss put together a lighting committee and conversations started about a policy, but the conversation went nowhere. The delay in the policy is also related to the Dark Skies Initiative. BED follows IES standards. IES has been looking at modified standards related to the Dark Skies Initiative, but they haven't really adopted any changes.

Mason: You are using some terminology we are not very familiar with. Could you explain Dark Skies?

O'Sullivan: It is a movement that is seeking to get rid of unnecessary artificial lights we have on the planet. Most people in residential areas feel over-lit. Many towns have gone dark or have dimmed their public lighting, but in Burlington we haven't done that because we have been sued in the past. We have a known liability. Because of this, we can't suggest any standards that haven't been approved. In the new lighting policy, it says that we will be aware of Dark Skies. This is important because if Dark Skies becomes part of common practice and incorporated into lighting standards, we are leaving an open window in the policy to make Dark Skies part of BED's practice in the future. We will be looking at standards that will hold up in court. Under the current IES standards that BED follows, more lighting is required than what we usually have. We are approximately 10% compliant. When Barbara Grimes started in BED, she suggested we start bringing commercial areas to compliance first. So if we come up with a defensible dark skies policy, we have done no harm.

Grimes: BED will be having an intern from the Vermont Law School, who will be working together with Gregg Meyer from the City Attorney's Office.

Willette: BED is responsible for lighting the streets of Burlington. Whenever streets are lit by BED, they will conform to IES (Illuminating Engineering Society) recommendations for lighting levels and uniformity. Lighting fixtures are selected by BED based on performance, durability, workability and cost. BED's standard installation consists of an LED cobra head fixture mounted approximately 30 feet above the ground on either a wooden or a fiberglass pole. When a light that is not compliant with IES recommendation, it is replaced with an equivalent LED cobra head fixture. BED maintains a street light capital plan that lists projects initiated by BED, City/State initiated street light projects and customer requested projects. The capital plan also includes upgrades of street lighting to IES recommendations. When a customer

requests to check lighting levels, Munir's group will perform a lighting study. If the study shows the street falls below IES recommendations, the street is added to the capital plan and upgraded as the budget allows. If the study shows the fixture exceeds the IES recommendations, the lighting levels will be adjusted. If the study shows the lighting levels meet the recommendations, BED informs the customer that the lighting levels are adequate. There are a few areas of the City that currently have decorative lighting. These areas include Upper Main Street & Riverside, Downtown District and Lower Church and North Streets.

Grimes: We've had problems with some of the decorative light installations. The problem with some of these is that the providers stopped manufacturing them and they had to be special ordered.

Kasti: The yearly Street Lighting Capital budget was approximately between \$75,000 and \$90,000. Since we are now installing LED lights, there are currently some rebates that have allowed us to increase the budget. Last year, the budget was increased to approximately \$250,000 and this upcoming year the budget is about the same.

Grimes: We are able to replace more lights now because of the rebates, but this is not going to last in the long term.

O'Sullivan: If you take a look at the handout, the policy reflects in writing BED's procedures. The only new part is the part that talks about Decorative Lighting and Banners. Decorative lighting is typically more expensive. The policy says that the City should be responsible for the decision of where to install decorative lighting. It will be the City's responsibility to designate decorative lighting and banner districts and then inform BED of those designations. After this, BED will be in charge of the logistics.

We have encountered an issue in the past with banners. When we install light poles, they have a warranty, which is only valid if poles are installed following the manufacturer's specifications. Any deviation from these specs, including hanging banners, will void this warranty. Paul Alexander has been working with attorneys to develop a liability waiver. We understand the value of banners in some parts of the City. This is why banner districts need to be designated. In these areas, the City would sign the liability waiver and by doing this, we would be protecting the rate payers.

Grimes: The Planning Department, CEDO, DPW or any other interested party can take the lead on the creation of these districts. Basically, what we are saying is that if we are asked to install something other than the standard, this directive needs to come from someone other than BED.

Willette: In Colonial Square, we are having an issue. They have decorative lighting in this area. The bulbs used in those fixtures are coming to an end of life and we won't have replacements because of the manufacturers have discontinued them.

Tracy: I can pass all this information to the full City Council

Mason: If I understand correctly, this policy has already been passed by the BED Commission? And after the TEUC, it will go to full City Council?

Grimes: That is correct.

Kasti: The initial cost of decorative lighting on Upper Main Street and Riverside Avenue was done through a grant.

Grimes: In the past, decisions were made without our input and now we are running into issues of maintenance. People need to understand that manufacturers change what they produce, that special lighting carries an additional cost and that in the future, manufacturers can choose to discontinue some of their products and that can be a challenge.

Tracy: When do you think this will need to go to the full City Council?

Grimes: Some time during the summer or fall.

Tracy: There is no urgency.

Grimes: No.

Mason: This might be a little more complicated. There may be a need for new ordinances to be passed to allow the creation of these districts.

Wildfire: We (CEDO) think this is great, but we have some questions. How should we proceed?

Mason: I think you should have a conversation with BED before this goes to full City Council.

5. Adoption of Town and Road Standards – Nicole Losch, DPW

Losch: In the last meeting we had a discussion about the adoption of Town and Road Standards. It is a very short document assuring that we are building roads to some basic standards. By adopting these standards, we will be able to reduce the local share required in case of emergencies.

Mason: We had a discussion about this before, am I correct?

Losch: Yes, but the actual document was not included in the meeting materials last time. We have included the document for your review prior to this meeting.

Mason: I make a motion to adopt the Town and Road Standards.

Tracy: I second. It passes unanimously.

Losch: We can draft the resolution that will go to the full City Council

Mason: Thanks

6. Colchester/Pearl/Prospect Scoping Study – Eleni Churchill, CCRPC & Nicole Losch, DPW

Losch: This scoping study started after the Colchester Avenue Corridor Study was concluded, back in 2011. One of the recommendations from that study was to further research the Colchester/Pearl/Prospect intersection.

Churchill: This study started in 2012. This study included public and stakeholder outreach, existing and future conditions analysis, statement of the project purpose and need, assessment of alternatives, selection of a preferred alternative, and a final scoping report. Several alternatives were developed and the Steering Committee endorsed a pilot project to test one alternative as a short-term solution. The pilot project was launched in August 2013, and traffic data and observations were done in October 2013. An online survey tool was available from August through November 2013. After reviewing the data and feedback collected from the pilot project, the Steering Committee recommended these changes to be made permanent. The Public Works Commission approved the regulations that made the pilot project permanent with some minor adjustments to improve operations. Development of long term alternatives continued after the Pilot Project. The final alternatives included a No-Build Alternative (keeping Pilot Project Changes), Alternative 1 (realignment of North-South Approaches), Alternative 2 (realignment of North-South Approaches plus Turn Lanes), and Alternative 3 (roundabout). Performance under future traffic condition was evaluated for these different alternatives, and an evaluation matrix was developed to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives in other criteria. After deliberation, in a Steering Committee meeting in April, *Alternative 1* was selected as the preferred alternative.

We would like to ask the TEUC to identify a preferred alternative or support the Steering Committee's recommendation, and advance this to the City Council.

Mason: I support the alternative endorsed by the Steering Committee.

Tracy: I second. (Passes unanimously).

7. Downtown Parking Initiative – Nathan Wildfire, CEDO

Wildfire: We are hoping to start having monthly updates to the TEUC due to the amount of work around parking happening right now. We currently have four studies happening related to parking:

- Downtown Parking Initiative
- Residential Parking Study
- Parking Garage Assessment
- Traffic Demand Management

We hired consultants to perform these four studies. July 11th is a big date. This is when the findings from the Parking Garage Assessment will be available. We are expecting a big number needed to bring garage structures into compliance.

These studies will reveal needs in the parking infrastructure that will require revenue enhancements in order to have enough funds to implement the changes and improve the parking experience for both residents and visitors. The revenue enhancements under consideration are:

- Raising parking rates
- Adjusting the 2 hour free parking program
- Enforcement of parking after 6 pm
- Enforcement on parking on Sundays.

Some of the changes that we are looking into don't require City Council approval, others do. The Mayor is still trying to figure out how to approach the roll-out of any changes. Parking can be an emotional issue, so there is very likely to be a strong response to any change. What the public finds difficult to visualize is that modest price changes and increased revenue can have a positive impact in the customer service experience.

We are also looking at some improvements in technology. These include:

- Payment by cell phone
- Payment by credit card (approximately 281 credit cards reading meters)
- Automation of the Marketplace Garage
- Wayfinding improvements

Another improvement that we are looking into is having an application or website with the City's Transportation Information Centralized. There is no centralized location for residents or visitors for information on parking, transit, etc.

Mason: One thing I don't see is changes in traffic management of traffic when the garage is full.

Wildfire: We are currently developing relationships private property owners who have parking spaces. There are lots of parking spots available at prime locations. We are trying to develop pilot agreements.

Tracy: Another idea that has been used in other places is variable pricing for parking. Higher pricing for premium parking spaces

Wildfire: Parking is a sensitive topic. Communication will be an important part of this process.

8. Councilors' Updates

The next TEUC meeting will take place on Wednesday, June 25th at 4:45 PM at the Front Conference Room at Burlington Public Works.

9. Adjourn

Tracy moves to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:11 PM.