



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

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Councilor Maxwell Tracy, Chair, WARD 2
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Transportation, Energy and Utilities Committee

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES:

Tuesday, July 1st - 2014 at 4:45 PM

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

Members present: Chair, Maxwell Tracy (TEUC)
Tom Ayres (TEUC)

Others present: Emily Boedecker, Local Motion
Guillermo Gomez, DPW
David Hartnett, Burlington City Council
Nicole Losch, DPW
Kurt Wright, Burlington City Council

Chair Tracy called the meeting to order at 4:55 pm.

1. Agenda

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

2. Public Forum

Hartnett: I have been following the North Avenue Corridor Study. I have also had the chance to meet with Chapin Spencer, and he has given me assurance that the process being followed for the Corridor Study is not being rushed, but I do have concerns about the project. My concerns come after the Public Meeting that was held in Saint Mark's. The impression that I got from that meeting is that there are not many people in support of having bike lanes or roundabouts in North Avenue. We have to be very careful about this process. Someone who went to the meeting must have left with the impression that there is no support for the proposals in the study. In the end, I want to do whatever residents want. Residents are not happy with a lower speed limit, bike lanes or roundabouts. I am a bike rider. I ride the bike on the avenue. I am concerned that intent of the project is not necessarily for safety, but for the bikers.

Wright: All I have to say is ditto to what Dave has just said. My gut instinct tells me people don't want such drastic change. There are improvements that can happen but the most controversial changes will definitely stir up a lot of people. People were frustrated in that meeting. We shouldn't move forward with the plan. Unfortunately the way it works, people usually don't weigh in until the plan is in front of everyone.

Ayres: I agree with the fact that there is a substantial amount of people disagreeing. But I want to highlight that none of the options are written in stone. And one question that I have is, why didn't people stay in the meeting and weigh in?

Wright: There was a lot of information to digest in that meeting. People were frustrated. People stayed for 1 hour and 15 minutes. One comment from one known doctor who lives in the neighborhood reflects the typical comments we received that day: his question was why? Why do we need to do this? What is so bad that we have to make such drastic changes? People are OK with the lower speed limit on residential streets, but not on the corridor. It is not unanimous, but my feeling is that people don't want all this. People don't like how long it takes to get from point A to point B. The current bike paths are not perfect, but they work. You can take the bike path to the Waterfront and from there you can get to places downtown. You also have the other bike path, parallel to the belt line.

Ayres: You could make the same argument for the Beltline. People have the option of jumping into the beltline if they want to get to places faster.

Hartnett: The meeting was overwhelming. There are some fixes and safety upgrades needed. About the beltline, a huge percentage of the users of the beltline are from Colchester. There are also places along North Avenue that people need to get to, like Burlington High School and Burlington College.

Wright: The Beltline initially decreased congestion on North Avenue. But we have now added traffic from new buildings.

Hartnett: The Beltline has its own issues (accidents, poor lighting). These issues discourage people from using the beltline.

Wright: During the Public Meeting, some residents came to me and asked why wasn't the crowd directly whether they wanted the changes or not.

Ayres: I want to put Emily in the spotlight. The feeling from the crowd that this was a done deal came in part from a last minute proposal from Local Motion. It steered everyone in a different direction.

Boedecker: I wish I would have been there. The proposal had merit but it increased the confusion. In Local Motion we also hear from our constituents who support the corridor study and want changes. The confusion from this meeting has led into good conversations. I don't

want the voices from the supporters to be lost. I want to acknowledge our missteps, but I also want to acknowledge the supporters. We want the preferred alternative to be the best possible solution.

Ayres: The steering committee will come with the report in front of the TEUC and then to full City Council.

Wright: My bottom line is that I want no plan that has a huge amount of opposition. I am confident that there are more opponents than supporters.

Ayres: I have advocated for pilot testing so we can understand the impact. One problem I see is that the opponents of roundabouts think of the Winooski Rotary. That is not a roundabout or what a roundabout would look like on North Avenue.

Boedecker: I want to echo Tom's words regarding pilot testing.

Tracy: What we are seeing now in terms of transportation trends is a shift from car-centric to multimodal. I have the opportunity to travel a lot for work and I can tell you, we are falling behind compared to other cities. I understand that you have your constituents who support traditional forms of transportation, but there are also broader constituencies in the City.

Wright: I think the vast majority should be making these decisions.

Tracy: Multimodal transportation is controversial. I think that for a long time, Local Motion has been averse to controversy, so I applaud LM's effort in the process. We are currently reaching a turning point. Most of the easy decisions have been made and we have to start making some difficult ones. If we don't make these decisions, change is never going to happen.

Boedecker: What I believe Local Motion should do is bring in the best ideas that we can. Our misstep was that we complicated the process for DPW and the CCRPC.

3. Minutes of 5/28/14

Councilor Ayres moved to approve minutes from 5/28/14. All in favor.

4. Downtown Parking Initiative – Max Tracy, Burlington City Council

Tracy: I can summarize some of the information regarding the Downtown Parking Initiative. There are three on-going studies done by consultants regarding parking:

- Garage Assessment: this study is reviewing the repair needs for all city owned garages. The study is expected reveal the need for a sizeable amount of repairs.
- Resident Parking Study
- Downtown Parking Management Study

We don't want to inhibit any changes during the time that these studies are being completed, so there are some changes that are coming, regardless of the time line of these studies. New parking meters will be installed. These meters will be able to accept credit cards.

Losch: While we discussing parking, are any the councilors in the TEUC available to be part of the steering committee for the Resident Parking Study?

Tracy: I can be the representative.

5. Sidewalk and Pedestrian Inventory – Guillermo Gomez, Nicole Losch, DPW

Gomez: The City completed an inventory of the sidewalk system in 2009, with volunteers and city staff walking the entire system and documenting the deficiencies. The purpose of this plan was to be able to prioritize the sidewalk improvement projects. The methodology that was used for sidewalk planning was attempting to emulate what we currently do for streets. For the paving program, we use software to determine a Pavement Condition Index (PCI), based on data collected in the field on the condition of the roads. This PCI helps us prioritize the streets that we will be repaving each year to improve our overall road system the most with the funds we have available. With the years that we have been using the Sidewalk Strategic Plan, we have discovered some areas in need of improvement. We are now trying to have a more proactive approach to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements). We recently issued a Request for Proposals for a consultant to redo the pedestrian infrastructure inventory, improve the methodology and identify areas that are not compliant with ADA requirements. We received proposals from four consultants and after evaluating and ranking them, we selected Sally Swanson Architects as the most qualified to do this project. This firm is based in San Francisco, California. They have a team within their company that does this type of project on a regular basis.

Tracy: When do you expect this to happen?

Losch: According to their schedule, they would start work in June and would be finishing up by December. We still have to go to Board of Finance and City Council to award this project. We expect to go to Board of Finance by July 14th if we manage to have the contract reviewed by then. If not, the following Board of Finance Meeting.

Tracy: This is very useful. You have my support for this.

6. North Avenue Corridor Study – Nicole Losch, DPW

Losch: There have been multiple meetings for this project. Our recommendations are evolving based on the feedback we have received. We are currently discussing the implementation.

Ayres: What will we be voting on?

Losch: On the implementation plan.

Ayres: Is there a way to estimate the impact on travel time that the alternatives would have?

Losch: Yes, traffic analysis has been a part of the process.

Boedecker: Will the data be available in September?

Losch: Yes. There are other impacts that we want to emphasize. It's not only about travel time.

Ayres: It's looking like this will go in front of the City Council in September, so Eleni can attend. Maybe we can plan to look at this again for the next TEUC meeting, which should happen in early August.

7. Update on Summer Paving Program – Guillermo Gomez, DPW

Gomez: Pike Industries was the lowest bidder for this year's paving program. This year, most of the work will be on residential streets, with the exception of North Champlain Street. We are also paving Appletree Point Road and Leddy Park Road. Work started earlier this week lowering structures, and paving will start next week. Working will start in the northernmost streets, and finalizing in North Champlain Street. The expected completion date is October 1st. With the departure of Erin Demers, who used to manage the paving program, we have hired Hoyle Tanner & Associates to manage the program. Jon Olin is the interim paving program manager, and he has brought in Al Dipietro as paving inspector. A new engineer has been hired to replace Erin. She will be starting on July 14th. The new engineer is expected to take over the management of the paving program.

Tracy: Could you please send us the street list?

Gomez: I will.

8. Bike-Ped Bonding

There are on-going conversations about adding a question in the ballot, either for November or March about active transportation financing. The details of what type of projects would be covered haven't been decided. There are currently needs for investment in sidewalks, on road and off road bicycle infrastructure, curbs. The options for financing could include a percentage of gross receipts, a bond, a tax, TIF funds, etc.

Tracy: Has there been a decision about adding bike infrastructure to the ballot?

Losch: There are on-road and off-road improvements that constitute bike infrastructure. Some of the on-road improvements are not clear at this point, so there is the open question of whether it is appropriate to include this in the ballot without clarity on what projects will be included.

Tracy: Clarity on this is good, but it can also be challenging. In terms of the ballot, with pensions and the school budget issues, we can't be continuously going to the public for all this. I think bundling all these needs makes sense for the ballot, but not everyone shares this view.

Ayres: I encourage pushing for the November elections for the ballot. In March, there is a general election, not in November.

Boedecker: I want to urge for any creative ideas to encourage creative ways to tie this to the established planning processes.

Ayres: The general public may not have an understanding of the concept of complete streets. There needs to be an effort to educate the public about this concept.

Tracy: Please make sure this committee is involved in these conversations. If this is moved forward, it will have to involve the City Council.

Ayres: There needs to be better communication regarding this.

9. Councilors' Updates

10. Adjourn

Tracy moves to adjourn. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 6:20 PM.